



Renewal Recommendation Report Academy of the City Charter School

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State University of New York
41 State Street, Suite 700
Albany, New York 12207

518-445-4250
518-320-1572 (fax)
www.newyorkcharters.org



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INTRODUCTION AND REPORT FORMAT

INTRODUCTION

This report is the primary means by which the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) transmits to the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) its findings and recommendations regarding an education corporation’s Application for Charter Renewal, and more broadly, details the merits of an education corporation’s case for renewal. The Institute has created and issued this report pursuant to the *Policies for the Renewal of Not-For-Profit Charter School Education Corporations and Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York* (the “SUNY Renewal Policies”) (revised September 4, 2013 and available at: www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Policies.pdf).

REPORT FORMAT

The Institute makes all renewal recommendations based on a school’s Application for Charter Renewal, evaluation visits conducted and information gathered during the charter term and a renewal evaluation visit conducted near the end of the current charter term. Additionally, the Institute has reviewed the strength and fiscal health of the not-for-profit education corporation with the authority to operate the school. Most importantly, the Institute analyzes the school’s record of academic performance and the extent to which it has met its academic Accountability Plan goals. This renewal recommendation report compiles the evidence below using the *State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks* (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”),¹ which specify in detail what a successful school should be able to demonstrate at the time of the renewal review. The Institute uses the four interconnected renewal questions below for framing benchmark statements to determine if a school has made an adequate case for renewal.

1. Is the school an academic success?
2. Is the school an effective, viable organization?
3. Is the school fiscally sound?
4. If the SUNY Trustees renew the education corporation’s authority to operate the school, are its plans for the school reasonable, feasible and achievable?

This report contains Appendices that provide additional statistical and organizationally related information including a largely statistical school overview, copies of any school district comments on the Application for Charter Renewal, the SUNY Fiscal Dashboard information for the school, and, if applicable, its education corporation, additional information about the education corporation and its schools, and additional evidence on student achievement of those schools.

¹ Version 5.0, May 2012, available at: www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Benchmarks.pdf.

INTRODUCTION AND REPORT FORMAT

Additional information about the SUNY renewal process and an overview of the requirements for renewal under the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the “Act”) are available on the Institute’s website at: www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/.

RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: **SHORT-TERM RENEWAL**

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Academy of the City Charter School for a period of three years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten through 5th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal, with a projected total enrollment of 420 students.

To earn an Initial Short-Term Renewal, a school must either:

- (a) have compiled a mixed or limited record of educational achievement in meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals, but have in place and in operation at the time of the renewal inspection visit (i) an academic program of sufficient strength and effectiveness, as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks,² which will likely result in the school's being able to meet or come close to meeting those goals with the additional time that renewal would permit, and (ii) a governing board and organizational structures both in the charter school and its education corporation that have demonstrated the capacity to meet the school's academic Accountability Plan goals and to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound fashion; or
- (b) have compiled an overall record of meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals but, at the time of the renewal inspection visit, has in place an educational program that, as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, is inadequate in multiple and material respects.³

REQUIRED FINDINGS

In addition to making a recommendation based on a determination of whether the school has met the SUNY Trustees' specific renewal criteria, the Institute makes the following findings required by the Act:

- the school, as described in the Application for Charter Renewal meets the requirements of the Act and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- the education corporation can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner in the next charter term; and,

² The Qualitative Education Benchmarks are a subset of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks.

³ SUNY Renewal Policies (pp. 12-13).

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- given the programs it will offer, its structure and its purpose, approving the school to operate for another three years is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act.⁴

As required by Education Law § 2851(4)(e), a school must include in its renewal application information regarding the efforts it has, and will, put in place to meet or exceed SUNY's enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners ("ELLs"), and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch ("FRPL") program. SUNY⁵ and the New York State Board of Regents (the "Board of Regents") finalized the methodology for setting targets in October 2012, and the Institute communicated specific targets for each school, where applicable, in July 2013. Since that time, new schools receive targets during their first year of operation.

Academy of the City Charter School ("Academy of the City") is not yet accountable for enrollment and retention targets⁶ but plans to use the following strategies to meet its future targets:

Students with Special Needs

- ensuring that all recruiting material indicates that the school is committed to serving students with disabilities;
- visiting local day care centers and highlighting the services that it offers for students with disabilities;
- offering a full-time special education coordinator, two full-time special education teachers and related services; and,
- utilizing the parent coordinator to maintain active and positive relationships with the New York City Department of Education's ("NYCDOE's") Division of Specialized Instruction and Student Support.

English Language Learners

- marketing and recruitment materials clearly indicating that the school has services to supports ELLs and regularly translates advertisements and materials into Spanish;
- recruitment materials regularly celebrating the diversity of the school's student body;
- utilizing the parent coordinator, who is fluent in English, Spanish and French, to visit churches and bodegas known to serve immigrant populations to actively share information about the school and services that it offers to ELLs;

⁴ See New York Education Law § 2852(2).

⁵ SUNY Trustees' Charter Schools Committee resolution dated October 2, 2012.

⁶ Enrollment and retention targets apply to all charter schools approved pursuant to any of the Institute's Request for Proposal ("RFP") processes (August 2010 – present) and to charter schools that applied for renewal after January 1, 2011. Academy of the City applied for a charter prior to the Institute's release of the first RFP.

RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

- increasing outreach to neighborhoods immediately surrounding the school;
- visiting pre-schools and community fairs and conducting parent sessions for student recruitment;
- offering robust and effective services to ELLs through full-time English-as-a-second language (“ESL”) teachers;
- holding parent workshops specifically designed to meet the needs of immigrant families; and,
- using simultaneous Spanish language interpretation at every parent community organization meeting, with headsets provided to parents who request them.

Students Eligible for FRPL Program

- developing relationships with local day care centers that serve predominantly low-income families;
- actively recruiting in Long Island City, a community near the school with a large amount of low-income housing;
- utilizing the parent coordinator to hold workshops that are especially beneficial to families who are economically disadvantaged;
- facilitating the provision of free dental care through the NYU Dental Services, free tutoring and free computers to families in need; and,
- emphasizing the school’s focus on the whole child, which may be more beneficial to students who might not ordinarily have access to arts enrichment opportunities such as programs in fine art, music and drama.

Please refer to Appendix A for more details about the school’s future targets including a comparison of how it would have performed if it currently had targets.

CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMENTS

In accordance with the Act, the Institute notified the district in which the education corporation is located regarding the Application for Charter Renewal. The full text of any written comments received appears in Appendix C, which also includes a summary of any public comments. As of the date of this report, the Institute has received no district comments in response.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Academy of the City Charter School

BACKGROUND

The SUNY Trustees approved Academy of the City's⁷ original charter on September 15, 2010. It opened its doors in the fall of 2011 initially serving 104 students in Kindergarten and 1st grade.

The mission of Academy of the City is:

The mission of Academy of the City Charter School is for students to become independent thinkers, lifelong learners, and responsible members of their communities. We are committed to an educational philosophy rooted in social justice, inquiry, experiential and collaborative learning, and supported by continual professional development and reflective practice. Through a literacy-based, integrated curriculum that encourages community and honors diversity, our students receive the education they will need to meet the academic and social challenges of the best high schools, to be prepared for our best colleges and universities, and to thrive in today's world.

The school leases a facility located at 31-29 60th Street, Woodside, Queens in Community School District ("CSD") 30. In the final year of its initial charter term, Academy of the City serves 416 students in Kindergarten through 5th grade.

Academy of the City contracts with Victory Schools Inc. (d/b/a Victory Education Partners) ("Victory") to assist in teacher development activities including weekly coaching, but Victory does not provide full management services.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While state test results are mixed and limited, the school's performance has generally been on an upward trajectory since 2013, the first year it posted state test results. Towards the end of the charter term, Academy of the City made a number of programmatic changes to increase the school's effectiveness and to support student achievement.

Throughout the charter term, the board and principal have been thoughtful and responsive about the school's deficiencies. Recognizing early on the need for additional behavioral supports, the school hired the current assistant principal in the second year of the charter term. While the school initially created this role to focus on school culture, the assistant principal is now an instructional leader, assisting the principal in teacher coaching and curriculum development. The school has continued to adjust its organizational structure, hiring a dean of school culture to replace the assistant principal in managing the school's behavior management policies, as well as additional operational staff to ensure instructional leaders spend more time in classrooms and support curriculum development. Instructional leaders have also made key transitions to

⁷ Previously named Our World Neighborhood Charter School II.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

curricular materials the school uses in response to state test scores. Leaders have made changes to both mathematics and English language arts (“ELA”) programs and are working to develop systems to increase the effectiveness of lesson creation and implementation.

The Academy of the City education corporation board of trustees (the “board”) demonstrates strong dedication to the school’s success. It has a clear understanding of the school’s needs and provides effective oversight of the program. Academy of the City is generally legally compliant and fiscally sound and has the resources to support the day-to-day operations of the school.

Based on the Institute’s review of the school’s performance as posted over the charter term, a review of the Application for Charter Renewal submitted by the school, a review of academic, organizational, governance and financial documentation as well as a visit to the school, the Institute finds the program in place at the time of the renewal review of sufficient strength and effectiveness such that the school is likely to meet or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals with the additional time renewal would permit. Therefore, the Institute recommends the SUNY Trustees grant Academy of the City a Short-Term Renewal for a period of three years.

NOTEWORTHY

During 2014-15, Academy of the City posted strong growth scores for ELLs and students with disabilities. Both subgroups exceeded the state’s median growth percentile, which signals that the school is increasing these students’ performance above peers who scored at the same level previously. In ELA, the mean growth percentile for ELLs exceeded the state median by 25 percentile points.

IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

With an improved educational program in place at the end of the initial charter term, Academy of the City is becoming an academic success. The school has posted mixed progress toward meeting its key Accountability Plan goals in ELA and mathematics and has responded with programmatic changes designed to boost student achievement. As assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, the academic program in place at the time of the renewal review was of sufficient strength and effectiveness that it is likely to improve student learning and result in Academy of the City being able to meet or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals with the additional time that renewal would permit.

At the beginning of the Accountability Period,⁸ the school developed and adopted an Accountability Plan that set academic goals in the key subjects of ELA and mathematics. For each goal in the Accountability Plan, specific outcome measures define the level of performance necessary to meet that goal. The Institute examines results for five required Accountability Plan measures to determine ELA and mathematics goal attainment. Because the Act requires charters be held “accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results”⁹ and states the educational programs at a charter school must “meet or exceed the student performance standards adopted by the board of regents”¹⁰ for other public schools, SUNY’s required accountability measures rest on performance as measured by state wide assessments. Historically, SUNY’s required measures include measures that present schools’:

- absolute performance, i.e., what percentage of students score at a certain proficiency on state exams?;
- comparative performance, i.e., how did the school do as compared to schools in the district and schools that serve similar populations of economically disadvantaged students?; and,
- growth performance, i.e., how much did the school grow student performance as compared to the growth of similarly situated students?

Every SUNY authorized charter school has the opportunity to propose additional measures of success when crafting its Accountability Plan. Academy of the City did not propose or include any additional measures of success in the Accountability Plan it adopted.

The Institute analyzes every measure included in the school’s Accountability Plan to determine its level of academic success, including the extent to which the school has established and maintained a record of high performance and the extent to which the school has established progress toward meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals, throughout the initial charter term. Since 2009, the Institute has examined but consistently de-emphasized the two absolute measures under each goal in elementary and middle schools’ Accountability Plans because of changes to the state’s assessment system. The analysis of elementary and middle school performance continues to focus primarily on

⁸ Because the SUNY Trustees make a renewal decision before student achievement results for the final year of a charter term become available, the Accountability Period ends with the school year prior to the final year of the charter term. For a school in an initial charter term, the Accountability Period covers the first four years the school provides instruction to students.

⁹ Education Law § 2850(2)(f).

¹⁰ Education Law § 2854(1)(d).

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the two comparative measures and the growth measure while also considering the two required absolute measures and any additional evidence the school presents using additional measures identified in its Accountability Plan. The Institute identifies the required measures (absolute proficiency, absolute Annual Measurable Objective attainment,¹¹ comparison to local district, comparison to demographically similar schools, and student growth) in the Performance Summaries appearing in Appendix B.

The Accountability Plan also includes science and No Child Left Behind Act (“NCLB”) goals. Please note that for schools located in New York City, the Institute uses the CSD as the local school district.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1A:

Has the school met or come close to meeting its Academic Accountability Plan Goals?

For schools in their first charter term, the SUNY Renewal Policies indicate the Institute may consider the progress a school has posted toward its academic Accountability Plan Goals. The Institute analyzes all measures under the school’s ELA and mathematics goals while emphasizing the school’s comparative performance and growth to determine goal attainment. The Institute calculates a comparative effect size to measure the performance of Academy of the City relative to all public schools statewide that serve the same grade levels and that enroll students who are similarly economically disadvantaged. It is important to note that this measure is a comparison measure and therefore any changes in New York’s assessment system do not compromise its validity or reliability. Further, the school’s performance on the measure is not relative to the test, but relative to the strength of Academy of the City’s demonstrated student learning compared to other schools’ demonstrated student learning.

The Institute uses the state’s mean growth percentiles as a measure of Academy of the City’s comparative year-to-year growth in student performance on the state’s ELA and mathematics exams. The measure compares a school’s growth in assessment scores to the growth in assessment scores of the subset of students throughout the state who performed identically on previous years’ assessments. According to this measure, median growth statewide is at the 50th percentile. To signal the school’s ability to help students make one year’s worth of growth in one year’s time, the expected percentile performance is 50. To signal a school is increasing students’ performance above the peers of its students (in terms of students statewide who scored previously at the same level), the school must post a percentile performance that exceeds 50. A percentile performance below 50 indicates that Academy of the City students are losing ground relative to their peers who scored similarly during prior years.

Academy of the City did not meet its ELA goal during its initial charter term. During 2012-13, the school underperformed the district by 5 percentage points. The following year, the school’s absolute performance declined slightly while the district’s was consistent widening the gap slightly between the school and the district. Although Academy of the City’s comparative effect size in ELA fell below SUNY’s standard, the school showed improvement on this measure in 2014-15 when the school

¹⁰ The state did not calculate an AMO for 2012-13. As such, the Institute will only report on the 2013-14 and 2014-15 results.

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performed higher than expected to a small degree in comparison to schools enrolling similar proportions of economically disadvantaged students. The school also posted its first data point for comparative growth in ELA during 2014-15 falling just two percentile points short of the state median of 50. Notably, every tested student receiving special education services and nearly every tested ELL during 2014-15 posted performance exceeding the median growth score statewide.

Academy of the City made progress toward meeting its mathematics goal during its initial charter term. After not meeting the goal during 2013-14, the school exceeded its targets on every required measure under the mathematics goal during 2014-15 to meet the goal. The school's absolute performance improved over the two years by 14 percentage points, enough for the school to exceed the comparatively lofty performance of the district during 2014-15. Notably, the school's mathematics proficiency rate exceeded that of the state by 10 percentage points. The Institute's comparative performance analysis reveals that, after performing lower than expected during 2013-14, Academy of the City performed higher than expected to a large degree during 2014-15 when it posted an effect size greater than one standard deviation above the mean. The school's mean growth percentile of 55 in mathematics corroborates this strong year over year improvement.

In science, Academy of the City posted a strong first data point with 89 percent of 4th graders scoring at or above proficiency on the state's 4th grade science exam. The school also exceeded the proficiency rate of 4th graders in CSD 30.

		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Enrollment (N) Receiving Mandated Academic Services		(25)	(27)	(42)
	Tested on State Exams (N)	N/A	(5)	(14)
Results	School Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	N/A	s ¹²	7.1
	Percent Proficient Statewide	5.0	5.2	5.8

¹² In order to comply with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act regulations on reporting education outcome data, the Institute does not report assessment results for groups containing five or fewer students.

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	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
ELL Enrollment (N)	(41)	(53)	(50)
Results			
Tested on NYSESLAT ¹³ Exam (N)	(33)	(54)	(48)
School Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress ¹⁴ on NYSESLAT	6.1	9.3	18.8

¹³ New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, a standardized state exam.

¹⁴ Defined as moving up at least one level of proficiency. As of 2014-15, student scores can fall into five categories/proficiency levels: Entering (formerly Beginning); Emerging (formerly Low Intermediate); Transitioning (formerly Intermediate); Expanding (formerly Advanced); and, Commanding (formerly Proficient).

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DESCRIPTION

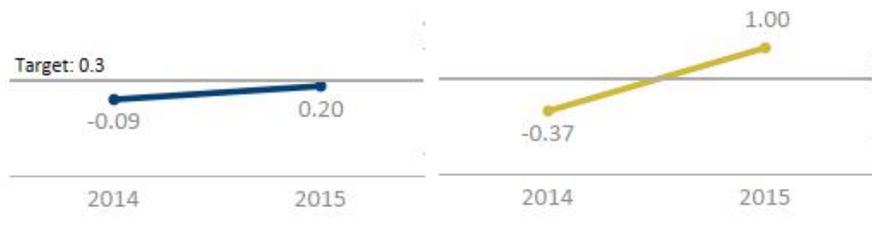
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

Comparative Measure: District Comparison. Each year, the percentage of students at Academy of the City in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in **ELA** and **mathematics** will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in **CSD 30**.



Comparative Measure: Effect Size. Each year, Academy of the City will exceed its predicted level of performance by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above in **ELA** and **mathematics** according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.



Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile. Each year, Academy of the City's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile in **ELA** and **mathematics**.



SCIENCE

Science: Comparative Measure. Each year, the percentage of students at the school in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in **science** will exceed that of students in the same tested grades in the district.



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The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, grounded in the body of research from the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University,¹⁵ describe the elements in place at schools that are highly effective at providing students from low-income backgrounds the instruction, content, knowledge and skills necessary to produce strong academic performance. The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks describe the elements an effective school must have in place at the time of renewal.¹⁶

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1B:

Does the school have an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning?

The school is beginning to systematize its use of assessment results to improve instructional effectiveness.

- The school administers the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (“NWEA MAP”) assessment annually and the Fountas and Pinnell (“F & P”) assessment thrice yearly. Teachers also administer *GO Math!* and writing assessments. In addition, teachers utilize a variety of more formative assessments such as daily exit tickets, weekly and unit assessments to gauge student mastery of objectives.
- The school is beginning to norm its process for assessment grading. Currently, teachers score test results with their grade-level colleagues. Also, Victory provides rubrics for grading written assignments, and teachers use these rubrics to help them norm their grading of written work. Strong and sustained continuation of these efforts will be critical to the school’s success in a future charter term.
- Teachers have sufficient access to assessment data. For regular unit assessments, an external coach and assistant principal help teachers create classroom spreadsheets with data results. Teachers also report having access to state test and NWEA MAP assessment results, but have not yet established a process to deeply analyze these data sources.
- Teachers report using data results to make instructional adjustments in classrooms. For example, teachers use assessment results to regroup students in mathematics and reading, to guide their re-teaching efforts, to design centers in both mathematics and ELA and to determine which students need intervention. Teachers discuss data results with their grade-level teams, and the school is developing school-wide expectations for how to approach that data.
- School leaders use data results to adjust the school’s program. For example, in response to state test results, the school recently switched their commercial mathematics program from TERC to *Go Math!*, and have purchased the Journeys program to serve as the base of the school’s ELA curriculum. Thoughtful about the need to increase student performance, leaders also increased the amount of daily instructional time the school allots for ELA and mathematics.

¹⁵ An extensive body of research identifying and confirming the correlates of effective schools exists dating back four decades. Selected sources include: www.mes.org/correlates.html;

http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/fryer/files/dobbie_fryer_revision_final.pdf; and, gao.gov/assets/80/77488.pdf.

¹⁶ Additional details regarding the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, including greater specificity as to what the Institute looks for at each school that may demonstrate attainment of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, is available at: www.newyorkcharters.org/suny-renewal-benchmarks/.

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- The school distributes two formal report cards a year to communicate student progress to parents and guardians. In addition, teachers regularly communicate student growth using informal methods such as phone calls, email, weekly newsletters and notes.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1C:

Does the school's curriculum support teachers in their instructional planning?

Academy of the City is continuing to develop a curriculum to support teachers in their instructional planning. As a result of performance on state assessments, the school has recently made large changes in their ELA and mathematics curricula and is currently in the process of updating its curriculum framework. The proposed short-term renewal provides the school the opportunity to put in place a strong, well implemented version of this curriculum.

- While the school has scope and sequence and unit plan documents for each grade and each subject, these plans do not yet fully incorporate the newly purchased ELA and mathematics curriculum programs. An external coach has created a scope and sequence document for the mathematics program, and is in the process of designing the mathematics units to support this scope and sequence. The school has recently begun implementing the Journeys program for ELA, and the assistant principal was in the process of designing weekly overviews to help teachers plan daily lesson plans for ELA at the time of the renewal visit.
- Teachers use unit plans and weekly overviews to create daily lessons. Teachers plan and submit a week of lesson plans to instructional leaders on Sunday for the upcoming week. Although instructional leaders review and provide feedback on plans, lesson plans observed during the visit generally lacked strong pre-planned lines of questioning and activities that aim to promote higher-order thinking skills amongst students.
- The school is systematic about assessing curriculum, conducting a formal process to review the curriculum annually at an end-of-year professional development session. In addition, teachers regularly reflect on the curriculum at grade-level meetings throughout the year. Understanding the curriculum is very new, Instructional leaders and the external coach are continually in the process of reviewing curricular materials.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1D:

Is high quality instruction evident throughout the school?

Although pockets of strong instruction exist, most Academy of the City classrooms evidence instruction that is adequate and, with continued significant focus in this area, should improve in order for the school to succeed in a future charter term. Recently, improved coaching routines contributed to reducing significantly disruptive student behaviors such that teachers are able to deliver instruction more effectively. Despite this, most lessons lack rigor. As shown in the chart below, during the renewal visit, Institute team members conducted 30 classroom observations following a defined protocol used in all renewal visits.

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CLASSROOM OBSERVATION: NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS

		GRADE						Total
		K	1	2	3	4	5	
CONTENT AREA	ELA		1	2	4	5	1	13
	Math	1	1	1	2	2	4	11
	Writing	1		1				2
	Science					1		1
	Soc Stu			1		1		2
	Specials					1		1
	Total	2	2	5	6	10	5	30

- Teachers deliver purposeful lessons that align to the school’s curriculum (21 out of 30 classrooms observed). Most lesson objectives are clear, as in one math lesson where the teacher reinforced the lesson’s objective during whole group portions of the lesson, in addition to posting it prominently on the whiteboard. However, despite generally clear objectives, lesson activities in some classrooms do not always align to objectives. For instance, in one ELA class, the lesson objective indicated that students would be able to decode words with common prefixes and suffixes. However, the vocabulary words provided included no prefixes or suffixes.
- A minority of teachers use effective checks for understanding during lessons (12 out of 30 classrooms observed). Instruction throughout the school is generally teacher-centered, with most teachers using cursory checks that do not provide teachers with enough information to make appropriate adjustments to instruction based on student understanding. For example, one teacher asked the class to use a hand signal to indicate if they agreed with a student’s response to a question. Although not all students agreed, the teacher did not question or explore the viewpoints of the dissenters. Despite ineffective checks in most classrooms, some teachers do use exit tickets to gauge students’ mastery of concepts at the end of a lesson.
- Few teachers provide opportunities in their lessons to challenge students to develop higher order thinking skills (9 out of 30 classrooms observed). In notable exceptions, some ELA teachers require students to make connections between reading passages and their personal lives and to make predictions based off of these connections. In many cases, the level of rigor with regard to assignments and expectations around student work is low, with teachers often not requiring students to think through misconceptions, correcting students’ answers before they have the opportunity to figure out answers themselves.
- Most teachers establish and maintain a classroom environment focused on academic achievement (22 out of 30 classrooms observed). The school uses the responsive classroom approach to establishing culture and management, although it is inconsistently applied across classrooms. Despite this, most students fully engage in independent and

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group activities. Teachers generally promote urgency for learning and use timers and countdown techniques to ensure appropriate lesson pacing.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1E:

Does the school have strong instructional leadership?

Academy of the City's instructional leadership is sufficient to support the development of teachers. Over the course of the charter term, the school has made a number of substantive adjustments to the academic program and the frequency of teacher oversight and coaching, resulting in improvements to instruction in classrooms and increasing academic outcomes, specifically with regard to student performance on mathematics state assessments.

- The leadership team, consisting of a principal and assistant principal, has made sufficient adjustments to teacher coaching and feedback loops to fill identified gaps in the education program. Despite adjustments in the amount of oversight and feedback leaders provide to the whole staff, they continue to develop their abilities to prioritize and address the highest needs of their most struggling teachers.
- With assistance from an external coach, leaders conduct weekly observations of teachers and coordinate their observations during informal check-ins and weekly leadership meetings to identify teacher needs. Despite increased frequency of observations, teachers still implement quality lessons inconsistently across classrooms. As teachers have some autonomy in their instructional planning and range in level of instructional capability, leaders are continuing to tailor coaching strategies and feedback content to meet teacher needs, particularly with regard to weaker teachers.
- Academy of the City establishes an environment of high expectations for teachers but has yet to see consistently strong instruction across all classrooms. Leaders set and communicate clear academic and behavioral goals, such as improving student engagement and incorporating writing across subjects. Communication notwithstanding, leaders must continue to develop the depth of coaching feedback to increase teachers' abilities in order to achieve these goals.
- The school embeds sufficient daily time for teachers to plan collaboratively. Grade levels also meet for more extended periods bi-weekly during staff meetings and during monthly professional development days. Instructional leaders, along with the external coach, push-in to meetings, attempting to provide planning support or professional development tailored to specific grade-level and teacher needs. However, observations of grade team meetings during the renewal visit showed that, despite attendance, leaders continue to develop their ability to support teachers in using student data to guide instructional planning.
- Instructional leaders are thoughtful about adjustments to the school's professional development program, implementing several changes over the charter term. Although Academy of the City continues to have only one week of pre-service training, the school has sufficient monthly professional development days centered on identified school-wide priorities including student engagement, higher-order questioning and student writing. The school also offers truncated professional development bi-weekly during staff meetings.

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- Professional development interrelates with classroom practice. Leaders use teacher surveys, classroom observations, student data and recommendations from the outside coach to determine school-wide priorities and professional development activities, ensuring sessions are relevant to teacher needs. For example, leaders identified higher-order questioning as an area of weakness for teachers and presented a professional development session on how to incorporate high levels of Blooms Taxonomy, a classification system used to distinguish different levels of human cognition (i.e., thinking and learning), into checks for understanding. Leaders expect teachers to incorporate higher-order questions into lesson plans and gauge teacher’s abilities to check students understanding during informal observations.
- Academy of the City has a set protocol to evaluate teachers three times a year. The process, consisting of two short evaluations and one more comprehensive observation with a follow-up narrative, has clear criteria, of which teachers are aware. As has been the case throughout the charter term, student data does not factor into teacher evaluations due to teacher collective bargaining agreement requirements.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1F:

Does the school meet the educational needs of at-risk students?

The school meets the educational needs of at-risk students as demonstrated by high rates of growth toward proficiency on the state’s ELA and mathematics assessments.

- Academy of the City uses its battery of assessments to accurately and reliably identify students struggling academically. At the beginning of the school year, the director of student support, the assistant principal and the principal arrange students scoring below proficiency on the state’s assessments in small groups to receive extra supports. These data also determine the frequency and intensity of the additional support that teachers provide. Throughout the school year, teachers assist students in the classroom by supplementing lesson materials with visual cues or working with small groups of students. If students continue to struggle, teachers refer them to the child study team that develops intervention strategies to support struggling learners. The school administers the home language survey and, when necessary, the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (“NYSITELL”) to identify new entrants who are ELLs.
- The school’s intervention for struggling students begins in the classroom where teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students who require a low level of academic intervention. Students rotate through activity centers in ELA and mathematics classes tailored to address specific skill deficiencies. During centers, teachers work with small groups of students to develop specific skills and re-teach content. Teachers pull students with more significant learning needs out of the classroom for additional small group instruction. Students who continue to struggle receive more frequent support in an even smaller setting. While this structure is sufficient to meet the needs of struggling students, teachers have a great deal of autonomy about how they implement differentiated lessons, potentially impacting the consistency of implementation across classrooms.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- Special education teachers conference with general education teachers during planning time and at grade level team meetings to monitor the progress of students with disabilities toward meeting academic goals. The special education coordinator improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the school's monitoring protocols by requiring teachers to reference specific standards when identifying areas where students need support. Special education and ELL teachers disaggregate ELL and students with disabilities data from that of the general population to analyze these students' achievement. Student growth scores on state tests provide evidence that these practices are effective.
- Special education teachers provide general education teachers with data about their students' progress toward achieving academic goals. ELL teachers also provide general education teachers with updates on their students' progress toward meeting language acquisition goals. General education teachers, special education teachers and ELL teachers meet during common planning times to discuss student progress towards meeting goals and to develop strategies to support students' goal attainment. Teachers often directly examine student work products and, when identifying areas where students struggle, are sure to link the skill deficiency explicitly to a standard to efficiently develop a support strategy.
- The special education coordinator conducted a professional development session at the start of the school year wherein she set expectations for teachers' monitoring the academic success and behavioral achievements of at-risk students. The content of the session also included specific strategies for general education teachers to use to support the learning of at-risk students. Teachers report that the strategies they discussed are effective for maintaining student engagement and increasing student achievement.

IS THE SCHOOL AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

Academy of the City is an effective and viable organization that faithfully implements its mission and key design elements and supports the delivery of the educational program. The Academy of the City board carries out its oversight responsibilities with a focus on student achievement.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2A:

Is the school faithful to its mission and does it implement the key design elements included in its charter?

Academy of the City is faithful to its mission and key design elements. These are found in the School Background section at the beginning of this report and identified in Appendix A, respectively. The school has made improvements in its implementation of the educational program and, with these changes, is likely to be able to be the academic success promised at the time the SUNY Trustees granted the charter.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2B:

Are parents/guardians and students satisfied with the school?

To report on parent satisfaction with the school's program, the Institute used survey data as well as data gathered from a focus group of parents representing a cross section of Academy of the City students.

Parent Survey Data. Fifty-six percent of Academy of the City parents responded to NYCDOE's 2014-2015 NYC School Survey. While the response rate is low, participating parent responses indicate satisfaction with the school. However, given the response rate, the results may not be representative of the school community.

Parent Focus Group. The Institute asks all schools facing renewal to convene a representative set of parents for a focus group discussion. A representative set includes parents of students in attendance at the school for multiple years, parents new to the school, parents of students receiving regular education services, parents of students with special needs and parents of ELLs. The seven parents in attendance at the focus group expressed strong satisfaction with the school. Parents believe the school does a great job keeping them up-to-date on their child's learning and achievement and feel the school responds to their child's needs appropriately. Specifically, several parents whose children receive academic services were very satisfied with the supports teachers provide their students. Parents note that the school environment is joyful, as exemplified through the attention the school pays to displaying student academic work and art. Parents unanimously agreed that enrolling their student at the school was a good decision.

Persistence in Enrollment. An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2014-15, 91 percent of Academy of the City's students returned from the previous year. Student persistence data from previous years of the charter term is available in Appendix A. The Institute derived the statistical information on persistence in enrollment from its database. No comparative data from NYCDOE or the New York State Education Department ("NYSED") is

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

available to the Institute to provide either district wide or CSD context. As such, the information presented is for information purposes but does not allow for comparative analysis.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2C:

Does the school's organization work effectively to deliver the educational program?

Academy of the City's organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program.

- Academy of the City has an administrative structure with staff, operational systems, policies and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program. Identifying the need for the principal and assistant principal to devote more time to teacher development, the director of operations now has increased responsibilities including building maintenance and direct supervision of the operational staff, formerly handled by the principal. Also, to allow instructional leaders sufficient time to observe classrooms, the school now employs a dean of school culture to focus on student discipline.
- In contrast to previous years, the school has an organizational structure that is sufficient in establishing distinct lines of accountability at the school. The principal and assistant principal are responsible for supervising and evaluating specific grade-levels, and teachers are clear on to whom to report for what.
- As in past years, Academy of the City uses responsive classroom techniques to promote a positive school culture. Classrooms have similar rules based on responsive classroom tenets and the school uses a tiered system to determine which infractions receive which consequences. Despite a school-wide focus on responsive classroom techniques, the visit team did not observe consistent application of these techniques across classrooms.
- Leaders are now deliberate in their attempts to retain high quality staff. In addition to increasing supports in classrooms, Academy of the City is designing teacher leadership opportunities to create professional growth opportunities within the school in an effort to retain talent.
- In contrast to previous years, the school has increased funds to allocate sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals. Specifically, the school allocated \$35,000 to purchasing new books and materials to improve the school's library.
- Academy of the City also received a grant from Lowe's Hardware to create a school garden it will use to support the implementation of certain science units. School staff, along with parent volunteers, put together four raised planter beds, along with rain collection and compost containers that students will use during science instruction.
- Academy of the City maintains adequate enrollment. The school currently enrolls 405 students and reports a waitlist of 883 students.
- The school has procedures in place to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets. Leaders are thoughtful about recruiting and retaining students considered at-risk of academic failure and continue to establish partnerships with pre-schools in Queens to share information about Academy of the City with families. The school distributes brochures in several languages and the parent coordinator organizes recruitment efforts with community groups and housing projects in the area.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

- Academy of the City monitors and evaluates its programs and makes changes when necessary. The school continues to use state assessment data to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum. For example, the school has recently transitioned all grade-levels to using the *GoMath!* program after determining it was more effective than the previous commercial program in increasing student performance on state tests.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2D:

Does the school board work effectively to achieve the school's Accountability Plan goals?

Academy of the City's board is responsive to the school's needs and works diligently to support the school in achieving its Accountability Plan goals.

- The board possesses sufficient skills to oversee the day-to-day operations of the school including education, finance, legal and real estate experience. The board has experienced little turnover since its inception, allowing it to develop and refine structures and procedures to govern the school. For example, the board operates with several standing committees, including an education committee, development committee and finance and operations committee, which meet regularly and provide effective supervision to specific segments of the school's program.
- The board is fully aware of and involved in the development of Academy of the City's program. Board members receive sufficient information, including assessment data, to keep them up-to-date on the academic achievement of the school and should solidify the school's focus on student outcomes in a future charter term. The board and specific sub-committees also receive fiscal and operations information from the school leader. This information is more than adequate for the board to provide effective oversight of the school.
- The board is reflective about the school's academic performance and the progress it must make towards achieving the totality of its Accountability Plan goals. The board no longer plans to increase the school's grade span to offer middle school grades in the next charter term. Instead, it is prioritizing refining the implementation of the school's recent curriculum changes. The board is finalizing a long-term plan involving leaders, teachers and parents focusing on how the school should consider growth and program development in the future.
- The board conducts annual evaluations of the school leader, using a rubric that aligns to key benchmarks the board stipulates. The board indicates setting goals with the principal to increase his ability to delegate non-essential tasks and to provide explicit feedback to staff throughout the charter term. The board is in the process of adjusting the rubric to further increase its own effectiveness in supporting and evaluating the principal. The board also participates in regular retreats to develop its ability to oversee the school's program and to strategize around short and long-range goals.
- The board effectively communicates with the school community and includes two parents as non-voting members of the board to stay informed about parent and student concerns.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2E:

Does the board implement, maintain and abide by appropriate policies, systems and processes?

The education corporation board materially and substantially implements, maintains and abides by adequate and appropriate policies, systems and processes and procedures to ensure the effective governance and oversight of the school. The board demonstrates a clear understanding of its role in holding the school leadership accountable for both academic results and fiscal soundness.

- The education corporation board has a healthy membership of different skill sets and recently added parents as ex-officio members.
- The board has a functioning committee structure.
- The board receives, at the general meeting and at the committee level, specific and extensive reports on each program including fiscal and academic performance.
- The board has been thoughtful in strategic planning relying heavily of feedback received from the Institute throughout the charter term.
- The board has materially complied with the terms of its by-laws and code of ethics.
- The board performs an annual self evaluation.
- The board has a well functioning finance and operations committee that performs extensive analysis to target resources allowing a surplus to assist with future facility plans.
- The board utilized legal counsel effectively to investigate a claim of misappropriation by a staff member.
- The board it thoughtful and looks to partner with other geographic and similarly situated charter schools to learn best practices.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2F:

Has the school substantially complied with applicable laws, rules and regulations, and provisions of its charter?

The education corporation generally and substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of its charter. The Institute noted exceptions in the following areas.

- Complaints. The school has generated few informal complaints. In following up on an informal allegation of rough handling of a student by a staff member, the Institute found the school had investigated, and contacted local authorities. The teacher resigned pending the police investigation. No formal complaints required review by the Institute, and initial inquiries found no violations.

IS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION FISCALLY SOUND?

Based on a review of the fiscal evidence collected through the renewal review, Academy of the City is fiscally sound. The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard for Academy of the City is included in Appendix D and presents color coded tables and charts indicating that the education corporation has demonstrated fiscal soundness over the course of the charter term.¹⁷

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3A:

Does the school operate pursuant to a fiscal plan in which it creates realistic budgets that it monitors and adjusts when appropriate?

Academy of the City has adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations and has maintained fiscal soundness through conservative budgeting practices, and routine monitoring of revenues and expenses.

- The annual budget process reflects collaboration between the principal and director of operations and the external financial service provider with the oversight of the board finance and operations committee.
- The budget is presented to the board finance and operations committee for full review, and once the committee is satisfied, the budget is presented to the full board for approval. Implementation of the budget is the responsibility of the principal.
- Actual to budget comparisons are analyzed for variances by the external financial service provider and the principal. Any budget modifications that are determined to be needed are approved by the board.
- The next charter term projection reflects steady enrollment and stable budgets.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3B:

Does the school maintain appropriate internal controls and procedures?

The education corporation has generally established and maintained appropriate fiscal policies, procedures and internal controls.

- Written policies address key issues including financial reporting, cash disbursements and receipts, payroll, bank reconciliations, credit card usage, fixed assets, grants/contributions, capitalization and accounting, procurement and investments.
- In 2014, the school began operating its afterschool program and received substantial payments from parents in the form of checks, credit card transactions and cash. The school established various control procedures relating to the handling of cash. However, the school did not communicate them sufficiently to staff resulting in \$15,814 of misappropriated cash receipts. The board was responsive to the loss in a comprehensive way, taking corrective action including institution of strong internal controls around the

¹⁷ The U.S. Department of Education has established fiscal criteria for certain ratios or information with high – medium – low categories, represented in the table as green – gray – red. The categories generally correspond to levels of fiscal risk, but must be viewed in the context of each education corporation and the general type or category of school.

collections of cash. The education corporation recovered the full amount of loss by filing a claim under its insurance policy and was made whole. The incident was reported to NYPD and the board retained independent counsel to conduct an investigation to determine what procedures were not followed and recommend revised protocols. The board directed the external financial service provider to assign a more experienced bookkeeper for the school and reprimanded the school's principal and director of operations.

- The education corporation has since accurately recorded and appropriately documented transactions in accordance with established policies.
- The external financial service provider works with the principal, director of operations, other key staff and the board to help ensure that the school follows established policies and procedures.
- The education corporation's most recent audit report of internal control over financial reporting related to financial reporting, compliance and other matters disclosed no material weaknesses, but did observe that staff filled out purchase order forms after the purchases were made. It is recommended that policies relating to purchasing and receiving are followed. The external auditor noted that the school does have a conflict of interest policy for the board, however, the education corporation did not provide signed conflict of interest forms covering the audit period to the auditor to review.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3C:

Does the school comply with financial reporting requirements?

Academy of the City has complied with reporting requirements.

- The education corporation's annual financial statements are presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and the independent audits of those statements have received unqualified opinions.
- The education corporation's independent auditor meets with the board to discuss the annual financial statements and answer any questions about the process and results.

SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3D:

Does the school maintain adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations?

The education corporation maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations.

- Academy of the City posts a fiscally strong composite score rating on the Institute's financial dashboard indicating a consistent level of fiscal stability over the charter term.
- Academy of the City has relied primarily on recurring operating revenues and accumulated surpluses to cover any operating deficits and is not dependent upon variable income for its financial needs.
- Academy of the City prepares and monitors cash flow projections and maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly and retains approximately 2.6 months of cash on hand.

FISCAL PERFORMANCE

- As a new requirement of charter agreements, Academy of the City established the separate bank account for the dissolution fund reserve of \$75,000.

FUTURE PLANS

IF THE SUNY TRUSTEES RENEW THE EDUCATION CORPORATION'S AUTHORITY TO OPERATE THE SCHOOL, ARE ITS PLANS FOR THE SCHOOL REASONABLE, FEASIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE?

Academy of the City has posted mixed results towards meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals although the educational program has increased in strength over the course of the charter term. The school operates as an effective and viable organization, and the education corporation is fiscally sound. Thus, the plans to implement the educational program as proposed during the next charter term are reasonable, feasible and achievable.

Plans for the School's Structure. The education corporation has provided all of the key structural elements for a charter renewal and those elements are reasonable, feasible and achievable.

Plans for the Educational Program. In concert with changes the school has made in the final years of its first charter term, Academy of the City plans to continue refining systems for data analysis, curriculum development and teacher support that aim to enhance student performance. Continued improvement with the academic program is likely to enable the school to meet its goals in the future.

	Current Charter Term	End of Next Charter Term
Enrollment	405	420
Grade Span	K-5	K-5
Teaching Staff	26.6	26.5
Days of Instruction	185	185

Plans for Board Oversight & Governance. Board members express an interest in continuing to serve Academy of the City in the next charter term and may add additional members in the future.

Fiscal & Facility Plans. Based on evidence collected through the renewal review, including a review of the 5-year financial plan, Academy of the City presents a reasonable and appropriate fiscal plan for the next charter term including budgets that are feasible and achievable.

The school intends to continue to provide instruction for Kindergarten through 5th grade students in its current location, a leased facility in Woodside, Queens.

The school's Application for Charter Renewal contains all necessary elements as required by the Act. The proposed school calendar allots an appropriate amount of instructional time to meet or exceed instructional time requirements, and taken together with other academic and key design elements, should be sufficient to allow the school to meet its proposed Accountability Plan goals. The education corporation has amended or will amend other key aspects of the renewal

FUTURE PLANS

application -- including by-laws and code of ethics -- to comply with various provisions of the New York Education Law, Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, Public Officers Law and the General Municipal Law, as appropriate.

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Appendix A

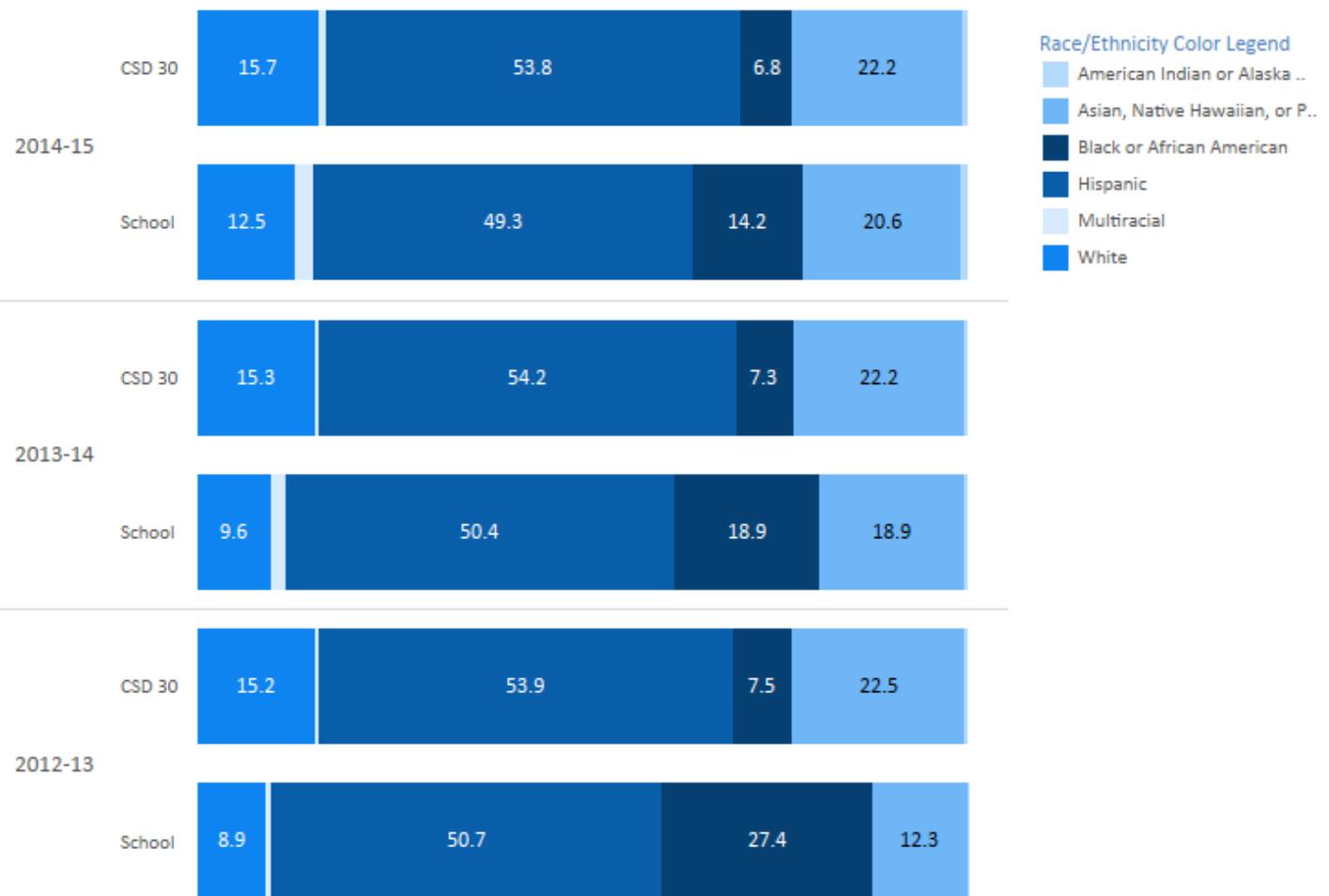
School Overview

APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Board of Trustees¹⁸

Board Member Name	Position	Board Member Name	Position
Nancy Sills	Chair	James Traub	Trustee
Angela Howard	Vice Chair	Michela Nonis	Trustee
Steven Zimmerman	Trustee	Ernest Brooks	Trustee
Harold Elish	Treasurer	Richard A Welles	Trustee
Monica Khan-Liriano	Non Voting Parent Rep.	Pily Quintanilla	Non Voting Parent Rep.

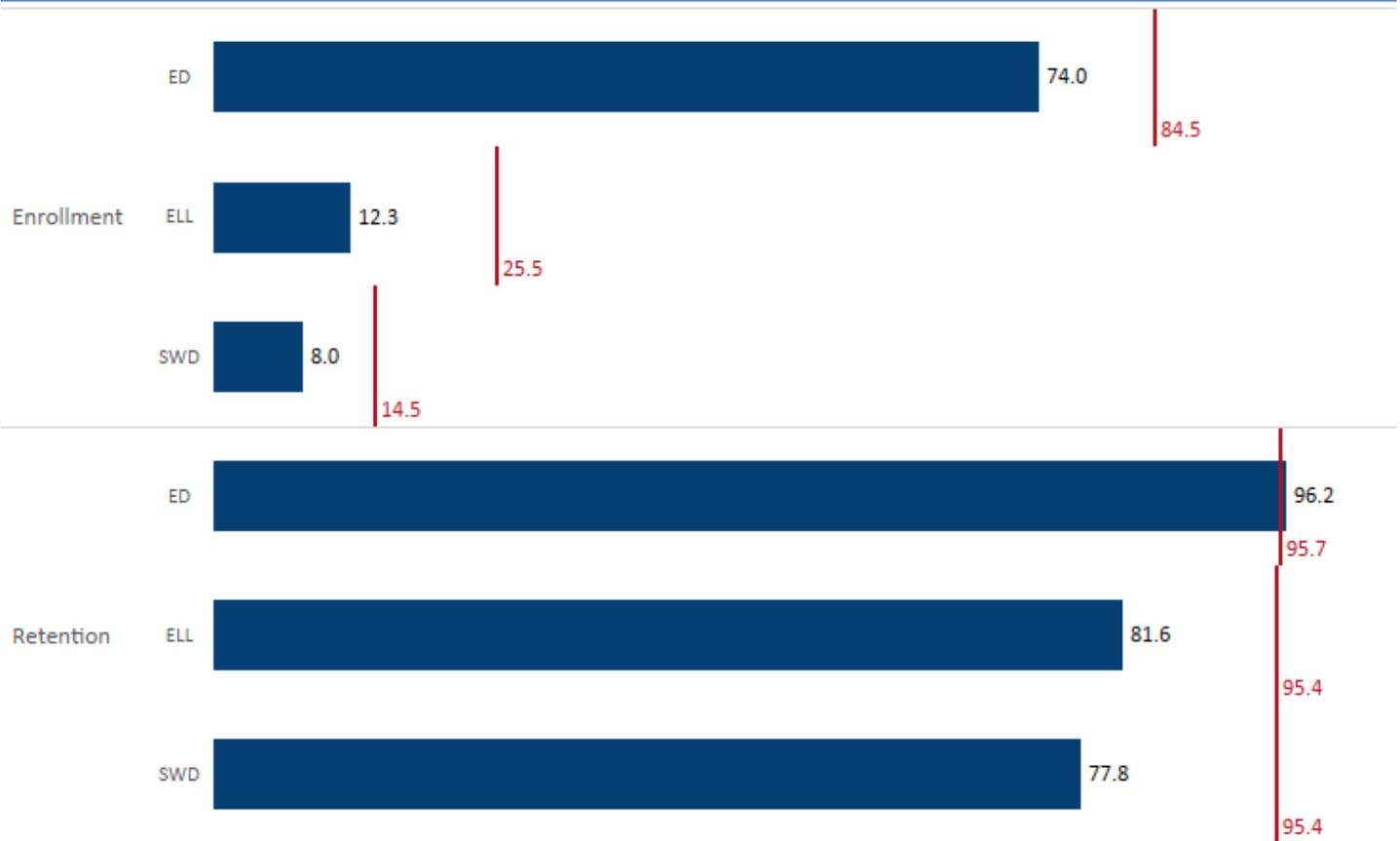
Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity



¹⁸ Source: The Institute's board records at the time of the renewal review.

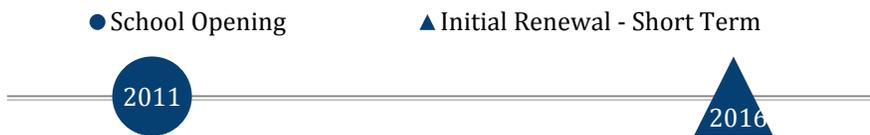
APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Enrollment and Retention Targets



The chart illustrates the school's **current enrollment and retention percentages** against the **enrollment and retention targets**. As required by Education Law § 2851(4)(e), a school must include in its renewal application information regarding the efforts it has, and will, put in place to meet or exceed SUNY's enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, ELL, and FRPL students. This analysis is based on the most recently available data from NYSED.

Timeline of Charter School Renewal



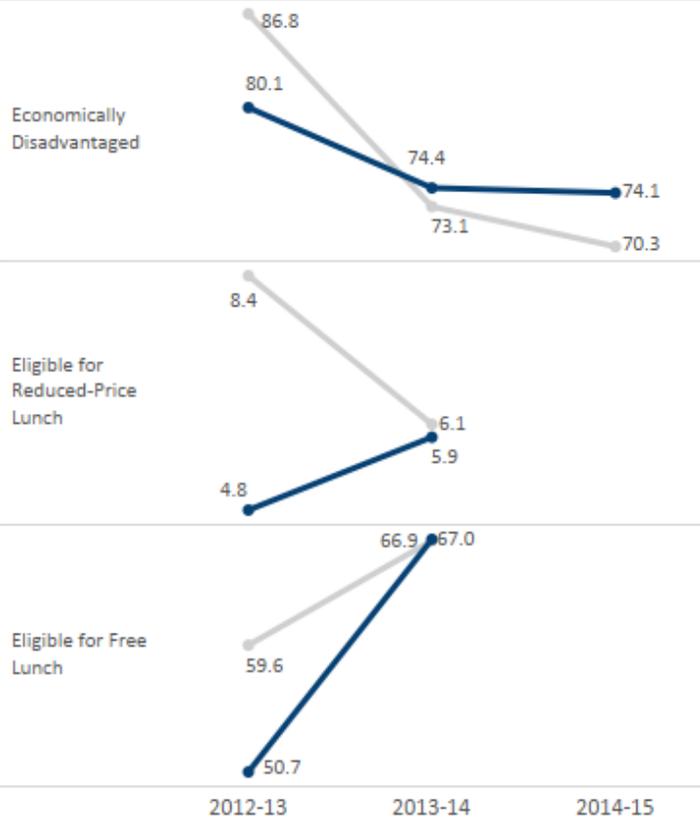
Persistence in Enrollment



Persistence in enrollment illustrates the percentage of students not scheduled to age out of the school who re-enroll from the previous year. The Institute derived the statistical information on enrollment persistence from its database. No comparative data from NYCDOE or NYSED is available to the Institute to provide either district wide or by CSD context. As such, the information presented is for information purposes but does not allow for comparative analysis.

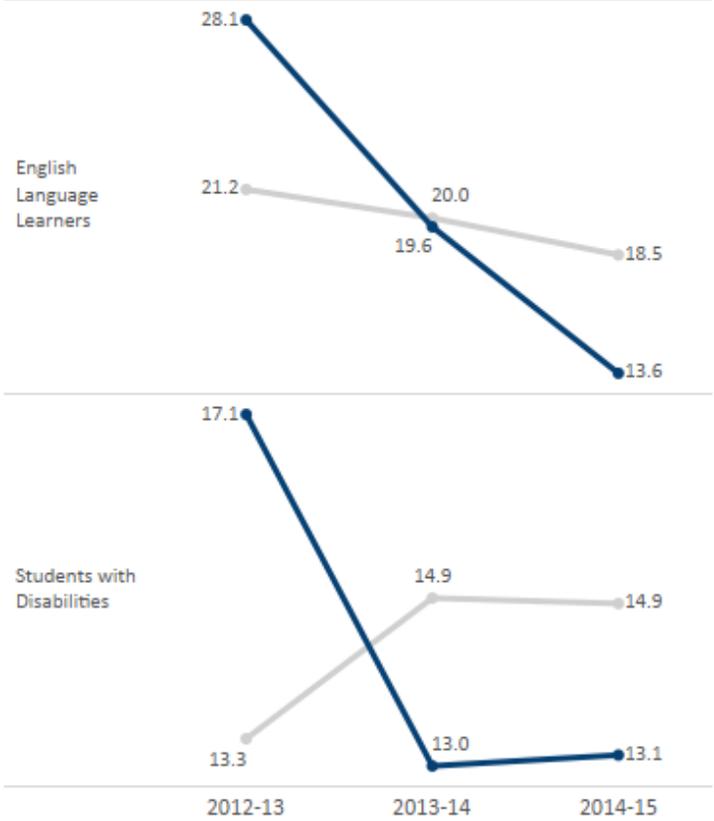
APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Student Demographics: Free/Reduced Lunch



The charts show the trends in enrollment in the **school** and the **district** for each subgroup over the charter term. Reduced-Price and Free Lunch data are not available for 2014-15. Economically disadvantaged includes those students eligible for Free and Reduced-Price lunch among other qualifying income assistance programs.

Student Demographics: Special Populations



The charts show trends in enrollment in the **school** and the **district** for each subgroup over the charter term.

APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Suspensions: Academy of the City Charter School's in school suspension rate and out of school suspension rate and the district overall suspension rate.



Although Community School District ("CSD") and school suspension rates are presented on the same graph, a direct comparison between the rates is not possible for three primary reasons. Available CSD data includes Kindergarten through 12th grades and school data includes only the grades served by the school. CSD data are not available that show multiple instances of suspension of a single student, the overall number of suspensions, the durations of suspensions, or the time of year when the school administered the suspension. CSD data showing the difference between in school and out of school suspensions are not available. The percentage rate shown here is calculated using the method employed by the New York City Department of Education: the total the number of students receiving an in school or out of school suspension at any time during the school year is divided by the total enrollment, then multiplied by 100.

Expulsions: The number of students expelled from the school each year.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
0	0	1	0	0

APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

School Characteristics

School Year	Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ¹⁹	Actual Enrollment as Percentage of Chartered	Proposed Grades	Actual Grades
2011-12	104	100	96%	K-1	K-1
2012-13	156	156	100%	K-2	K-2
2013-14	270	276	102%	K-3	K-3
2014-15	351	358	102%	K-4	K-4
2015-16	405	416	103%	K-5	K-5

Key Design Elements

Element	Evident?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflective practice of the Academy of the City student; 	+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflective practice, professional development of the Academy of the City teacher; 	+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A focus on literacy; 	+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sheltered instruction; 	+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data-driven decision making; 	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peace curriculum; and, 	+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A longer school day and year. 	+

School Leaders

School Year(s)

2011-12 to Present

Name(s) and Title(s)

Richard Lee, Principal

Parent Satisfaction: Survey Results

Response Rate: 56%

Rigorous Instruction: 91%

Effective School Leadership: 88%

Supportive Environment: 96%

¹⁹ Source: Institute's Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Date
2011-12	First Year Visit	April 17, 2012
2013-14	Evaluation Visit	May 7, 2014
2015-16	Initial Renewal Visit	October 13-15, 2015

Conduct of the Renewal Visit

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
October 13-15, 2015	Aaron Campbell	Senior Analyst
	Jeffrey Wasbes	Executive Deputy Director for Accountability
	Jennifer David-Lang	External Consultant

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Appendix B

School Performance Summaries

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: English Language Arts
Academy of the City Charter School



	2012-13 Grades Served: K-2			MET	2013-14 Grades Served: K-3			MET	2014-15 Grades Served: K-4			MET				
	Grades	All Students	2+ Years Students		Grades	All Students	2+ Years Students		Grades	All Students	2+ Years Students					
		% (N)	% (N)			% (N)	% (N)			% (N)						
ABSOLUTE MEASURES																
1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State exam.	3	()	()		3	23.2 (56)	28.9 (38)		3	23.1 (52)	22.2 (45)					
	4	()	()		4	(0)	(0)		4	24.5 (53)	21.1 (38)					
	5	()	()		5	(0)	(0)		5	(0)	(0)					
	6	()	()		6	(0)	(0)		6	(0)	(0)					
	7	()	()		7	(0)	(0)		7	(0)	(0)					
	8	()	()		8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)					
	All	()	()		All	23.2 (56)	28.9 (38)	NA	All	23.8 (105)	21.7 (83)	NO				
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Level Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO					
					3	75	89	NO	3-4	86	97	NO				
COMPARATIVE MEASURES																
3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Comparison:				Comparison: Queens District 30				Comparison: Queens District 30							
	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District					
					3	28.9	34.0	NO	3-4	21.7	33.5	NO				
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at proficiency on the state exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students.	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size		% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size		% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size		
						77.2	23.2	24.3	-0.09	NO		82.0	23.8	21.3	0.20	NO
GROWTH MEASURE																
5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State					
	4				4				4	48.0						
	5				5				5	0.0						
	6				6				6	0.0						
	7				7				7	0.0						
	8				8				8	0.0						
	All				All				All	48.0	50.0				NO	

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: Mathematics
Academy of the City Charter School



	2012-13 Grades Served: K-2			MET	2013-14 Grades Served: K-3			MET	2014-15 Grades Served: K-4			MET			
	Grades	All Students	2+ Years Students		Grades	All Students	2+ Years Students		Grades	All Students	2+ Years Students				
		% (N)	% (N)			% (N)	% (N)			% (N)					
ABSOLUTE MEASURES															
1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State exam.	3	(0)	(0)		3	26.8 (56)	34.2 (38)		3	54.5 (55)	56.3 (48)				
	4	(0)	(0)		4	(0)	(0)		4	43.6 (55)	40.0 (40)				
	5	(0)	(0)		5	(0)	(0)		5	(0)	(0)				
	6	(0)	(0)		6	(0)	(0)		6	(0)	(0)				
	7	(0)	(0)		7	(0)	(0)		7	(0)	(0)				
	8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)				
	All	(0)	(0)		All	26.8 (56)	34.2 (38)	NA	All	49.1 (110)	48.9 (88)	NO			
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Level Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO				
					3	80	86	NO	3-4	129	94	YES			
COMPARATIVE MEASURES															
3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Comparison:				Comparison: Queens District 30				Comparison: Queens District 30						
	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District				
					3	34.2	42.0	NO	3-4	48.9	43.6	YES			
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at proficiency on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students.	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size		% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size		% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	
						77.2	26.8	33.8	-0.37	NO	82.0	49.1	30.4	1.00	YES
GROWTH MEASURE															
5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State				
	4				4				4	55.3					
	5				5				5	0.0					
	6				6				6	0.0					
	7				7				7	0.0					
	8				8				8	0.0					
	All				All				All	55.3	50.0				YES

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Appendix C

District Comments

The Institute has received no district or public comments.

Appendix D

School Fiscal Dashboard

APPENDIX D: SCHOOL FISCAL DASHBOARD



Academy of the City Charter School

SCHOOL INFORMATION

FINANCIAL POSITION

Assets

Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents - **GRAPH 1**
Grants and Contracts Receivable
Accounts Receivable
Prepaid Expenses
Contributions and Other Receivables

Total Current Assets - **GRAPH 1**

Property, Building and Equipment, net

Other Assets

Total Assets - **GRAPH 1**

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses
Accrued Payroll and Benefits
Deferred Revenue
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable
Other

Total Current Liabilities - **GRAPH 1**

L-T Debt and Notes Payable, net current maturities

Total Liabilities - **GRAPH 1**

Net Assets

Unrestricted
Temporarily restricted

Total Net Assets

Total Liabilities and Net Assets

ACTIVITIES

Operating Revenue

Resident Student Enrollment
Students with Disabilities

Grants and Contracts

State and local
Federal - Title and IDEA
Federal - Other
Other

Food Service/Child Nutrition Program

Total Operating Revenue

Expenses

Regular Education
SPED
Regular Education & SPED (combined)
Other

Total Program Services

Management and General
Fundraising

Total Expenses - **GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4**

Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations

Support and Other Revenue

Contributions
Fundraising
Miscellaneous Income
Net assets released from restriction

Total Support and Other Revenue

Total Unrestricted Revenue

Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue

Total Revenue - **GRAPHS 2 & 3**

Change in Net Assets

Net Assets - Beginning of Year - **GRAPH 2**

Prior Year Adjustment(s)

Net Assets - End of Year - **GRAPH 2**

Opened 2011-12

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Cash and Cash Equivalents - GRAPH 1	-	55,514	19,334	367,128	1,093,331
Grants and Contracts Receivable	-	112,714	157,932	4,189	8,660
Accounts Receivable	-	-	96,000	4,859	9,693
Prepaid Expenses	-	-	47,727	106,253	54,565
Contributions and Other Receivables	-	-	-	-	-
Total Current Assets - GRAPH 1	-	168,228	320,993	482,429	1,166,249
Property, Building and Equipment, net	-	77,938	189,818	478,967	663,805
Other Assets	-	10,000	50,000	161,247	161,400
Total Assets - GRAPH 1	-	256,166	560,811	1,122,643	1,991,454
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	-	38,895	122,314	80,376	125,803
Accrued Payroll and Benefits	-	126,743	194,690	338,367	353,114
Deferred Revenue	-	18,328	-	-	-
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	-	-	-	-	-
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable	-	10,625	3,125	-	-
Other	-	-	14	349,227	-
Total Current Liabilities - GRAPH 1	-	194,591	320,143	767,970	478,917
L-T Debt and Notes Payable, net current maturities	-	-	-	-	588,854
Total Liabilities - GRAPH 1	-	194,591	320,143	767,970	1,067,771
Unrestricted	-	61,575	240,668	354,673	923,683
Temporarily restricted	-	-	-	-	-
Total Net Assets	-	61,575	240,668	354,673	923,683
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	-	256,166	560,811	1,122,643	1,991,454
Resident Student Enrollment	-	1,381,752	2,142,097	3,890,072	5,171,188
Students with Disabilities	-	-	-	-	-
State and local	-	91,664	-	-	159,813
Federal - Title and IDEA	-	26,612	415,954	270,836	86,588
Federal - Other	-	224,865	7,962	-	23,325
Other	-	-	220,000	54,293	167,431
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program	-	-	-	-	-
Total Operating Revenue	-	1,724,893	2,786,013	4,215,201	5,608,345
Regular Education	-	1,345,333	1,719,623	2,548,187	3,463,594
SPED	-	142,959	242,787	482,558	497,602
Regular Education & SPED (combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Program Services	-	1,488,292	1,962,410	3,030,745	3,961,196
Management and General	-	677,315	654,301	1,079,252	1,057,454
Fundraising	-	10,650	15,000	14,656	20,685
Total Expenses - GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4	-	2,176,257	2,631,711	4,124,653	5,039,335
Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations	-	(451,364)	154,302	90,548	569,010
Contributions	-	512,940	24,791	20,304	-
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Income	-	-	-	3,153	-
Net assets released from restriction	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support and Other Revenue	-	512,940	24,791	23,457	-
Total Unrestricted Revenue	-	1,840,219	2,810,804	4,238,658	5,608,345
Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue	-	397,614	-	-	-
Total Revenue - GRAPHS 2 & 3	-	2,237,833	2,810,804	4,238,658	5,608,345
Change in Net Assets	-	61,576	179,093	114,005	569,010
Net Assets - Beginning of Year - GRAPH 2	-	-	61,575	240,668	354,673
Prior Year Adjustment(s)	-	-	-	-	-
Net Assets - End of Year - GRAPH 2	-	61,576	240,668	354,673	923,683

APPENDIX D: SCHOOL FISCAL DASHBOARD



Academy of the City Charter School

SCHOOL INFORMATION - (Continued)

Functional Expense Breakdown

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Personnel Service					
Administrative Staff Personnel	-	357,335	386,202	413,200	525,460
Instructional Personnel	-	627,839	946,432	1,348,975	1,798,443
Non-Instructional Personnel	-	39,702	50,000	155,115	194,829
Personnel Services (Combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Salaries and Staff	-	1,024,876	1,382,634	1,917,290	2,518,732
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes	-	205,555	312,236	392,238	545,446
Retirement	-	15,384	-	39,456	-
Management Company Fees	-	-	-	-	-
Building and Land Rent / Lease	-	266,340	286,558	874,802	952,854
Staff Development	-	7,267	21,588	26,458	23,827
Professional Fees, Consultant & Purchased Services	-	417,999	374,532	343,549	412,474
Marketing / Recruitment	-	13,118	-	10,792	26,974
Student Supplies, Materials & Services	-	61,358	128,880	118,443	171,973
Depreciation	-	18,327	29,855	71,028	73,825
Other	-	146,033	95,428	330,597	313,230
Total Expenses	-	2,176,257	2,631,711	4,124,653	5,039,335

SCHOOL ANALYSIS

ENROLLMENT	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Chartered Enroll	-	104	156	208	260
Revised Enroll	-	-	-	270	351
Actual Enroll - GRAPH 4	-	100	156	276	358
Chartered Grades	-	K-1	K-2	K-3	K-4
Revised Grades	-	-	-	-	-

Primary School District: New York City	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Per Pupil Funding (Weighted Avg of All Districts)	-	13,527	13,527	13,527	13,777
Increase over prior year	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%

PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

Revenue	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Average - 5 Yrs. OR Charter Term
Operating	-	17,249	17,859	15,272	15,666	16,512
Other Revenue and Support	-	5,129	159	85	-	1,343
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	22,378	18,018	15,357	15,666	17,855
Expenses						
Program Services	-	14,883	12,580	10,981	11,065	12,377
Management and General, Fundraising	-	6,880	4,290	3,963	3,012	4,536
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	21,763	16,870	14,944	14,076	16,913
% of Program Services	0.0%	68.4%	74.6%	73.5%	78.6%	73.8%
% of Management and Other	0.0%	31.6%	25.4%	26.5%	21.4%	26.2%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses - GRAPH 5	0.0%	2.8%	6.8%	2.8%	11.3%	5.6%

Student to Faculty Ratio	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
	-	8.3	19.5	10.2	9.9

Faculty to Admin Ratio	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
	-	2.0	2.0	5.4	5.1

Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - GRAPH 6

Score	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Average
Score	0.0	1.1	2.0	2.0	2.5	1.8
Fiscally Strong 1.5 - 3.0 / Fiscally Adequate 1.0 - 1.4 / Fiscally Needs Monitoring < 1.0	N/A	Fiscally Adequate	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong

Working Capital - GRAPH 7

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Average
Net Working Capital	0	(26,363)	850	(285,541)	687,332	94,070
As % of Unrestricted Revenue	0.0%	-1.4%	0.0%	-6.7%	12.3%	1.0%
Working Capital (Current) Ratio Score	0.0	0.9	1.0	0.6	2.4	1.2
Risk (Low ≥ 3.0 / Medium 1.4 - 2.9 / High < 1.4)	N/A	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	HIGH
Rating (Excellent ≥ 3.0 / Good 1.4 - 2.9 / Poor < 1.4)	N/A	Poor	Poor	Poor	Good	Poor

Quick (Acid Test) Ratio

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Average
Score	0.0	0.9	0.9	0.5	2.3	1.1
Risk (Low ≥ 2.5 / Medium 1.0 - 2.4 / High < 1.0)	N/A	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Rating (Excellent ≥ 2.5 / Good 1.0 - 2.4 / Poor < 1.0)	N/A	Poor	Poor	Poor	Good	Good

Debt to Asset Ratio - GRAPH 7

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Average
Score	0.0	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.6
Risk (Low < 0.50 / Medium 0.51 - .95 / High > 1.0)	N/A	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Rating (Excellent < 0.50 / Good 0.51 - .95 / Poor > 1.0)	N/A	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good

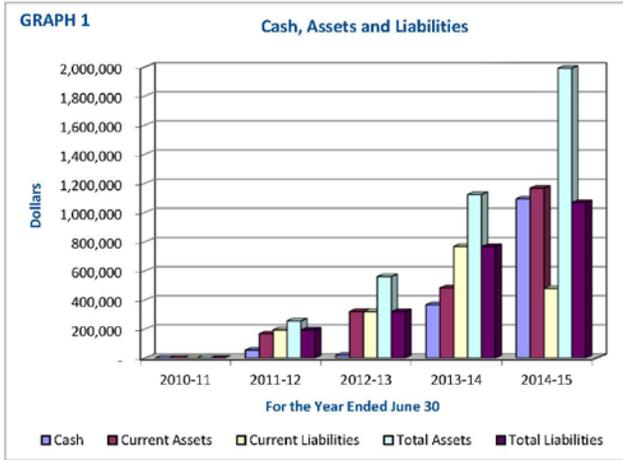
Months of Cash - GRAPH 8

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Average
Score	0.0	0.3	0.1	1.1	2.6	1.0
Risk (Low > 3 mo. / Medium 1 - 3 mo. / High < 1 mo.)	N/A	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Rating (Excellent > 3 mo. / Good 1 - 3 mo. / Poor < 1 mo.)	N/A	Poor	Poor	Good	Good	Good

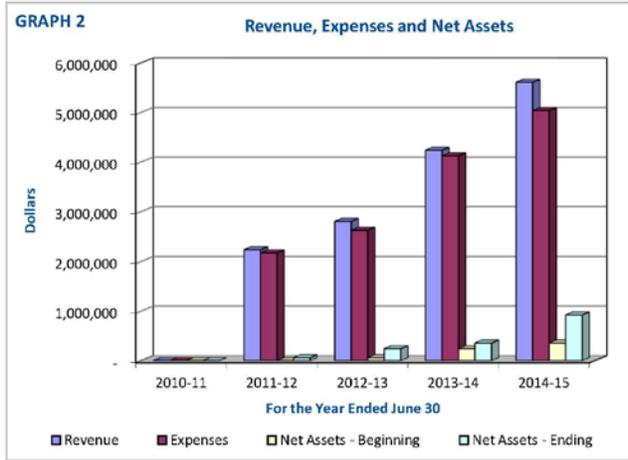
APPENDIX D: SCHOOL FISCAL DASHBOARD



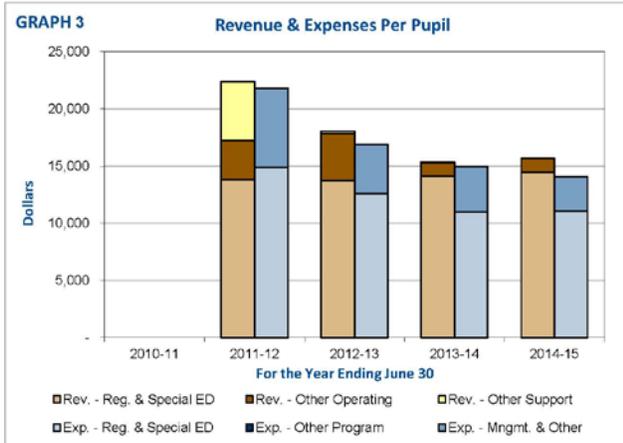
Academy of the City Charter School



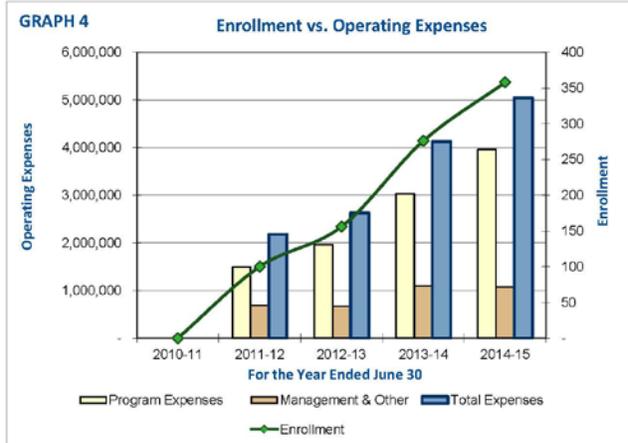
This chart illustrates the relationship between assets and liabilities and to what extent cash reserves makes up current assets. Ideally for each subset, subsets 2 thru 4, (i.e. current assets vs. current liabilities), the column on the left is taller than the immediate column on the right; and, generally speaking, the bigger that gap, the better.



This chart illustrates total revenue and expenses each year and the relationship those subsets have on the increase/decrease of net assets on a year-to-year basis. Ideally subset 1, revenue, will be taller than subset 2, expenses, and as a result subset 3, net assets - beginning, will increase each year building a more fiscally viable school.



This chart illustrates the breakdown of revenue and expenses on a per pupil basis. Caution should be exercised in making school-by-school comparisons since schools serving different missions or student populations are likely to have substantially different educational cost bases. Comparisons with similar schools with similar dynamics are most valid.



This chart illustrates to what extent the school's operating expenses have followed its student enrollment pattern. A baseline assumption that this data tests is that operating expenses increase with each additional student served. This chart also compares and contrasts growth trends of both, giving insight into what a reasonable expectation might be in terms of economies of scale.

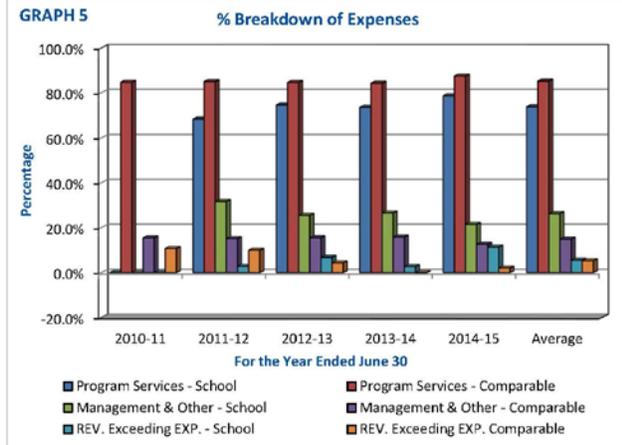
APPENDIX D: SCHOOL FISCAL DASHBOARD



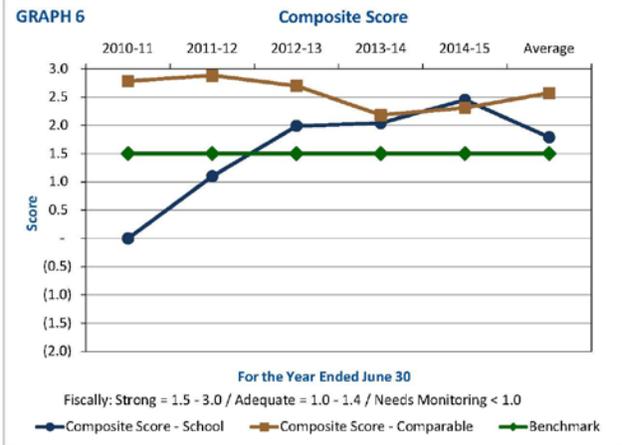
Academy of the City Charter School

Comparable School, Region or Network: New York City & Long Island Schools

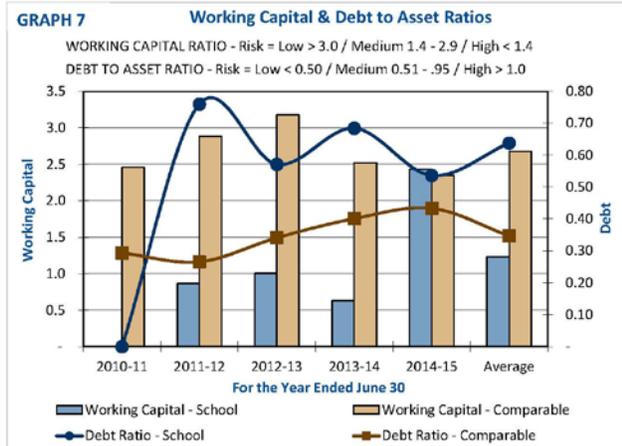
* Average = Average - 5 Yrs. OR Charter Term



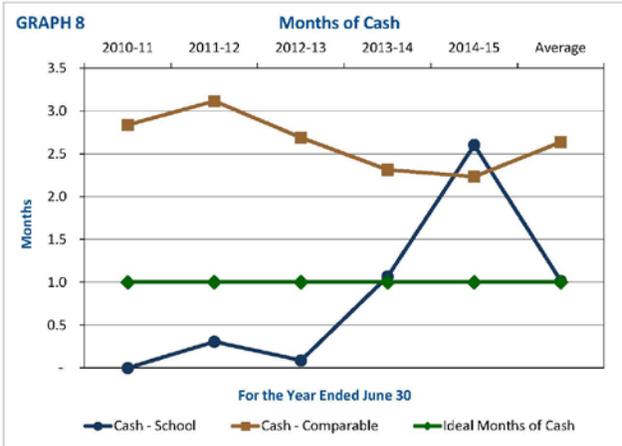
This chart illustrates the percentage expense breakdown between program services and management & others as well as the percentage of revenues exceeding expenses. Ideally the percentage expense for program services will far exceed that of the management & other expense. The percentage of revenues exceeding expenses should not be negative. Similar caution, as mentioned on GRAPH 3, should be used in comparing schools.



This chart illustrates a school's composite score based on the methodology developed by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) to determine whether private not-for-profit colleges and universities are financially strong enough to participate in federal loan programs. These scores can be valid for observing the fiscal trends of a particular school and used as a tool to compare the results of different schools.



This chart illustrates Working Capital and Debt to Asset Ratios. The Working Capital ratio indicates if a school has enough short-term assets to cover its immediate liabilities/short term debt. The Debt to Asset ratio indicates what proportion of debt a school has relative to its assets. The measure gives an idea to the leverage of the school along with the potential risks the school faces in terms of its debt-load.



This chart illustrates how many months of cash the school has in reserves. This metric is to measure solvency – the school's ability to pay debts and claims as they come due. This gives some idea of how long a school could continue its ongoing operating costs without tapping into some other, non-cash form of financing in the event that revenues were to cease flowing to the school.