

V.A.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO BE PROPOSED:

January 4, 2017

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes, renews the charter of Side By Side Charter School from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2022, subject to the Commissioner's January 4, 2017, memorandum to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____, this fourth day of January, Two Thousand Seventeen.

Signed: _____
Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary
State Board of Education

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education

DATE: January 4, 2017

SUBJECT: Renewal of State Charter – Side By Side Charter School, Norwalk

Introduction

In accordance with subsection (g) of Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), charters may be renewed, upon application, in accordance with the provisions for the granting of new charters. The State Board of Education (SBE) may renew a charter for a period of up to five years. The SBE makes renewal decisions based on evidence of the following performance standards:

1. *School Performance:* Is the school a successful model resulting in strong student outcomes and a positive school climate?
2. *Stewardship, Governance and Management:* Is the school financially and organizationally healthy and viable?
3. *Student Population:* Is the school promoting equity by effectively attracting, enrolling and retaining students, particularly among targeted populations?
4. *Legal Compliance:* Is the school acting in compliance with applicable laws and regulations?

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and the SBE carefully evaluate qualitative and quantitative evidence, and longitudinal data aligned to the four performance standards outlined above when making charter renewal decisions. The charter performance framework drives the CSDE's charter school accountability systems and processes, including initial approval decisions, annual monitoring and renewal determinations. From inception to renewal, charter schools must abide by the CSDE's charter school accountability procedures and performance framework. Charter monitoring takes place through annual reporting, meetings, and correspondence and site visits, as appropriate. In accordance with C.G.S. § 10-66bb(g), a charter may be renewed, upon application, if the charter school has demonstrated satisfactory performance relative to the four performance standards.

History/Background

Side by Side Charter School (SBS) opened in the fall of 1997 and serves 236 students in Grades PK-8: 88 percent reside in the City of Norwalk (the host district), 8 percent reside in Bridgeport and 4 percent reside in six surrounding districts. Table 1, page 11, of the attached Charter Renewal Report provides 2015-16 student enrollment and demographic data. SBS's mission states, in part, to ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed and every voice heard. SBS prides itself as a true "Community" school where students, families, teachers and staff work together, side by side, to help build curious, resilient and enthusiastic 21st century learners.

The school offers a small school setting and a one-class-per-grade program offering a curriculum aligned to the Connecticut Core State Standards. SBS builds student character and responsibility through a commitment to community, social justice and tolerance toward others. All students are enrolled into the school through a blind lottery. Based on the CSDE's review of the charter, the school is satisfactorily achieving its mission.

Charter Renewal Process

Application for Renewal of Charter: The CSDE accepted an application for the renewal of SBS's charter on September 2, 2016. The application detailed the charter school's progress, operations, and achievement in relation to the CSDE's charter school performance standards: (a) school performance; (b) stewardship, governance and management; (c) student population; and (d) legal compliance. SBS submitted data and evidence to substantiate the charter school's written responses.

A renewal team comprised of CSDE staff with expertise in curriculum, assessments, special education, English learners, school management, finance, and school governance reviewed the renewal application and requested clarification and additional information, where necessary. Overall, the team determined that the application responded effectively to the areas required and provided sufficient supporting evidence.

Renewal Site Visit: On October 19, 2016, the CSDE renewal team conducted an on-site visit at SBS. The purpose of the renewal on-site visit was to observe SBS's programs, policies, practices, and procedures to assess their efficacy and fidelity to the school's charter and aligned operating systems. Evidence was collected through on-site visit observations, document reviews, interviews and focus groups. The team spoke with board members, administrators, staff, parents and community members. The team used this process to ensure that the school is functioning in compliance with the law and the school's mission. The team verified the responses detailed in the renewal application regarding compliance with the law and the CSDE's performance framework and accountability plan.

Invitation for Written Comment: The CSDE solicited written comments on the renewal of SBS from the Superintendent of Norwalk and from contiguous school districts: Darien, New Canaan, Westport and Wilton. The CSDE received a letter supporting the renewal of SBS's charter from Dr. Steven J. Adamowski, Superintendent, Norwalk Public Schools (see Attachment A). CSDE also received a letter supporting the renewal of SBS's charter from The Honorable Harry W. Rilling, Mayor, City of Norwalk (See attachment B). In addition, the CSDE received a letter

supporting the renewal of the charter school from State Senate Majority Leader, Bob Duff (see Attachment C).

Public Hearing: Stephen P. Wright, member of the SBE, and CSDE staff held a public hearing on November 30, 2016, in Norwalk, and heard from 13 individuals on the potential charter renewal of SBS and the impact it is having on the community. Public hearing participants included members of the SBS community, including family members, students, school staff and community members. Over 30 people attended the public hearing. The responses generated during the public hearing were overwhelmingly positive, both in terms of the impact the charter school has had on the community and support for SBS in the context of school choice. No one spoke out against the renewal of the school's charter.

Site Visit Findings

The most recent available data and information contained in the Charter Renewal Report and Next Generation Accountability Report 2014-15 (see below) speak to SBS's performance and success according to the four performance standards. The report highlights school strengths and areas for continued growth. Strengths include:

- SBS accountability index score of 72.9 in English language arts for all students exceeded the state average index score of 67.9 by 5.0, while also exceeding the Norwalk school district average index score of 64.7 by 8.2.
- SBS accountability index score of 67.0 in English language arts for high needs students exceeded the state average index score of 56.7 by 10.3, while also exceeding the Norwalk school district average index score of 58.4 by 8.6.
- SBS accountability index score of 63.7 in Mathematics for all students exceeded the state average index score of 59.3 by 4.4, while also exceeding the Norwalk school district average index score of 54.5 by 9.2.
- SBS accountability index score of 59.7 in Mathematics for high needs students exceeded the state average index score of 47.8 by 11.9, while also exceeding the Norwalk school district average index score of 48.3 by 11.4.

Areas of concern include:

- A review of SBS's accounting policies and procedures manual (APPM) by staff from CSDE's Office of Internal Audit determined the APPM lacks many of the standard sections of an APPM. The missing items include payroll, purchasing, accounts payable, accounts receivable, credit and debit cards, bank reconciliations and investments.
- SBS accountability index score of 52.9 in Science for all students fell below the state average index score of 56.5. The accountability index score of 46.4 for high needs students is slightly above the state average.
- A review of SBS's student suspension data reports an increase of in-school suspensions over the last three years from 2013-14 to 2015-16.
- A review of SBS's 2015-16 student mobility data reports 8 percent of the student population did not re-enroll at the school for 2015-16.

Charter Renewal Recommendation

Side By Side is providing its students with a high-quality public school education. As evidenced by the attached Charter Renewal Report and school culture and climate data (Table 2), SBS is satisfactorily achieving its mission and making strides in closing Connecticut's achievement gap. The percentage of SBS students meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in ELA and Mathematics on the 2016 SBAC exceeded the state average. In ELA, 58.9 percent of all SBS students met the ELA achievement standard, exceeding the state average by 3.3 percent. In Mathematics, 46.2 percent of all SBS students met the math achievement standard, exceeding the state average by 2.1 percent. Based on the SBS's performance indicators, together with the CSDE's evaluation of the charter, the CSDE recommends that the SBE renew the school's charter for the period July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2022.

The CSDE will notify Side By Side of action taken by the SBE following its meeting on January 4, 2017. The school will be advised of relevant technical assistance opportunities designed to improve its educational program. The CSDE will conduct follow-up visits to ensure that Side By Side has addressed the issues raised in this memorandum.

Prepared by: Robert E. Kelly
Charter School Program Manager
Turnaround Office

Approved by: Desi D. Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer
Turnaround Office

CHARTER RENEWAL REPORT | SPRING 2016

Charter School Information:		
Charter School Name:	Side By Side Charter School	
School Director:	Matthew Nittoly	
School Board Chairperson:	Anne Dichele	
Location (City/Town):	Norwalk	
Rating Key:		
Meets	The school demonstrates effective policies and practices, resulting in positive outcomes.	
Pending Action	The school requires minor modifications to its policies and/or practices. The school is taking satisfactory measures to remedy and address these issues in a timely manner.	
Does Not Meet	The schools falls below performance expectations with significant concerns noted, which require immediate attention and intervention.	
Standard 1: School Performance Indicators	Points/Max	% Points Earned
Accountability Index:	614.2/ 750	81.9
Notes and Evidence:		
<p>The 2014-15 SBS Accountability Index score of 81.9 is above average when compared to the state school Accountability Index score of 76.1. Schools that meet Standard 1: School Performance Indicators are schools earning an accountability index score that is in the state's top three quartiles. SBS's accountability score of 81.9 places its performance in the top two quartiles which meets Standard 1. Side by Side's 2014-15 Next Generation Accountability Report is shown in detail on the next page.</p>		



Next Generation Accountability Report, 2014-15

Choose a District
Side By Side Charter School District

No:	Indicator	Index/ Rate	Target	Points Earned	Max Points	% Points Earned	State Avg Index/Rate
1a.	ELA Performance Index – All Students	72.9	75	97.2	100	97.2	67.9
1b.	ELA Performance Index – High Needs Students	67.0	75	89.3	100	89.3	56.7
1c.	Math Performance Index – All Students	63.7	75	84.9	100	84.9	59.3
1d.	Math Performance Index – High Needs Students	59.7	75	79.6	100	79.6	47.8
1e.	Science Performance Index – All Students	52.9	75	70.6	100	70.6	56.5
1f.	Science Performance Index – High Needs Students	46.4	75	61.8	100	61.8	45.9
4a.	Chronic Absenteeism – All Students	9.8%	<=5%	40.4	50	80.8	10.6%
4b.	Chronic Absenteeism – High Needs Students	9.8%	<=5%	40.4	50	80.8	17.3%
5	Preparation for CCR – % taking courses	N/A	75%	0.0	0	0.0	66.1%
6	Preparation for CCR – % passing exams	N/A	75%	0.0	0	0.0	37.3%
7	On-track to High School Graduation	N/A	94%	0.0	0	0.0	85.6%
8	4-year Graduation All Students (2014 Cohort)	N/A	94%	0.0	0	0.0	87.0%
9	6-year Graduation - High Needs Students (2012 Cohort)	N/A	94%	0.0	0	0.0	77.6%
10	Postsecondary Entrance (Class of 2014)	N/A	75%	0.0	0	0.0	72.8%
11	Physical Fitness (estimated part rate) and (fitness rate)	96.9%	75.8%	50.0	50	100.0	87.6%
12	Arts Access	N/A	60%	0.0	0	0.0	45.7%
Accountability Index				614.2	750	81.9	

These statistics are the first results from Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability Model for districts and schools. For detailed information and resources about every indicator including the rationale for its inclusion, the methodology used as well as links to resources, research, and evidence-based strategies, please see the document titled Using Accountability Results to Guide Improvement.

This model is the direct result of an extensive consultation process over a two year period. The CSDE sought feedback from district and school leaders, Connecticut educators, state and national experts, CSDE staff, and many others. This model was outlined in Connecticut's flexibility application to the U.S. Department of Education and formally approved by the USED in August 2015.

Gap Indicators	Non-High Needs Rate*	High Needs Rate	Size of Gap	State Gap Mean + 1 Stdev**	Is Gap an Outlier?
Achievement Gap Size Outlier?					N
ELA Performance Index Gap	75.0	67.0	8.0	17.3	
Math Performance Index Gap	67.7	59.7	8.0	19.6	
Science Performance Index Gap	N/A	46.4	N/A	17.2	
Graduation Rate Gap (2012 Cohort)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N

Participation Rate	Rate
ELA – All Students	100.0%
ELA – High Needs Students	100.0%
Math – All Students	100.0%
Math – High Needs Students	100.0%
Science – All Students	100.0%
Science – High Needs Students	100.0%

If the Non-High Needs Rate exceeds the ultimate target (75 for Performance Index and 94% for graduation rate), then the ultimate target is displayed and used for gap calculations. If size of gap exceeds the state mean gap plus one standard deviation, then the gap is an outlier.

Standard 2: Stewardship, Governance and Management Indicators:	Rating
2.1. Fiscal Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
2.2. Financial Reporting and Compliance	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
2.3. Financial Viability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
2.4. Governance and Management	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
2.5. School Facility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
Notes and Evidence:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator 2.1: CSDE site visit staff reviewed SBS’s last three certified financial audits and uncovered no significant findings, conditions or internal control weakness. • Indicator 2.2: CSDE site visit staff reviewed SBS’s last three certified financial audits, accounting policies and procedures manual (APPM) and budgets, interviewed the school business manager, school director and governing board members. The reviewers determined SBS completed on-time submission of certified audits and annual budgets. Staff from CSDE’s Office of Internal Audit determined the APPM lacks many of the standard sections of an APPM. The missing items include purchasing, accounts payable, accounts receivable, credit and debit cards, bank reconciliations and investments. The CSDE has received and is currently reviewing the SBS corrective action plan to revise its APPM and expects it to be completed by February 2017. • Indicator 2.3: Staff from CSDE’s Office of Internal Audit reviewed SBS’s last three certified financial audits and determined SBS’s debt to asset ratio (total liabilities/total assets), current asset ratio (current assets / current liabilities), total margin (net income/ revenue), and days of unrestricted cash (unrestricted cash /((total expenditures – depreciation) / 365)) meets or exceeds the ranges recommended by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), signifying overall financial health. • Indicator 2.4: CSDE site visit staff reviewed school policies and bylaws and determined them to comply with new CSDE administrative oversight guidelines (e.g., anti-nepotism and conflict of interest). SBS’s policies and procedures regarding background checks of staff and board members, open board meetings and board membership training were reviewed and found to comply with state and federal laws, rules and regulation. This finding was supported by a review of background check and board training records and the review of the schools website and governing board meeting minutes. Upon review of its payroll policies and procedures SBS was required to amend its payroll policy to include greater separation of duties. The CSDE has received and is currently reviewing the SBS corrective action plan to revise its payroll policy and procedure and expects it to be completed by February 2017. • Indicator 2.5: As evidenced by the site visit, SBS has a safe and well-maintained school facility to support quality teaching and learning. Evidence included proof of property insurance, an approved Norwalk Fire Marshal inspection and approved certificate of occupancy issued by the Norwalk Building Department for the facility. Also, the school recently received an award from the state to construct a new middle-school facility to replace the existing portable structure. The work will be completed by the start of the 2018-19 school year. 	

Standard 3: Student Population Indicators	Rating
3.1. Recruitment and Enrollment Process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
3.2. Waitlist and Enrollment Data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
3.3. Demographic Representation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
3.4. Family and Community Support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
3.5. School Culture and Climate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM

Notes and Evidence:

- Indicator 3.1:** SBS currently serves 236 students primarily from Norwalk, the host district, in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8. A review of the school’s student enrollment policy, and interviews with school staff, board members and parents determined all students are admitted through a blind lottery.
- Indicator 3.2:** A review of SBS’s waitlist information (Table 3 page 11) determined it maintains a sizable waitlist of families beyond the available number of seats. In 2015-16, 154 students were on the waiting list. The waitlist has included over 125 students each year for the past three years. The October 2016 student enrollment (236) is 100 percent of the 2016-17 projected student enrollment.
- Indicator 3.3:** A review of SBS’s 2015-16 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports students from minority groups represent 84.3 percent of SBS’s student population and 42.4 percent of students qualify for free and reduced-price meals. The English learner population is 5.9 percent. The percentage of special education students at SBS is 8.1 percent. Overall the student body reflects the demographics of the surrounding community.
- Indicator 3.4:** SBS demonstrates strong community support as evidenced by letters of support for the school from Dr. Steven J. Adamowski, Superintendent, Norwalk Public Schools, The Honorable Harry W. Rilling, Mayor, City of Norwalk and State Senate Majority Leader, Bob Duff. During the site visit CSDE staff interviewed 8 parents of students attending the school. All described the communication between the school and families as strong. All expressed support for the rigor of the curriculum and the school’s dedication to ensuring each child’s needs are met. Parents indicated they were happy with the school’s commitment to serving students from diverse backgrounds. Over 30 individuals attended the November 30, 2016, renewal public hearing, and 13 individuals offered testimony supporting the school’s efforts and the renewal of its charter.
- Indicator 3.5:** School culture and climate policies reviewed by CSDE site visit staff were clear and concise. Classroom observations revealed consistent implementation of behavior intervention monitoring. A review of SBS’s 2015-16 school culture and climate data reports a 4.3 percent overall student suspension rate, a 4.2 percent student chronic absenteeism rate and a 96.3 percent student average daily attendance rate.

Standard 4: Legal Compliance Indicators	Rating
4.1. Open Meetings/Information Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.2. Students with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.3. English Learners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.4. Rights of Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.5. Teacher/Staff Credentials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM
4.6. Employee Rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> DNM

Notes and Evidence:

- Indicator 4.1:** The school website and Governing Board documents demonstrate that Governing Board meetings are open and accessible to the public. The Governing Board meeting schedule for the year and meeting agenda are posted on the school’s website. Education records and testing data are secured in locked file cabinets in the assistant to the director’s office.
- Indicator 4.2:** A review of SBS’s 2015-16 Public School Information System (PSIS) data reports the percentage of special education students at SBS was 8.1 percent. A review of student records and interviews with the SBS Assistant Director, special education teacher and a Norwalk district administrator were conducted to determine how the school meets the needs of students with disabilities.

PPT meetings are joint endeavors including a SBS administrator and district of residence administrator and other appropriate staff from the district of residence and SBS. Dialogue regarding the development and revisions of IEPs are common practice at SBS and include meetings with parents. SBS issues invitations for PPT meetings and utilizes IEP Direct (an electronic program for developing and managing IEPs) to facilitate the development of documents. When initial referrals are needed SBS issues required paperwork to the appropriate parties. Once evaluations have been conducted by the district of residence, SBS will reconvene the PPT to review results of evaluations and to make recommendations. Based on these recommendations, SBS will respond as required to meet the student’s needs.

SBS students with IEPs are typically integrated into the general classroom environment with occasional pull-outs for more specialized instruction. Services are provided in the least restrictive environment with appropriate inclusion in the school’s academic program, assessments (with appropriate accommodations), and extracurricular activities. All students with IEPs are in a general education class.

As evidenced by classroom quizzes, tests, class work and work with the special education teacher, it was determined the assessments were aligned to IEP goals. Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) are used to inform student progress and inform curriculum and instruction. This assessment allows for screening of Grades K-8 students in reading and math three times a year, and Grades 5-8 students in science three times a year. MAP individualizes students’ progress. SBS is in its second year utilizing MAP.

- Indicator 4.3:** Classroom observations and staff interviews by the CSDE EL consultant during the site visit observed the use of push-in and pull-out support from the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher and differentiated instruction provided by the classroom teacher.

A review of SBS English learner policies and procedures found them in compliance including native language communication, proper steps for identification of students in need of EL services, exiting students from EL services and monitoring exited students.

- **Indicator 4.4:** SBS student rights policies and procedures include admissions, handling of student information, due process protections and state nondiscrimination laws. Interviews with parents and staff at the school supported the proper implementation and use of the policies.
- **Indicator 4.5:** Staff from the CSDE Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification reviewed the state certified staff file and found no certification issues. Review of the school's employee roster also found no teacher certification issues.
- **Indicator 4.6:** A review of SBS employment policies and procedures and an interview with the school director determined the school's hiring and employment practices ensure protections under the Family Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Prepared by:	Approved by:
Robert Kelly, Charter School Program Manager	Desi D. Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer

Side by Side Charter School

Table 1. 2015-16 Student Enrollment and Demographic Information	
Grades served:	PK-8
Total enrollment:	236
Percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price meals:	42.4%
Percentage of special education students:	8.1%
Percentage of students with limited English proficiency:	5.9%
Percentage of minority students:	84.3%
Percentage of Asian students:	**
Percentage of Black students:	29.2%
Percentage of Hispanic students:	45.3%
Percentage of Caucasian students:	15.7%

Table 2: School Culture and Climate Data			
Performance Metric:	2013-14:	2014-15:	2015-16:
Average daily attendance rate:	96.3%	95.7%	96.3%
Chronic absenteeism rate:	6.2%	9.8%	4.2%
Number of in-school suspensions:	5	6	9
Number of out-of-school suspensions:	13	3	7
Suspension rate (percentage of students with 1+ suspension):	5.5%	3.0%	4.3%
Number of expulsions:	0	0	0
Cohort graduation rate (if applicable):	N/A	N/A	N/A
Six Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (if applicable):	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Source: CSDE analysis based on district submitted and certified data

**N<=5. Suppressed to protect student confidentiality.

Table 3: Student Waitlist and Mobility Information			
Performance Metric:	2014-15:	2015-16:	2016-17:
Waitlist number:	126	154	147
Number of enrolled students who left during the school year:	2	4	N/A
Number of students who did not re-enroll the next year and had not completed the highest grade at the school:	14	19	N/A

Attachment A



Steven J. Adamowski, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

125 East Avenue • P.O. Box 6001
Norwalk, Connecticut 06852-6001
Tel: (203) 854-4001 • Fax: (203) 838-3299
Email: adamowskis@norwalkps.org

September 8, 2016

Mr. Robert Kelly
Charter Schools Program Manager
CT State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Mr. Kelly,

I have recently been informed that the CT State Board of Education will soon be reviewing Side by Side Charter School's application for renewal. As you know, Side by Side is one of the original charter schools in CT and has been providing a successful, alternative choice-education program to the children and families of Norwalk for more than a decade. As the Superintendent of Norwalk Public Schools, I am proud to give my support for Side by Side to receive the maximum 5-year renewal of their charter.

Since the start of my tenure with NPS I have been in consistent communication with Mr. Matthew Nittoly, Executive Director at Side by Side, to share our best practices, student learning experiences and to brainstorm potential collaborations between both of our programs. These communications have most recently included site visits by me and my administrative staff. I look forward to continuing this positive relationship and discussing new and innovative ways that we can collaborate to better the lives of the children and families of Norwalk.

It is with great pleasure that I support Side by Side in seeking renewal of its charter with the CT State Board of Education. I look forward to knowing that the future of education for the children and families of Norwalk includes the opportunities that are provided by Side by Side Charter School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steven Adamowski".

Dr. Steven Adamowski
Superintendent, Norwalk CT Public Schools

Norwalk Public Schools Website: www.norwalkpublicschools.org

Attachment B



CITY OF NORWALK
Harry W. Rilling
Mayor
hrilling@norwalkct.org
norwalkct.org
P: 203-854-7701 / F: 203-854-7939
Norwalk City Hall
125 East Avenue, PO Box 5125
Norwalk, CT 06856-5125

September 12, 2016

Mr. Robert Kelly
Charter Schools Program Manager
CT State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

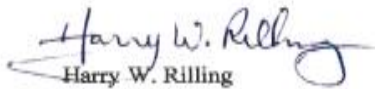
Dear Mr. Kelly,

It is a great pleasure to know that the CT State Board of Education will soon be reviewing Side by Side Charter School's application for renewal. As you know, Side by Side is one of the original charter schools in CT and has been successfully serving the children and families of Norwalk for nearly 20 years. As the Mayor of the city of Norwalk, I am proud to give my support for Side by Side to receive the maximum 5-year renewal of their charter.

Since 1997, Side by Side has served as a regional public charter school located in the heart of South Norwalk. Side by Side has successfully provided the children and families of the Norwalk community with a unique opportunity for an early childhood, elementary and middle-school education. Through a curriculum rich in teaching children to socially and academically succeed and in providing programs and resources for families in need, Side by Side has grown to become a valued institution in this city.

It is with great pleasure that I support Side by Side in seeking renewal of its charter with the CT State Board of Education. I look forward to knowing that the future of education for the children and families of Norwalk includes the opportunities that are provided by Side by Side Charter School.

Sincerely,


Harry W. Rilling
Mayor

Attachment C

SENATOR BOB DUFF
MAJORITY LEADER

Twenty-fifth District
Norwalk & Darien



State of Connecticut
SENATE

State Capitol
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591

Capitol: 860-240-8600
Home: 203-840-1333
Bob.Duff@cga.ct.gov

www.SenatorDuff.cga.ct.gov

September 12, 2016

Mr. Robert Kelly
Charter Schools Program Manager
CT State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Mr. Kelly,

It has been brought to my attention that the CT State Board of Education will soon be reviewing Side by Side Charter School's application for renewal. Based upon the close relationship that I have developed with Side by Side over the past decade I am proud to give my support of their renewal.

As the CT Senate Majority Leader and a lifelong Norwalk resident I have a great understanding of the difficulties that public school systems are faced with. It gives me great pleasure to know that we have a strong and diverse public school system in Norwalk that includes a choice program such as Side by Side Charter to help overcome these barriers.

Most recently my support of Side by Side can be exemplified by a 2016 Bill of the CT General Assembly that I drafted and helped lead to approval that will soon be awarding \$2.5million to Side by Side for construction of a new middle school building. Their longstanding success and demonstration of being a viable, high-quality program makes them well deserving of this recognition.

I am proud to represent a city that houses one of the preeminent public charter school programs in Connecticut. For this reason, it is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I give my wholehearted endorsement for Side by Side Charter School to receive the maximum renewal of their charter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob".

Bob Duff
Senate Majority Leader