

RESOLUTION WITH INTENT TO OPPOSE THE APPLICATION FOR THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BLOOMFIELD CONSERVATORY CHARTER SCHOOL IN
BLOOMFIELD, NJ

WHEREAS The Bloomfield Board of Education on March 31, 2017, received a copy of an application to establish a charter school in the Township of Bloomfield under the name The Bloomfield Conservatory Charter School intending to serve 240 students in grades 6-8; and

WHEREAS The Bloomfield Conservatory Charter School appears to be a resubmission of the failed 2016 Frank Sinatra Charter School of the Arts application; and

WHEREAS the failed 2016 Frank Sinatra Charter School of the Arts application was deemed by the New Jersey Department of Education to “not provide a compelling rationale” and “the arts program is not clearly explained”; and the “existing [founder] group does not demonstrate strong expertise in business, finance and facilities management”; and the current application is not substantially different from the 2016 application; and

WHEREAS the founders of The Bloomfield Conservatory Charter School appear to have submitted an identical application for the East Orange Conservatory Charter School; and

WHEREAS the Bloomfield Board of Education operates a successful public school system with eight elementary schools serving grades K-6, one middle school serving grades 7 and 8, one high school, an Early Childhood Center and an alternative high school; and

WHEREAS the Bloomfield Public School District’s fine arts, music and theater programming and technology and curriculum initiatives already meet the expressed mission of the proposed Bloomfield Conservatory Charter School; and

WHEREAS the Bloomfield Public School District has a successful 1-to-1 initiative that has been praised by the New Jersey Department of Education’s Chief Innovation Officer, Joshua Koen, and, due to his recommendation, the district was invited to present at the New Jersey School Boards Association Fourth Annual Technology Conference; and

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WHEREAS the Bloomfield Middle School has a successful iSTEM program developed under the guidance of Montclair State University Professor Jenn Goeke that is inclusive and designed to meet the needs of all students; and using the Defined STEM program, which is based on the Next Generation Science Standards, the Middle School is developing cross content performance-based tasks that draw on language arts and the fine arts as well as science, technology, engineering and math; and

WHEREAS the establishment of a charter school in Bloomfield serving 240 students would result in the state-mandated diversion of funds from the Bloomfield Board of Education of approximately \$2,300,000 plus any required additional special services costs and transportation costs. Such payments would threaten the school district's educational offerings by requiring material reductions in teaching staff and programs; and

WHEREAS, the founders of the Bloomfield Conservatory Charter School have not demonstrated community demand and support for a charter school; and

WHEREAS the founders of the Bloomfield Conservatory Charter School have no demonstrated track record of successfully starting and sustaining a charter school; and

WHEREAS the founding team must identify a physical address for the proposed charter school and the address supplied has been identified as 683 Bloomfield Avenue in Bloomfield, New Jersey, The Sacred Heart School; and

WHEREAS the Diocese of Newark has no record of being contacted by the founders and in fact part of the building has been already leased to the First Class Learning Center, a daycare center; and

WHEREAS N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-4(c) provides that the local board of education shall review a charter school application and forward a recommendation to the Commissioner of the New Jersey Dept of Education within 60 days of receipt of the application;

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NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Bloomfield Board Of Education expresses its intent to strongly oppose the application for the establishment of The Bloomfield Conservatory Charter School and hereby directs the Superintendent to assist the Board in the development of a recommendation to the Commissioner in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-4(c) detailing the basis for such opposition; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to Kimberley Harrington, Acting Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Education, Essex County Interim Superintendent of Schools Joseph Zarra, Senator Ronald L. Rice, Assemblyman Ralph R. Caputo, Assemblywoman Cleopatra G. Tucker, Bloomfield Mayor Michael J. Venezia, Bloomfield Township Council Members Elias N. Chalet, Nicholas Joanow, Carlos Bernard, Wartyna Davis, Ted Gamble, Carlos Pomares, and Essex County Freeholder Cynthia D. Toro.