

Resolution on Charter Schools. November 2010

Whereas Community School District 3 in Manhattan currently offers a wide range of excellent public school choices as evidenced in part by strong demand, overcrowding and space limitations which have severely impacted several schools in the district, and

Whereas District 3's Community Education Council (CEC3) believes all existing classroom space is desperately needed to accommodate the current and anticipated growth of District 3's elementary and middle school programs, and

Whereas Harlem Success Academy has recently received approval from the SUNY Trustees, along with strong support from the Department of Education (DOE), to open a new charter school in District 3 with plans to expand to 700 students, and

Whereas Harlem Success has embarked upon a long term, multi-faceted and expensive marketing effort to artificially stimulate demand for a new charter which would siphon physical and financial resources, as well as parental support, from District 3's existing highly regarded public schools, and

Whereas Harlem Success, rather than pursue its original mission of offering innovative alternatives to communities which have long suffered from poor and failing public schools for a multitude of reasons including extreme poverty, neglect and underfunding, has now apparently decided it's mission should be expanded to include displacement of successful public schools in ethnically and socioeconomically diverse neighborhoods such as District 3 with thriving public schools, and

Whereas the experience of other public schools which have been forced to co-locate with charters has resulted in their being pushed out and relegated to inferior facilities, and

Whereas the results of charter schools' general effectiveness to improve the educational outcomes of disadvantaged students as measured by the admittedly limited yardstick of New York State as well as national standardized test results has been mixed at best, and

Whereas 95% of New York City's 1.1 million public school children will continue to be educated in the regular public school system and our society cannot afford to be distracted or diverted from the obligation to provide them with a sound basic education by pre-occupation with the highly marginal and arguable benefit of increasing the number of charter schools, especially in those communities where there is no evidence of systemic "failure",

Therefore be it resolved that Three Parks Independent Democrats:

Calls for a moratorium on charter school expansion in New York City.

Opposes the co-location of any charter school within District 3.

Insists that the District 3 CEC be actively involved in all decisions relating to the allocation of classroom space in that District's schools.

Be it further resolved that:

All elected officials be apprised of the Club's position on this issue

The Three Parks Board be delegated the responsibility to implement the policies expressed in this resolution as changing circumstances dictate. Any relevant actions shall be reported promptly to the Club membership.