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Correspondence; 2005-08-24; NYS School Boards Association

Catherine Collins

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August 24, 2005

Dr. Catherine Collins, Board Member-at-Large
Buffalo Public Schools
65 Niagara Square
City Hall, Room 801
Buffalo, New York 14202

Dear Dr. Collins,

I want to thank you for sending me a copy of the Buffalo Board of Education’s Charter School Payment Resolution. It helps clarify my understanding of the board’s current position on charter schools.

NYSSBA has had some success in convincing the Regents to consider the cumulative fiscal impact of charter payments on a district’s budget when they review the merits of an application. Regrettably, the Trustees of the State University of New York, who are all appointed by Governor Pataki have been unwilling to acknowledge the extraordinary burden these schools place on traditional public schools.

Charter School Institute Executive Director James Merriman continues to insist that over time, a district should be able to effectuate savings when educating fewer students. We respectfully disagree. Unfortunately, there is no requirement in law which permits an authorizer to deny any charter application on the basis of fiscal impact alone.

The problem will not easily be resolved until more members of the State Legislature, including the Buffalo delegation insist that the leaders of their respective houses amend the Charter School Act of 1998. It is unconscionable for lawmakers to give any consideration to lifting the cap on the number of charter schools until this funding issue is remedied.

The Association will continue to make this issue one of our top legislative priorities. With help from the Buffalo Board of Education, perhaps this will be the year we achieve success.

Sincerely,

Anne M. Byrne
President

cc: Buffalo Board of Education
Dr. James A. Williams, Ed.D.