

## Regents reverse closure, decide Buffalo Academy charter school will stay open

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The New York Board of Regents Monday reversed its surprising decision last month to close a high-performing Buffalo charter school after a strong campaign from the school's families.

The Regents in May voted to close Buffalo Academy of Science Charter School, which has a 94% graduation rate and met nine of the 10 state performance benchmarks. At the time, the Regents expressed concern for money being taken away from Buffalo Public Schools, particularly in a recession triggered by COVID-19.

After that, the school organized parents to inundate the Regents with emails and phone calls urging them to reverse their decision before students must be placed in new schools in the fall.

On Monday, the Regents who voted "no" in May attempted to explain why they were changing their votes.

"It was really just a protest vote," Regent Nan Meade said.

"I have reconsidered after great internal struggle, and very strongly believe this school ... is exemplary, given what it's done for student achievement and well-being," Regent Frances Wills said.

Catherine Collins, the Buffaloarea Regent, proposed renewing the school's charter for three years rather than the proposed five years, in part because of a lack of black and Hispanic administrators, but that motion was denied in a 7 to 10 vote.

"I don't know how this school could be better positioned to receive a five-year (renewal) than it is now," Vice Chancellor Andrew Brown said.

In a statement, the school's executive director, Joseph Polat said: "We are relieved that the Regents have realized their previous mistake. BuffSci is grateful for the (outpouring) of support we received from both the BuffSci and the statewide charter communities which helped to make this outcome possible."

The renewed charter allows the school to expand to grades 3 and 4, becoming a K-12 school after two years.

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**Buffalo Academy of Science Charter School PROVIDED PHOTO**

