MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Erie County Department of Social Services
Re: Authorization for Say Yes Buffalo Virtual Learning Support Center Grant
Date: January 15, 2021

SUMMARY
Say Yes Buffalo was selected for continued grant support on the strength of the existing Virtual Learning Support Center program and the high needs status of Buffalo Public School students. This resolution requests authorization to grant additional funds for the continuation of that critical program in Buffalo Public Schools.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS
The resolution requests authorization to enter into an agreement with Say Yes Buffalo for a total not to exceed amount of $600,000, under the conditions that pledged BPS funding be expended prior to Erie County funds and all Erie County funds be used prior to March 5th. Funds come from Fund 252, Funds Center 120, Account 525095 Virtual Learning Assistance.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION
Buffalo Public Schools has indicated that there is still a need for their students to be supported by VLSCs, as their district will continue to be 100% remote learning until February 1, 2021 and predominantly remote for the majority of students for many weeks thereafter. At that time, BPS projects that the highest needs students (ESL, Special Education, Pre-K-2nd Grade, Digital Divide) will begin the transition back to in-person learning. Buffalo Public Schools has also pledged $1 million dollars in continued support for the VLSCs program administered by Say Yes Buffalo for BPS students ages 5-12.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
A Request-for-Proposal for Virtual Learning Support Centers was issued in September 2020. Say Yes Buffalo was selected for grant support at that time on the strength of their plan to utilize child care providers in the creation of their VLSC network. This resolution would ensure the continuation of that program until Buffalo Public Schools can ensure all high needs students are educated in-person.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION
Families of high needs students (ESL, Special Education, Pre-K-2nd Grade, Digital Divide), as well as other students in grades K-6 in the Buffalo Public School system will not be able to meet the virtual education expectations.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL
A contract will be issued to Say Yes Buffalo for professional services.