



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Kennedy, Peoples-Stokes Urge State Education to Keep COMMUNITY Charter School Open

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY December 7, 2012

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION**

*COMMUNITY Charter School is up for charter renewal in June 2013; Decision over whether or not to renew set to be made December 10.*

*Kennedy, Peoples-Stokes highlight the school's rebound and steady progress following the adoption of their School Improvement Plan.*

*Kennedy, Peoples-Stokes: Our Community Matters. Give COMMUNITY the Opportunity to Complete their Comeback.*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy and Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes called on the New York State Education Department to keep COMMUNITY Charter School open, specifically urging them to grant a two-year provisional charter to empower the school to fully implement their improvement plans. The school is up for charter renewal in June 2013, but it's expected that the decision over whether or not to renew the charter will be made next week. After a period of declining test scores, COMMUNITY Charter School is starting to turn things around and improve student academic performance now that they've set in motion their School Improvement Plan.

Kennedy and Peoples-Stokes want State Ed to give COMMUNITY the chance to keep striving for further improvement. They say an academic resurgence is on its way, if State Ed

grants the provisional charter.

“The State Education Department needs to give COMMUNITY Charter School the opportunity to complete their comeback,” said **Senator Kennedy**. “Since they opened their doors in 2002, COMMUNITY Charter School has empowered students with educational opportunities and helped students achieve academic success on Buffalo’s East Side. The school has been an asset to our community and a beacon of hope for local families. With the comprehensive improvement plans they’ve adopted, it’s clear an academic resurgence is on its way at COMMUNITY Charter School. That’s why the Education Department needs to grant the provisional charter.”

“Time and time again we ask schools to give us better results and implement these School Improvement plans. We need to allow Community Charter School that opportunity. Their leadership has significantly changed, and there are signs that it will rebound and be a successful school in the district. I am looking forward to Commissioner King's acceptance of this request from the community,” stated **Assemblywoman Peoples-Stokes**.

Kennedy and Peoples-Stokes wrote to State Education Commissioner John King on Thursday, urging him to support COMMUNITY and grant the provisional charter. The school has experienced some challenges, but the local lawmakers feel the immediate progress following the initial implementation of improvement plans makes it clear the school is coming back and growing stronger.

Approximately 97 percent of the school’s student population is economically disadvantaged, and the school maintains an impressive attendance rate of 95 percent. At a rally held last week, over 100 people – parents, elected officials and community leaders – came out to support the school. The letters from Kennedy and Peoples-Stokes echo the pleas made at the rally: provide the school and their children with the chance to follow through on the School

Improvement Plan and show improved academic performance.

You can read the text of Senator Kennedy's letter below.

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 58th District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, Eden, Hamburg and West Seneca, the city of Lackawanna and parts of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at [kennedy.nysenate.gov](http://kennedy.nysenate.gov).*

Senator Kennedy's letter to NYSED Commissioner King:

Dr. John B. King, Jr.

Commissioner of Education

New York State Education Department

89 Washington Avenue

Albany, New York 12234

Dear Commissioner King:

Since opening their doors in September 2002, COMMUNITY Charter School has provided a safe, nurturing learning environment in Buffalo's East Side neighborhood. COMMUNITY Charter School, which serves 315 elementary-age students, is up for a charter renewal in June 2013. I understand the decision of whether to grant them the renewal will take place December 10, 2012. **I am writing today to ask that you grant this school a provisional two-year charter to allow them to fully carry out their School Improvement Plan, to get student test scores up and to maintain this valuable community asset.**

COMMUNITY Charter School is in danger of losing their charter due to a three-year period of declining test scores. Last year the school collaborated with the Center for Educational Innovation - Public Education Association (CEI-PEA), an organization that has successfully implemented school turnaround plans throughout New York City. With a new principal, a new Board of Directors and a comprehensive School Improvement Plan, COMMUNITY Charter School is seeing significant improvements in test scores.

COMMUNITY Charter School serves a population of which 97 percent are economically disadvantaged and maintains a 95 percent attendance rate. Last week, COMMUNITY Charter held a rally to save the school. Over 100 people – parents, elected officials and community leaders – attended to support the school. They ask that NYSED provide the school and their children with the chance to follow through on the School Improvement Plan and show improved academic performance.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this request. For further reference, please do not hesitate to contact me at (716) 826-2683.

Sincerely,

Timothy M. Kennedy

New York State Senator, 58<sup>th</sup> District