

October 14, 2016

A Message to the NAACP Board of Directors
Public Schools Educate All Children
New York City Charter Schools Do Not

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the membership of the United Federation of Teachers, we support the NAACP resolution calling for a moratorium on the expansion of charter schools.

In New York City, charter schools have created a system of "haves and have nots" and do not accept or keep comparable numbers of high-needs students as traditional public schools – whether special education students, homeless children or English language learners.

Nor are charters always successful even with the children they do accept. According to the latest available data, while New York City charters educate 7% of the students, they account for 42% of the city's suspensions, effectively forcing out students who do not fit in. In one of the largest charter chains, Success Academy, a principal created a "Got To Go" list as a way to push out "difficult" students.

At the same time, as charters are permitted free space in public schools, public school students in those buildings often lose access to important facilities like gyms and art rooms, and see themselves relegated to second-class status as charters use private funds to modernize the classrooms and facilities that only their students use.

Charter schools claim to be public institutions, but in too many communities, charters take public funds yet are not accountable to parents, lawmakers or taxpayers. Until charter schools embrace the same challenges that our public schools face, the NAACP is right to urge a moratorium on their expansion.

Sincerely,

Michael Mulgrew, President
United Federation of Teachers