

Assembly Resolution No. 780

BY: M. of A. Fahy

HONORING William Wolff upon the occasion of his retirement after many years of distinguished service as Executive Director, LaSalle School, Albany, New York, and Chairman of the 853 Schools Coalition in New York State

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to acknowledge the significant milestones in the distinguished careers of esteemed residents of this noble Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor William Wolff upon the occasion of his retirement after many years of distinguished service as Executive Director, LaSalle School, Albany, New York, and Chairman of the 853 Schools Coalition; and

WHEREAS, Rarely has an individual served their institution as well as William Wolff has served LaSalle School and the Coalition of 853 Schools; he was also active in several leadership roles on both a national level and his own communities of Albany and Chatham, New York; and

WHEREAS, William Wolff has transformed the building footprint and modernized structures which serve the boys and staff at the School by working with architects, building contractors and financing agencies; has led the effort to build the LaSalle School Foundation assets to over \$4 million thus securing the financial future of the School; has successfully led the Coalition of 853 Schools through the challenging times of state regulated reimbursement and oversight; and has identified strategic partners to completely transform the manner in which clinical services are delivered to at risk youth by scientifically informed adverse childhood experience learning strategies; and

WHEREAS, In 1986, William Wolff was hired as a science teacher at LaSalle School, a private, not-for-profit treatment center which provides specialized therapeutic and educational services to troubled children and their families in Albany, New York; and

WHEREAS, The following year, he was appointed as the Junior High School Principal and one year later as the Curriculum Director and Co-Chair of the Committee on Special Education at the School; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, after completing his Master's degree in Organization Management, William Wolff began managing a major rebuilding project at the School, working with legislative authority to secure Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) financing; the CEO of the School, Brother Brice Wilder, named William Wolff the Director of Operations and Quality Control; and

WHEREAS, In 1994, William Wolff was selected by the Board of

Trustees to serve as the Interim Executive Director and a year later, appointed as Executive Director, a position he would continue to hold until his official retirement in 2018; and

WHEREAS, The DASNY project design and \$9.3M in financing was approved in 1998; simultaneously, he led a campaign for Capital and Endowment which raised \$2.5M; upon its completion in 2000, the remarkable renovations constituted a sea change in the campus environment providing necessary safety and security improvements to classrooms, administrative and dormitory spaces; and

WHEREAS, In 2004, LaSalle School recognized its 150th anniversary. Under William Wolff's leadership this included many events and celebrations, reopening of the renovated buildings and a successful fundraising effort exceeding \$300,000; and

WHEREAS, In 2004, William Wolff was elected as President of the 853 Schools Coalition, a post he would continue in until 2018; under his leadership, these schools, serving the neediest of children, would achieve more secure state funding, would increase the professionalism of their staffs and would successfully meet the challenges of state oversight and transformation of the funding for medical services and the New York State Justice Center; in 2005, he was elected as a Director of the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies, a position he would also hold until 2018; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, William Wolff recognized the need to invest in staff development and training in the developing science and study of adverse childhood traumatic experiences and brain science; this leadership has included Annual Capital District ACES Symposium, each year's attendance breaking previous records, and providing great benefit to policy makers, practitioners and others who serve troubled youth; and

WHEREAS, Early on, his ability to create partnerships resulted in an alliance with the nationally renowned State University of Albany School of Social Work which has facilitated this scientific study; in 2014, William Wolff again led another successful capital campaign; and

WHEREAS, When the "Change in Mind: Applying Neurosciences to Revitalize Communities" initiative was created, William Wolff guided LaSalle School to be named as one of 10 sites across the United States chosen by an independent selection committee through a competitive process; then in 2015, he was named the co-Principal of the Mobilizing Action for Resilient Communities representing a large cohort of Capital District Human Services Agencies in this national initiative; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, he guided \$4M in improvements to dormitories, dining rooms and the dedication of the renovated George Hanner Center for Excellence and Lasallian Mission; and

WHEREAS, At the time of his retirement the LaSalle Foundation has accrued assets of over \$4M to support the mission of LaSalle School, not possible without his leadership, support and vision; and

WHEREAS, LaSalle School now holds licenses to treat the most challenging children including at the Counseling Center at LaSalle serving both boys and girls; the LaSalle JRFC in partnership with two other local agencies, services boys and girls suffering from mental health and additional issues, licenses that few other agencies have attained; this ability to take risks for the healthy transformation of boys under his care has been a hallmark of his leadership; and

WHEREAS, William Wolff has sustained high quality relationships with the LaSalle School high performing Board of Trustees; has served in various capacities to assist the De LaSalle Christian Brothers with the endowing management of their schools and programs, sustaining the commitment of LaSalle School to the values and mission of the Brothers; guided four successful re-accreditations by the Council on Accreditation; named the 2007 Distinguished Lasallian Educator, both for the New York District and for the National Award; named an Affiliate Brother of the Christian AFSC in 2014; became a published author in national publications focused on child welfare; and served as a past Director and Secretary of the Albany, N.Y. Police Athletic League and past officer of the Chatham, New York Board of Education and its foundation; and

WHEREAS, William Wolff rendered faithful, conscientious and valuable service to LaSalle School and the 853 Schools Coalition, earning the admiration, esteem and affection of his colleagues; and

WHEREAS, In his capacity as both Executive Director and Chairman, William Wolff served with loyalty, honor and distinction, and was governed by a keen sense of duty and always showed a unique grasp of human problems in his official acts; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of the great State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor William Wolff upon the occasion of his retirement after many years of distinguished service as Executive Director, LaSalle School, Albany, New York, and Chairman of the 853 Schools Coalition, and to wish him well in all his future endeavors; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to William Wolff.