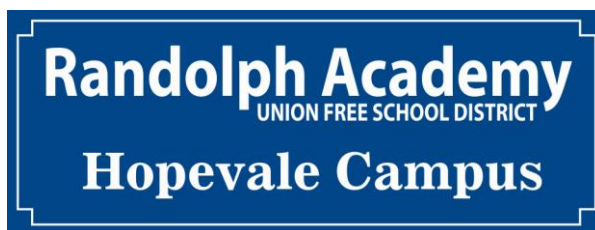


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 21, 2011



Contact:
Lori DeCarlo
Superintendent Randolph Academy
(o) 716.358.6866
(c) 716.939.0119

RANDOLPH ACADEMY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND HOPEVALE SCHOOL DISTRICT COMBINE OPERATIONS

Joint programming achieves \$1.1 million in savings through combined operations

Hamburg, New York – Hamburg, New York – New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo signed legislation on July 20th, 2011 that joins the operations of the Randolph Academy Union Free School District and Hopevale School District in Hamburg. As a result of the transition, 50 positions at Hopevale will be saved. In addition, the expanded district achieves \$1.1 million in savings through combined business operations, efficient use of shared staff positions and general restructuring.

The law expands the borders of the Randolph Academy Union Free School District to include the Hopevale school program. Randolph Academy Hopevale Campus will operate as one of two campuses, providing specialized educational services for to up to 100 students at each site. The Randolph Academy's main campus in Cattaraugus County educates students from Randolph Children's Home and day students from the Southern Tier. The Hopevale Campus will continue to educate day students from the Buffalo metropolitan area.

Assemblyman Robin Schimminger (D-C-I-Kenmore) sponsored the legislation with Assembly co-sponsors Joe Giglio (R-I-C-Gowanda), Kevin Smardz (R-I-Hamburg), Mark Schroeder (D-Buffalo), and former assembly member Sam Hoyt. Senator John Flanagan (R-Long Island) who is chairman of the Senate Education Committee sponsored the companion bill in the Senate. The legislation also was supported by the State Education Department.

"The services at Hopevale School help children with special needs from across Erie County obtain the attention and services needed to gain necessary life skills, as well as a full academic experience. So when it was brought to my attention that the very existence of the Hopevale Day Program was in jeopardy, I knew that we in the State Legislature had to take fast action," said Assemblyman Schimminger. "By allowing Randolph Academy Union Free School District to expand its borders to include the Hopevale program, we not only continue to provide the essential services to meet the unique needs of these children, but on a state level we also save local jobs and the state more than \$1 million. For me, this was a no-brainer, and I am very pleased that the Legislature speedily and unanimously embraced this legislation and that Governor Cuomo has given his approval."

The future of the Hopevale School and the educational placement of 80 day students were threatened by the December closing of Hopevale Inc. which provided residential treatment, foster care, and family programming. Without a residential program, the Hopevale Union Free School District could not continue to exist permanently on its own.

With the full support of the New York State Education Department and the best interests of the enrolled day students in mind, Hopevale UFSD was allowed to complete the school year.

-more-

2/2/2/2

Concurrently, the administration and boards of both schools began the lengthy and complicated process of pursuing legislative action to preserve the Hopevale School.

"This type of transition between two Special Act School Districts has never been attempted. It required groundbreaking legislation and visionary action at all levels of State government," said Randolph Academy Superintendent Lori DeCarlo and chief school officer of the newly expanded district. "We're extremely grateful for the support we received and inspired by the confidence placed in our schools."

"We're especially pleased for our day students that they have an opportunity to continue on their pathway to completing their education," said Cynthia Stachowski, superintendent of the former Hopevale School and the assistant superintendent of the new district, managing the Hopevale Campus. "Our program can be the difference many of these students need to achieve success. We're also looking forward to becoming a new resource for students returning to the Buffalo area from outside placements."

The legislation also authorizes Randolph Academy to purchase some or all of the Hopevale campus, which is currently owned by Hopevale Inc. Plans are underway for a comprehensive re-use of the entire campus. Randolph Academy has engaged in talks with partners from related service industries who have interest in leasing administrative office space and the dormitories.

"This legislation ensures there is a brighter tomorrow for the students and faculty at the Hopevale Union Free School District. By joining the operations of the Randolph Academy Union Free School District with that of Hopevale, we are making certain that our students continue to receive much relied upon specialized educational services, while also maintaining the 50 vital faculty positions currently filled at Hopevale," Assemblyman Smardz said. "That this measure is also cost efficient to the state is an encouraging sign that despite any current fiscal challenges we may face, action can and will be taken to protect our students. At the end of the day, our top priority should always be the well-being of our children and I could not be happier with the end result."

"I'm thrilled to be a part of a brand new experience for two of New York's best special act schools," Assemblyman Giglio said. "Getting to this point took a tremendous amount of research, forethought, preparation and dedication by many people. This new partnership between Randolph Academy and Hopevale School will be a model for others across the State and Country to use when seeking to provide the best education possible for the many special needs children that must be served. I was happy to co-sponsor this legislation and I am just as happy to have it signed into law by the Governor."

"This legislation was important to the Senate because it was important to the children with special needs who this school serves," stated Senator Flanagan. "While this expansion will help protect local jobs and save the state money, the Assembly, the Senate and Governor Cuomo have acted because it is the right thing to do for these students and their families and that should always be the ultimate educational goal in our state."

"As a licensed occupational therapist, I understand how important it is that we protect and support our children with special needs," Senator Kennedy said. "By securing approval of this legislation, we have ensured that Western New York children will continue to receive the high-quality education they deserve while helping to save about 50 jobs with no fiscal impact on the state. I thank my colleagues in state government for their advocacy on behalf of students with special needs, as well as the Randolph Academy and Hopevale for their commitment to our children."

-more-

3/3/3/3

"This is a great day for both Hopevale School District and Randolph Academy Union Free School District, which will embark on a new future together providing students with the top-notch services that they deserve," Assemblyman Schroeder said. "Not only will this partnership save taxpayer dollars, but it will also save dozens of jobs from being eliminated. This is truly a win-win situation, and I am honored to be a co-sponsor of this legislation."

"Hopevale UFSD provides very specialized services for students with very unique educational needs," said Senator Patrick M. Gallivan. "For many high-need and at-risk youths, Hopevale provides their only access to specialized education and necessary life skills. I thank Assemblyman Schimminger and Senator Flanagan for thinking outside the box and finding an innovative solution that will save tax dollars, protect Western New York jobs, and most importantly, keeps Hopevale's doors open for students."

Hopevale's summer program began July 11, and the regular school year begins in September. Those who are interested in acquiring Randolph Academy's educational services for day students in the Buffalo area may contact Cynthia Stachowski at 716.648.1930. Referral information for Southern Tier students is available by calling Susan Vanderzyden at the Randolph Academy main campus, 716.358.6866.

###

Randolph Academy Union Free School District:

Randolph Academy Union Free School District, with campuses in Erie and Cattaraugus counties, is a public school district that was created in 1985 through a special act of the New York State legislature to provide educational services to students with emotional and behavioral needs.