

BY: Senator KENNEDY

COMMENDING Say Yes to Education Buffalo upon the occasion of celebrating its 5th Anniversary

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations which are committed to enhancing the quality of education in the State of New York, and which enable our schools to offer excellent educational programs in the most efficient manner; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Say Yes to Education Buffalo upon the occasion of celebrating its 5th Anniversary; and

WHEREAS, Founded in 2012, Say Yes to Education Buffalo is a landmark partnership which brings the Buffalo Public School District, parents, the Buffalo Teachers Federation, the Buffalo Association of Administrators and Supervisors, higher education, the City of Buffalo, Erie County, Say Yes to Education, Inc., and a diverse group of Buffalo area corporate, non-profit, and philanthropic organizations together to organize people, time, money and resources to provide holistic, year-round support to Buffalo Public School District students throughout their kindergarten-12 years and beyond; and

WHEREAS, This education-based initiative aims to provide a powerful engine for long-term economic development through radically improving the life course of public school students in the City of Buffalo; to accomplish this goal, the partnership combines a comprehensive kindergarten-12 support system with the incentive of locally funded postsecondary Tuition Scholarships to remove the barriers (financial, academic, social and health) to college access and success for youth in the City of Buffalo; and

WHEREAS, Say Yes to Education Buffalo is focused on the children and providing whatever resources students and their families need to navigate the bureaucracy of transcripts, test scores and letters; the organization also guarantees free tuition, through scholarships, to any graduate of a Buffalo public or charter school; and

WHEREAS, Nearly three out of four Buffalo students using the scholarships are minorities; almost half are black, ten percent are Hispanic, and six percent are Asian; nearly nine out of 10 students receiving the scholarship come from families which earn less than \$50,000 a year; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, the graduation rate in Buffalo schools has increased from 49% in 2012, to 63% for the class of 2015; in that same year, 67% of Buffalo Public School graduates continued on to a two- or four-year college; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Say Yes to Education Buffalo has been instrumental in sending 3,000 students to college, thereby increasing the portion of Buffalonians moving on to higher education; and

WHEREAS, Emerson, the International Preparatory School at Grover on the West Side of Buffalo, and McKinley High School on Elmwood Avenue, saw the biggest improvement in their percentage of college-bound graduates; and

WHEREAS, Say Yes to Education Buffalo truly believes that every student can graduate high school and college when given the proper supports, resources, and opportunities; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is very pleased to have this opportunity to salute Say Yes to Education Buffalo for its history of purposeful endeavor which has greatly benefited the community of Buffalo, and to wish this worthy organization continued success in future years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Say Yes to Education Buffalo upon the occasion of celebrating its 5th Anniversary; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Say Yes to Education Buffalo.