



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

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GUIDELINES FOR CREATING AN ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS AUTHORIZED BY
THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) established the Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) in February 1999 to assist it in carrying out its responsibilities under the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the “Act”), which granted the SUNY Trustees the authority to award charters for the purpose of organizing and operating independent and autonomous public charter schools offering instruction in Kindergarten – 12th grade.

SUNY is the largest charter school authorizer in New York and the largest university-based authorizer in the country. In 2010, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers recognized SUNY’s new school application process as being the “Best Application Process” for Approving New Charter Schools and in 2011, the CBT Education Trust and the World Bank identified SUNY’s Authorizing Practices as an international model and featured them in an online toolkit.

SUNY authorized charter schools lead the state’s charter sector in student achievement on state assessments in mathematics and English language arts (“ELA”). Besides SUNY’s rigorous new school application review process, the schools’ success is also attributable to the manner in which SUNY holds school’s accountable through its charter renewal practices. While the SUNY Trustees have the obligation and authority to hold charter schools accountable through a number of means during the term of operation (including revocation of a school’s charter), the requirement that a school apply and be approved for renewal on a periodic basis is at the core of the Act. The Institute’s renewal review is, therefore, a high-stakes process for charter schools.

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OVERVIEW

As set forth in 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”), the single most important factor that the Institute and the SUNY Trustees consider in making renewal determinations is the school’s record in generating successful student achievement outcomes. Regardless of the grade levels a school serves, SUNY expects all students will leave the school fully prepared for the next step in their academic careers—middle school, high school, college, or other post-secondary outcome.

In order to determine whether a school has met that high standard, each SUNY authorized school must enter into a performance agreement. This agreement’s primary purpose is to lay out the specific student achievement goals that a school agrees to meet and the specific outcome measures that define what constitutes meeting these goals. This agreement, known as the Accountability Plan, becomes part of the school’s charter. Under SUNY’s accountability system, schools are required to report yearly progress in meeting the goals contained in their Accountability Plans through an annual Accountability Plan Progress Report¹ (“APPR”) and, more importantly, when applying for renewal.

As New York State public schools, charter schools are held accountable for the same outcomes as other public schools, namely performance on state exams. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”), schools are explicitly expected to meet state performance standards as measured by the state exams. Further, in New York State the elementary and middle school examinations align to the high school New York State Regents examinations; thus, achievement on the 3rd – 8th grade examinations provides a benchmark for whether students are on track for passing high school exams and being college and career ready. The Institute views performance on the state exams, especially in ELA and mathematics, as well as high school graduation and college preparation (for college preparatory high schools), as the most important indicators of whether a school has improved student learning and achievement, a purpose of the Act.

In establishing high standards for renewal, the Institute requires that the Accountability Plans for all SUNY authorized charter schools contain a common set of goals, along with specific measures, that set the same criteria for success for each school. These required outcome measures with specified levels of student performance represent the Institute’s expectations for student learning and achievement at the time of renewal. In addition to the required measures, schools may also choose to include in their Accountability Plan additional academic as well as other non-academic goals and measures. Section V of these guidelines provides more information about procedures for incorporating additional goals and measures in an Accountability Plan, and the ramifications of doing so.

These guideline provide detailed instructions on how and when a school should formulate its Accountability Plan and what specifically it must include. Some of the language contained in these guidelines is quite technical given that the Accountability Plan primarily concerns student assessment data. Still, it is imperative that a charter school board of trustees and school leaders thoroughly understand the goals and measures as they will be responsible for collecting and analyzing assessment data and reporting the results throughout the charter term. Ultimately, these reports will contribute to the evidence base for the school’s renewal.

1. For information regarding the preparation of the annual Accountability Plan Progress Report, please see an Accountability Plan Progress Report Template for the relevant grade span, all of which are available at www.newyorkcharters.org.

GENERAL CONCEPTS

GOALS AND OUTCOME MEASURES

Before discussing the Accountability Plan's sections in greater detail, it is useful to identify the general characteristics of, and differences between, goals and outcome measures.

GOALS

Goals are general, declarative statements about long-term expectations for the school. They follow from the school's mission statement, as well as the programmatic and organizational design elements presented in the school's charter agreement. To develop an Accountability Plan, schools should begin by contemplating what success will look like: How will school leaders know if the school has succeeded? What will students know and be able to do? What will parents say about the program? Each goal aligns with a specific set of measurable outcomes, which, taken together, indicate the extent to which the school has achieved the goal.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Holding schools accountable for what actions they take (inputs) as opposed to what they actually achieve (outcomes) is part and parcel of the problem with ineffective schools. Thus, SUNY Accountability Plans are built upon outcome measures that focus on student achievement as a result of the school's programmatic and organizational practices. Outcome measures do not describe how much time students have spent reading, how much money was spent on reading programs, or even what students read (all input measures) but rather assess an end product; for example, how much students improved in their ability to read.

For each goal in the Accountability Plan there must be at least one outcome measure which specifies what is necessary to achieve that particular goal. Each outcome measure includes: an expected level of performance for students to achieve; the assessment tool to determine the performance; when and to whom the school will administer the assessment (e.g., students in particular grade levels, etc.); and, who will administer and score the assessment (if it is not a standardized test). A well-conceived outcome measure should specify a timeframe or target date for achievement. It may contain a long-term objective that the school expects to achieve by renewal, along with annual benchmarks that will enable the school and its stakeholders to monitor and assess progress during an entire charter period.

There are three types of outcome measures used in the Accountability Plan: absolute, comparative, and growth.

- **Absolute measures** use fixed criteria against which to measure the school's performance. The target is an absolute standard; that is, mastery at a specified level of skill and knowledge. Students show proficiency by performing at a given, pre-determined level. To the extent that the school's mission is to prepare students for success in middle school, high school, and beyond, the Institute expects a large percent of students taking these assessments to show proficiency in order for the school to be deemed successful in preparing students for future achievement. As all subject area assessments are aligned, scoring at the proficient level (passing) on the elementary and middle school examinations is an indicator that a student is likely to demonstrate college and career readiness on the high school examinations. For this reason, SUNY authorized charter schools are required to set the criterion for success at 75 percent of students scoring at or above proficiency on state examinations.
- **Comparative measures** weigh the school's performance against that of other selected schools, the local school district, the state, or a national student population. In addition to examining academic goals in terms of absolute student achievement, SUNY authorized charter schools must also compare their students' performance on the state examinations to that of the school district that students would likely attend if they were not enrolled in the charter school (usually the district or community school district of location), as well as to those of comparable schools statewide based on demographic factors.
- **Growth measures** examine progress based on year-to-year performance relative to a comparison groups of students with the same baseline performance. Unlike the absolute measure of proficiency, a growth outcome measure is intended to chart student progress attributable to the impact of a school's instructional program. To determine student growth, the outcome is expressed as the relative growth of a student in the current year to other students with the same baseline scores, accounting for certain demographic factors. This analysis may be particularly useful to schools serving low performing students.

A school should develop outcome measures that are specific, clear, concisely stated, and easily understood. It should tie its academic subject measures to academic standards that specify what students should know and be able to do in that content area at a specified grade or other grouping level.

REQUIRED ACADEMIC GOALS AND OUTCOME MEASURES

A charter requires a school to objectively demonstrate that the program as a whole improves student learning. The Accountability Plan should lead with goals, outcome measures, and assessments that will demonstrate achievement of academic success. The burden of proof to demonstrate its success is on the school.

According to a school’s charter, its educational program must allow students to meet or exceed state performance standards.² Since state examinations are directly aligned with state standards, they provide the most compelling evidence and are therefore required components of the Accountability Plan. To the extent that the school has rigorously developed additional assessments aligned to the state performance standards and reliably scored them, the Institute will consider this evidence along with the required state assessment results in determining if the school has improved student learning and achievement. The burden again falls to the school to demonstrate that any additional assessment measures also provide valid and reliable evidence of achievement.

All Accountability Plans must include four academic goals that address the three major academic subjects of ELA, mathematics, and science as well as the requirements of the state’s accountability system under ESSA. Charter high schools must also include a social studies goal and a graduation goal³ that address the successful completion of high school requirements. In addition, charter high schools with a college preparatory mission must include a college preparation goal.

Schools may also choose to add additional measures to these goals; however, supplemental measures will not supplant or dilute the Institute’s consideration of the required measures in its evaluation of the goals. In addition, schools may add additional academic goals or non-academic goals such as character development or citizenship, student behavior and attendance, parent satisfaction, etc. All additional goals must have at least one distinct outcome measure that indicates specifically what is required for that goal to be achieved. (See Section IV for a more extensive discussion of additional goals and outcome measures.)

SCHOOL LEVELS

Elementary/Middle Schools: The four academic goals have multiple required outcome measures based on results of the state examinations administered to all public school students. ELA and mathematics are the subjects on which the Institute places the most emphasis and are tested every year between 3rd and 8th grade. There are five required outcome measures for each of these two subjects. Science is tested in the 4th and 8th grades and has two required outcome measures: one absolute and one comparative. Finally, there is one required absolute outcome measure based on the state’s ESSA accountability system.

2. Currently, meeting the state’s performance standard is defined by achieving proficiency on the state exam.

3. A social studies goal for Kindergarten – 8th grade schools is not required because the state social studies exams for 5th and 8th grades has been eliminated. Charter schools are still expected to continue to provide strong programs in social studies both for the value of having a well-rounded education and to prepare students for the high school social studies Regents exams and may propose an additional goal in this area.

Summary of Required Goals and Outcome Measures for Elementary/Middle (Kindergarten – 8th Grade) Schools

REQUIRED OUTCOME MEASURES					
GOAL	ABSOLUTE		COMPARATIVE		GROWTH
	75% proficient on state exam	PI meets MIP	Percent proficient greater than school district	Effect size greater than 0.3	Mean growth percentile greater than 50
English language arts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mathematics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Science	✓		✓		
ESSA	School is deemed in good standing under the state’s ESSA accountability system: it has not met the criteria to be identified as needing comprehensive or targeted school improvement.				

High Schools: Most importantly, high school Accountability Plans must include a graduation goal, and those high schools with a college preparatory mission must also have a college prep goal. High schools that do not have a college preparatory mission must identify a post secondary goal that embodies the academic, non-academic, or life activities for which the high school program prepares its students. Accountability Plans for charter high schools also include the same academic subject goals as elementary and middle schools, i.e., ELA, mathematics, and science, with the addition of social studies, as well as the ESSA goal. Rather than statewide grade level exams, charter high schools are held accountable for student performance on Regents exams.

High school graduation accountability is based on the performance of a Total Cohort for Graduation (“Graduation Cohort”). Like the Accountability Cohort, students are included in the Graduation Cohort based on the year they first enter the 9th grade anywhere. However, students who have spent at least one day in the school after entering the 9th grade are part of the Graduation Cohort unless they leave the school for an acceptable reason. A student is included in the school’s Graduation Cohort if the student’s reason for discharge is not a transfer to another New York State district or school, death, transfer by court order, or left the U.S. For a complete description of the criteria for inclusion in the Accountability Cohort and the Graduation Cohort, refer to the latest edition of NYSED’s Student Information Repository (“SIRS”) Guidance: www.p12.gov/irs/sirs.home.html.

Because many measures based on cohorts only apply to students at the time of graduation (i.e., four years after they entered the 9th grade) and the Institute would not have had time to evaluate them for renewal prior to the end of an initial Accountability Period, high school Accountability Plans must include additional required measures that serve as leading indicators, generally showing student performance two years after they entered the 9th grade, including credit accumulation and progress toward passing Regents or approved alternative exams required for graduation.

For charter high schools that have a college preparatory mission, a college preparatory goal is required. It focuses on how well the school will prepare students for admission to, and success in, college. The Institute requires college preparatory high schools to identify a measure or a combination of measures of college readiness that best define academic success for the high school educational program. In addition to prescribed measures, college preparatory schools may develop additional measures that reflect their school’s mission and college preparatory activity.

High school accountability in academic subjects is based on the performance of a student cohort, which is generally defined as a group of students who entered the 9th grade at the same time. The definition centers on the number of years since the members of the group began the 9th grade, not the grade in which the cohort members are currently enrolled. Students who left the school prior to the current year for any reason are removed from the Accountability Cohort; on the other hand, students who enrolled in the school after the 9th grade are still grouped with their peers who began the 9th grade at the same time.

The state’s Accountability Cohort consists specifically of students who are in their fourth year of high school after having entered the 9th grade. For example, the 2009 Accountability Cohort is comprised of students who entered the 9th grade in the 2009-10 school year, were enrolled in the school on the state’s Basic Education Data System day (“BEDS” day) in the 2012-13 school year, and either remained in the school for the rest of the year or left for an acceptable reason. While most of the students would be in the 12th grade, some may be in the 11th grade and a few perhaps in the 10th grade, but they are all still members of the same cohort.

Summary of Required Goals and Outcome Measures for High (9th – 12th Grade) Schools

GOAL	Required Outcome Measure
High School Graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% of students in first and second year high school Total Graduation Cohorts will earn ten credits (if 44 needed for graduation) or five credits (if 22 needed for graduation) each year. 75% of students in the second year high school Total Graduation Cohort will score at or above proficiency (or approaching Common Core expectations) on at least three different New York State Regents exams required for graduation. 75% of students in the 4th year high school Total Graduation Cohort will graduate. 95% of students in the 5th year high school Total Graduation Cohort will graduate. Each year, 75% of students in the high school Total Cohort pursuing an alternative graduation pathway (commonly referred to as the 4+1 pathway) will achieve a Regents equivalency score and pass an approved pathway assessment required for graduation by the end of their fourth year in the cohort. The percent of students in the high school Total Graduation cohort graduating after the completion of their fourth year will exceed that of the cohort from the local school district.
College Prep (only for college prep high schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% of graduating students will demonstrate their preparation for college by one or a combination of multiple college readiness indicators, including passing an Advanced Placement (“AP”) exam, a College Level Examination Program (“CLEP”) exam, an International Baccalaureate (“IB”) exam, achieving the college and career readiness benchmark on the SAT exam, earning a Regents diploma with advanced designation, by passing a college level course, or by a school-created indicator with the approval of the Institute. Each year, the College, Career, and Civic Readiness Index (“CCCRI”) for the school’s Total Cohort will exceed the state’s MIP set forth in the state’s Accountability System. Each year, the school’s CCCRI for the Total Cohort exceeds that of the district’s Total Cohort. Each year, 75% of graduating students will matriculate in a college or university in the year after graduation.
ESSA	The school is deemed to be in good standing under the state’s ESSA accountability system: it has not met the criteria to be identified as a school in need of Comprehensive or Targeted Improvement.

Required Outcome Measures		Goal Areas			
		English language arts	Math	Science	Social Studies
Absolute Measures	65% demonstrate college ready proficiency on Regents exams after four years	✓	✓		
	80% meet or exceed score required to earn a Regents diploma after four years	✓	✓		
	75% meet or exceed score required to earn a Regents diploma after four years			✓	✓
	Performance Index (“PI”) meets Measure of Interim Progress (“MIP”)	✓	✓		
Comparative	Performance Index exceeds that of local school district	✓	✓		
	Percent passing Regents exams after four years is greater than that of local school district	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Percent meeting or exceeding Common Core expectations is greater than that of the district	✓	✓		
Growth	50% not proficient in 8 th grade demonstrate college ready proficiency on Regents exams after four years	✓	✓		
	75% not proficient in 8 th grade partially meet college ready proficiency on Regents exams after four years	✓	✓		

EXPLANATION OF REQUIRED MEASURES

ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC SUBJECT MEASURES

Absolute Measure: Each year, 75 percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above proficiency on the state’s 3rd – 8th grade exams.

This measure applies to all three major subjects: ELA, mathematics, and science. The NYSED reports results as performance levels, which are determined by scale score ranges. In order to account for the effect of the school’s program on individual achievement, students who have only recently enrolled at the school are not included in the analysis; only students who are enrolled in at least their second year at the school are considered. Students are deemed to be enrolled in at least their second year if they were enrolled at the school on or prior to BEDS Day, the first Wednesday in October, of the previous school year.

Absolute Measure: Each year, the school’s aggregate Performance Index (“PI”) on the state exams will meet that year’s state Measure of Interim Progress (“MIP”) set forth in the state’s ESSA accountability system.

This measure applies only to ELA and mathematics. In New York State, schools meet ESSA performance goals by showing that an absolute proportion of a school’s students who have taken the ELA and mathematics state tests have scored at the partially proficient, or proficient and advanced performance levels (Levels 2 or 3 & 4). The percentage of students at each of these three levels is used to calculate a PI and determine if the school has met the MIP set each year by the state’s ESSA accountability system. The PI is the sum of the percent of students in all tested grades combined scoring at Level 2, plus two times the percent of students scoring at Level 3, plus two-and-a-half times the percent of students scoring at Level 4. Under ESSA, schools receive additional credit for student scoring

Example of How to Calculate a Performance Index

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
10%	25%	45%	20%

$$\text{Level 2} + \text{Levels 3 \& 4} = 90$$

$$+ \text{Levels 3 \& 4} = 65$$

$$+ 0.5 * \text{Level 4} = 10$$

$$\text{PI} = 165$$

above grade level expectations. Instead of a scale from 0 to 200, the additional credit makes it possible for a school to score as high as 250. So if every tested student were to score at Accountability Level 3, the school’s PI would be 200. If every tested student were to score at Accountability Level 4, the school’s PI would be 250.

Comparative Measure: Each year, the percent of all tested students who are enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above proficiency on the state exam will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the local school district.

This measure applies to all three major subjects: ELA, mathematics, and science. To demonstrate that a charter school is providing a superior educational alternative to that of the local school district, this measure indicates that on state tests the school as a whole outperforms the district of location. The performance of all tested students

in the charter school who are enrolled in at least their second year is compared to that of all students in the same tested grades in the district. For example, a charter school serving students in Kindergarten – 5th grades would compare the aggregate performance on the state ELA exam of its students in the 3rd – 5th grades to the aggregate performance of the 3rd – 5th grades students in the local district.

In comparing the school's achievement results to those of the district, students who have only recently enrolled at the charter school are not included. Rather, to ensure comparability and generate as large a sample as possible, the school is required to include students in at least their second year; that is, students who enrolled by BEDS day of the previous school year. Consequently, schools that start with middle school grades (e.g., schools serving 5th– 8th grade) would not include students in their lowest grade in the analysis since students in that grade would have been enrolled in only their first year. The exception would be students who are repeating the lowest grade and are therefore in their second year.

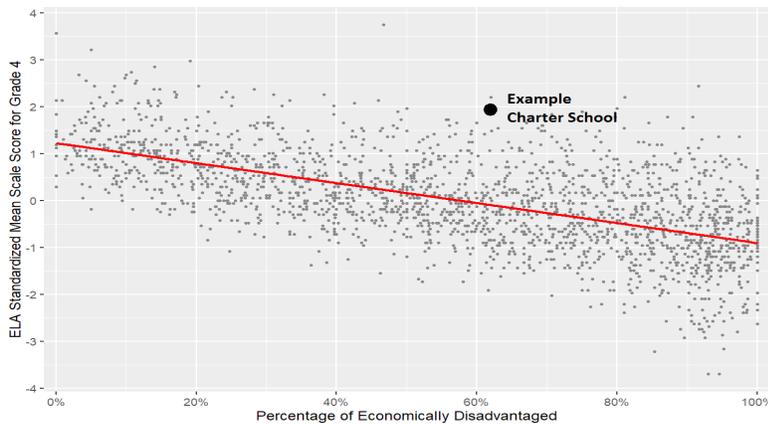
Comparative Measure: Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance on the state English language arts exam by an effect size of 0.3 or above (performing higher than expected to a meaningful degree) according to a regression analysis controlling for the enrollment of economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.

This measure applies only to ELA and mathematics. Economic disadvantage has consistently proven to be one of the most significant demographic indicators of student performance. Therefore, the Institute examines school performance in terms of the performance of all other public schools in the state enrolling a similar proportion of economically disadvantaged students. In order to determine if schools are meeting this measure, the Institute conducts a regression analysis that yields a predicted standardized, average scale score based on grade-specific test performance and the economically disadvantaged statistics of all New York State public schools.

The results for each grade can be represented with a scatter plot graph where all New York State public schools are shown as dots on a graph whose axes are the standardized, average scale score on an exam and the percent of economically disadvantaged students. Given the distribution of schools on the graph, the regression analysis generates a line of best fit which represents the predicted level of performance, or average scale score, for all schools given the percent of economically disadvantaged students. A separate analysis is conducted for each tested grade in ELA and math.

As an example, consider a 4th grade ELA regression analysis. The scatter plot shows the distribution of all public schools in New York State by ELA average scale score and percent of economically disadvantaged students. The solid line shows schools' predicted performance with a given percent of economically disadvantaged students. The further above the line a school is located, the better its results compared to what is predicted by the regression analysis. In the example below, The zero point on the Y axis represents the state wide 4th grade average scale score. The

red line represents the expected performance based on the average scale score performance of similarly situated schools, i.e., schools with similar concentrations of economically disadvantaged students - which is displayed on the



X axis. Example Charter School, a charter school with about 62 percent of its students identified as economically disadvantaged and with an average scale score roughly two standard deviations above the mean, is performing better than predicted in the 4th grade.

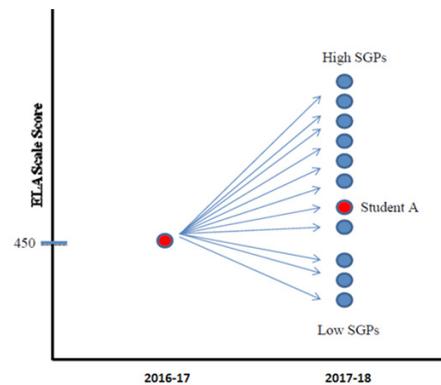
The Institute presents the results for each school in a Comparative Performance Analysis report that displays a table which compares a school’s actual and predicted

level of performance in each tested grade and overall. An effect size is the degree of difference between a school’s actual and predicted performance in each grade, relative to other schools with similar economically disadvantaged statistics (the difference between the actual and predicted outcome divided by the standard deviation). To meet the Accountability Plan measure, a school’s result must show an overall effect size of 0.3 or greater, which means a higher than expected level of performance to at least a meaningful degree, when the results of all the individual grades are combined using an average and weighted by the number of test takers at each grade level.

Growth Measure: Each year, under the state’s Growth Model, the school’s unadjusted mean growth percentile (“MGP”) for all tested students in 4th – 8th grades will be above 50.

The Institute has adapted the state’s quantitative growth model as the growth measure for ELA and mathematics goals. It is a robust and meaningful indicator of growth insofar as it is indicative of student growth compared to similar students. The model identifies similar students as those having the same baseline scale scores on previous years’ exams.

In this growth model, using past assessment scores as baseline, each student is given a student growth percentile (“SGP”), which is based on a student’s score on the current year’s state assessments compared to those of students who had identical scores on the previous year’s state tests including up to two prior years of tests (where available).



The Institute calculates the average of all student growth percentiles in ELA and mathematics at each applicable grade level and for the school. The overall school average must exceed 50 in order to meet the measure.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION MEASURES

Leading Indicator: Each year, 75 percent of students in the first and second year high school Graduation Cohorts will earn at least ten credits (if 44 needed for graduation) or five credits (if 22 needed for graduation).

This is a leading indicator of adequate progress towards the requirements of graduation at the early stages of a high school career.

Leading Indicator: Each year, 75 percent of students in the second year high school Graduation Cohort will score at or above proficiency on at least three different Regents exams required for graduation.

This is also a leading indicator of adequate progress towards the requirements of graduation, namely the timely completion of Regents exams (or alternative exams accepted by the Commissioner) in order to graduate. Thus, after two years, students should have passed exams in three of the following areas: ELA, mathematics, science, U.S. history, global history, or an approved alternative area leading to a Regents diploma through one of the state's 4+1 Pathways. Students have until the end of the summer of their second year to pass the three Regents exams or accepted alternatives.

Absolute Measure: Each year, 75 percent of students in the fourth year high school Graduation Cohort will graduate.

The ultimate purpose of a high school is to graduate its students. The Graduation Cohort examines students who entered the 9th grade four years prior and earned a high school diploma on or before August 31st of the fourth year in the cohort. While each charter high school may have its own graduation requirements, at a minimum, students are expected to pass five Regents exams, or accepted alternative exams, or fulfill the requirements for one of the state's 4+1 Pathways. Students must complete and pass one exam each in ELA, mathematics, and science, as well as the U.S. history and global history exams as required for earning a Regents diploma.

Absolute Measure: Each year, 95 percent of students in the fifth year high school Graduation Cohort will graduate.

The Institute recognizes that not all students will complete high school within four years. Thus, with this measure, credit is also given for schools' graduating students in five years. Schools providing instruction to high school students with non-traditional or other needs may include a 6th year graduation cohort measure at the discretion of the Institute.

Comparative Measure: Each year, the percent of students in the fourth year high school Graduation Cohort graduating will exceed that of the cohort from the local school district.

Charter schools compare the August graduation rate of students completing their fourth year in the charter school's Graduation Cohort to that of the respective cohort of students in the local district.

Absolute Measure: Each year, 75 percent of students in high school Graduation Cohort pursuing an alternative graduation pathway (commonly referred to as the 4+1 pathway) will achieve a Regents equivalency score and pass an approved pathway assessment required for graduation by the end of their fourth year in the cohort.

The New York State Board of Regents approved regulations establishing alternative pathways to graduation for all students. Schools may replace one of the required social studies Regents exams with an approved alternative assessment when completing the examination requirements for students graduating with a Regents diploma.⁴ Not all schools will include the 4+1 option in their academic programming. Those that choose to do so must report the achievement data from the alternative exam to the Institute as part of its annual accountability reporting requirement.

HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE PREPARATORY MEASURES

Absolute Measure: Each year, 75 percent of graduating students will demonstrate preparation for college by at least one or some combination of the following indicators:

- passing an Advanced Placement (“AP”) exam with a score of 3 or higher;
- earning a score of 4 or higher on an International Baccalaureate (“IB”) exam;
- passing a College Level Examination Program (“CLEP”) exam;
- passing a college level course offered at a college or university or through a school partnership with a college or university;
- achieving the college and career readiness benchmark on the SAT⁵ ;
- earning a Regents diploma with advanced designation; or,
- a school-created indicator approved by the Institute.

In order to gain acceptance into a rigorous college program, students will need to demonstrate their preparedness to engage in and successfully complete college level coursework. Charter high schools have a variety of valid and commonly accepted measurement options to demonstrate the school’s capacity to move students to college and career readiness. This absolute measure affords schools the opportunity to select the method or methods to demonstrate college readiness that best matches the design elements of the school’s academic program. Schools should select only those methods listed here that it will use to demonstrate the college readiness of its students and eliminate those that it will not. For instance, high schools that do not deliver an IB Program as part of their high school design should eliminate the IB option from this measure in the final version of their Accountability Plans. However, charter high schools should use any other method listed here, or any combination thereof, to demonstrate that at least 75 percent of graduates are prepared to engage in rigorous college level coursework.

Schools can propose a method for students to demonstrate college readiness not listed here to the Institute. The Institute will work with a school proposing any method to determine its rigor and the extent to which it represents a college level standard before including a proposed method in a school’s Accountability Plan.

Absolute Measure: Each year, the College, Career, and Civic Readiness Index (“CCCRI”) for the school’s Total Cohort will exceed the state’s Measure of Interim Progress set forth in the state’s ESSA accountability system.

The state’s ESSA plan includes a College, Career, and Civic Readiness Index that measures the rate of completion among a Graduation Cohort of a variety of indicators of readiness for the next step after high school. Indicators that are more rigorous and that are therefore more difficult to attain receive greater weight in the new CCCRI (e.g.,

4. For more information about requirements and approved assessments refer to the NYSED resource online: www.p12.nysed.gov/cia/multiple-pathways/

5. Currently, the College Board defines the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing Benchmark at 480 and the Math Benchmark at 530. collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/pdf/educator-benchmark-brief.pdf, p3

attaining a Regents diploma and a score of 4 or higher on an IB exam). Conversely, some less rigorous indicators that were not included in the College and Career Readiness Index under the state's No Child Left Behind accountability system are included in the CCCRI (e.g., completion of a high school equivalency program).

Comparative Measure: Each year, the school's CCCRI for the Graduation Cohort will exceed that of the district's Graduation Cohort.

Charter high schools should graduate higher proportions of students who demonstrate college, career, or civic readiness than schools in their local district using any of the approved methods to do so.

Absolute Measure: Each year, 75 percent of graduating students will matriculate into a college or university in the year after graduation.

The ultimate measure of whether a college prep high school has lived up to its mission is whether students actually enroll and succeed in college. Schools must implement a system to track and report the college acceptance and matriculation of their graduating students.

HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC SUBJECT MEASURES

Absolute Measure: Each year, 65 percent of students in the high school Accountability Cohort will meet or exceed Common Core expectations (currently scoring at or above Performance Level 4 on the Regents Exam in English Language Arts (Common Core)) by the completion of their fourth year in the cohort.

This measure applies to ELA and mathematics. The statewide adaptation of the Next Generation Learning Standards includes incorporating college, career, and civic readiness performance standards for ELA and mathematics exams; in science and social studies, the passing score remains 65. The state has benchmarked student ELA and mathematics test performance to the likely need for remedial course work when students enter college by comparing student 3rd – 8th grade test results and Regents results to their post-secondary experience at SUNY and CUNY. Besides raising the cut scores for proficiency in the 3rd – 8th grade testing program, the state has aligned Performance Levels to college, career, and civic readiness standards for passing Regents. Currently, the college, career, and civic readiness standard is met by achieving Performance Level 4 or Performance Level 5.

In recognition of the challenge of achieving these passing rates, SUNY sets the target as 65 percent of students meeting the college, career, and civic readiness standard in ELA and mathematics, but continues to set the target at 75 percent of students passing the science and social studies Regents. In science, students are expected to pass at least one of the state's science Regents exams in living environment, earth science, chemistry, or physics. In social studies, students are expected to pass both the U.S. History and Global History Regents exams (unless the school has replaced the global history requirement with an acceptable alternative requirement from the state's 4+1 pathways). As noted above, the Accountability Cohort examines all students still enrolled in the school on BEDS day four years after they entered the 9th grade. Students have until the end of the summer (the August Regents administration) of their fourth year to pass the respective Regents exams.

Absolute Measure: Each year, 80 percent of students in the high school Accountability Cohort will at least partially meet Common Core expectations (currently scoring at Performance Level 3 on the Regents English Language Arts Exam (Common Core)) by the completion of their fourth year in the cohort.

This measure applies to ELA and mathematics. Charter high schools with a mission to prepare students for college will aspire to the highest levels of student achievement in ELA and mathematics, including meeting Common Core expectations. In recognition that meeting Common Core expectations is a higher standard than is required for high school graduation, charter schools will also include measures under the content area goals that align to student achievement levels required to earn a Regents diploma. The additional achievement measure also offers a more nuanced analysis of a school's achievement levels under the state's requirements for earning a diploma.

Absolute Measure: Each year, the Performance Index on the Regents exam of students completing their fourth year in the Accountability Cohort will meet the state Measure of Interim Progress set forth in the state's ESSA accountability system.

This measure applies only to ELA and mathematics. The state's finalized and approved ESSA plan includes a revised calculation of the high school PI. In it, schools now receive additional credit for students scoring at Accountability Level 4.⁶ Due to the extra credit, the Performance Index exists on a scale of 0–250 and is calculated as follows: (percent of students scoring at Accountability Level 2) + 2*(percent of students scoring at Accountability Level 3) + 2.5 * (percent of students scoring at Accountability Level 4). The Accountability Cohort is the basis for calculating the percent of students.

Comparative Measure: Each year, the percentage of students in the Total Cohort meeting or exceeding Common Core expectations on the Regents Exam in English Language Arts (Common Core)/mathematics will exceed the percentage of comparable students in the district meeting or exceeding Common Core expectations.

This measure applies only to ELA and mathematics. Schools that include college preparation in their mission are expected to prepare students to meet the rigors of college coursework in greater proportions than those of schools in their local district. The comparison data available from the NYSED requires the Institute to use the Total Cohort as the basis of comparison for this measure.

Comparative Measure: Each year, the percentage of students in the Total Cohort partially meeting Common Core expectations on the Regents Exam in English Language Arts (Common Core)/mathematics will exceed the percentage of comparable students in the district partially Common Core expectations.

This measure applies only to ELA and mathematics. In recognition that partially meeting Common Core expectations fulfills the state's requirement for students to earn a Regents diploma, charter high schools are expected to support students learning to fulfill the requirements in proportions greater than the local district.

Comparative Measure: Each year, the Performance Index in English and mathematics of students in the high school Accountability Cohort will exceed that of students in the high school Accountability Cohort from the local school district.

6. For more information about the score ranges associated with the four Accountability Levels and the five Performance Levels on Common Core Regents exams, refer to: www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/sirs/documents/2017RegentsScoreRangesforAnnualandAccountabilityReporting.pdf.

Charter high schools are expected to exceed the performance of their local district in scoring at or above proficiency on the Regents ELA and mathematics exams.

Comparative Measure: Each year, the percent of students in the high school Total Cohort passing the social studies and science Regents by the completion their fourth year in the cohort will exceed that of students in the Total Cohort from the local school district.

Charter high schools are expected to exceed the performance of their local district in meeting the college and career ready standard in ELA and mathematics, as well as exceed the Regents pass rate in science, and social studies.

Growth Measure: Each year, 50 percent of students in the high school Accountability Cohort who did not score proficient on the New York State 8th grade ELA or mathematics exams will meet or exceed Common Core expectations (currently scoring at or above Performance Level 4 on the Regents Exam in English Language Arts (Common Core) and at or above performance level 4 on a Regents mathematics exam) by the completion of their fourth year in the cohort.

This measure applies only to ELA and mathematics. As with all students, those who enter high school with a record of low performance on the either of the 8th grade state exams are still expected to meet the respective requirements four years after they enter the 9th grade. Schools are expected to obtain the 8th grade data, track their students and disaggregate results based on 8th grade performance.

Growth Measure: Each year, 75 percent of students in the high school Accountability Cohort who did not score at or above proficiency on the New York State 8th grade math exam will at least partially meet Common Core expectations (currently scoring at Performance Level 3 on a Regents exam in mathematics) by the completion of their fourth year in the cohort.

Similarly to the expectation that students entering high school with a record of low performance reach Common Core expectations in ELA and mathematics by the end of their fourth year in the cohort, this measure offers a parallel expectation for students to meet the state’s requirements for high school graduation with a Regents diploma.

ESSA GOAL AND MEASURE

In addition to the subject area and high school specific goals, Accountability Plans for all schools must also include a goal addressing the requirements of the federal ESSA legislation. Since all students must meet the state’s performance standards, the federal statute stipulates that various sub-populations and demographic categories of students among all tested students must meet the state standard in and of themselves aside from the overall school results. ESSA requires New York State, like all states, to establish a specific system for making these determinations for its public schools, charter schools do not have latitude in establishing their own performance levels or criteria of success for meeting the ESSA accountability requirements. Therefore, the Institute requires that ESSA accountability be included as an additional goal and absolute outcome measure in a school’s Accountability Plan.

Absolute Measure: Under the state’s ESSA accountability system, the school is in good standing: the state has not identified the school as being in need of comprehensive or targeted assistance.

Each year, the state identifies each school’s accountability status. Schools are expected to be in good standing.

ADDITIONAL GOALS AND MEASURES

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND OTHER NON-ACADEMIC GOALS

A school may, at its discretion, include additional academic, organizational, and other non-academic goals in its Accountability Plan for a variety of reasons, including: to highlight priorities in the school mission, to demonstrate the effectiveness of specific aspects of the instructional program, to help in monitoring effective program implementation, or to support school improvement efforts.

In making the determination of whether to incorporate a particular additional goal into the Accountability Plan, please note the following:

- Simply including a particular additional goal in the Accountability Plan does not necessarily elevate its importance in the Institute’s evaluation of the school’s academic, organizational, or fiscal success; however, it may provide additional evidence that the Institute can take into account where the goal is well-constructed and the evidence is compelling.
- Every goal that a school chooses to include in the Accountability Plan necessarily requires the school to gather data in determining the progress it has made towards meeting that goal and report on it not only at renewal but annually in the Accountability Plan Progress Report.
- Not including a goal in its Accountability Plan does not preclude a school from setting internal goals and measures, gathering data on those goals and then deciding to include the results as additional evidence in Accountability Plan Progress Reports and upon renewal—or intermittently and more informally in reports to the school’s board, parents, the larger community, etc.

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC OUTCOME MEASURES

To the extent that assessments other than the state exams have been rigorously developed and scored, are aligned with state performance standards, and can demonstrate meaningful student progress, the Institute will consider this evidence along with state exams in determining if the school has improved student learning and achievement. The burden is on the school to demonstrate that these other assessment measures provide notable and reliable evidence of achievement. For the purpose of developing an Accountability Plan and considering which assessment instruments to include in the outcome measures, it is useful to distinguish between standardized tests and locally scored assessments.

Standardized Tests: Standardized tests are typically nationally normed tests, which are usually not directly aligned with state performance standards. They provide a comparative measure of student performance (i.e., percentile rank or normal curve equivalent (“NCE”) score compared to a national sample) rather than an indication of proficiency attainment. While an NCE of 50 is often referred to as “grade level performance,” the median score of a national sample is not necessarily the equivalent of scoring at the proficient level on the criterion-referenced state exams and may not be predictive of performance on state exams.

Given this information, standardized tests are generally efficient and inexpensive to score and yield objective, reliable quantitative results. Teachers do not have to be trained in scoring the test and do not have to spend time scoring exams. The school does not have to monitor the consistency of scoring. Also, the validity of the test is based on the extent to which it matches its own stated objectives or external standards. In addition to the accountability functions, grade-level results indicate if the instructional program is effective in each grade, and, by disaggregating the data, if special interventions have been effective. Like school-developed assessments, standardized tests can be useful tools for evaluating the effectiveness of the instructional program in enabling students to achieve on the state examinations. They can also allow a school to measure students' performance in subjects not covered by the state testing program, such as social studies and Spanish. If rigorously administered, they can provide additional evidence of student learning and achievement. On the other hand, because standardized test are developed externally, they may not reflect the school's day-to-day instruction and only be indicative of a broad level of student skill and knowledge.

Internal, School-developed Assessments: A school may also consider using internally-developed assessment tools to gauge progress and success. If teachers or other school or network staff create internal assessments, the school should include in the Accountability Plan the rubrics or scoring instruments. In addition, when reporting on student performance based on these internal measures, the school should include a discussion of the scoring methods so as to ensure reliability, as well as the extent to which the evaluation of student performance addresses state performance standards, to ensure validity. The Institute encourages schools to consider carefully the decision to include measures based on internal assessments. Charter schools often find that designing such measures and making them valid and reliable is not easy; moreover, implementing them is often time consuming and expensive. Keep in mind that as rigorous internal assessment practices are essential to preparing students for meeting state performance standards, they are part of an effective instructional program. For these reasons, the Institute includes use of internal assessments in its regular evaluation of schools.

As with the required outcome measures, additional outcome measures may be of any of the following types:

Absolute Outcome Measures: These measures would be based on assessments other than the state exams, which would typically be externally-developed, published instruments, such as an individually-administered early childhood assessment such as the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS); a standardized test such as Terra Nova or Stanford 10; or, a school-developed instrument, such as portfolios.

Examples of Additional Absolute Measures

- Each year, 75% of students in 2nd - 10th grade will perform at the proficient level on the English language arts Terra Nova exam.
- Each year, 85% of student-completed art portfolios will be deemed proficient by a panel of external experts using the school's portfolio rubric.

Comparative Outcome Measures: In addition to the two required comparative measures, the school's performance may also be compared to the performance of other individual schools, districts, the state, or nation. Schools may be selected because of their proximate location, reputation, similar demographics or program characteristics, as well as because they are schools that many students in the charter school would have otherwise attended.

Examples of Additional Comparative Measures

- Each year, the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and scoring at or above proficiency on the state's English language arts exam will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the City's Science and Math Magnet School.

Growth Outcome Measures: Schools may wish to administer norm-referenced tests in ELA and mathematics in addition to the state examinations in order to provide additional evidence on the value the instructional program adds to student learning. Such a growth measure would examine the extent to which each cohort's average NCE has made meaningful progress toward reaching grade-level. The target would be to reduce the gap considerably between the prior year's average NCE and grade level, i.e., an NCE of 50.⁷

Example of an Additional Growth Measure

- Each year, each cohort of students will halve the difference between their previous year's average NCE and an NCE of 50. Cohorts that have already achieved an average NCE of 50 will show an increase in their average NCE.

ADDITIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER NON-ACADEMIC OUTCOME MEASURES

As organizational goals are means toward enabling students to achieve academically and as schools are required to comply with legal requirements and to operate in a fiscally sound manner, organizational goals, including parent and student satisfaction, legal compliance, and fiscal soundness, are additional components of the Accountability Plan. Unique aspects of the school's non-academic program may also be included as additional measures.

Additional organizational and other non-academic outcome measures tend to be absolute measures. If a comparative measure is included, it is the school's responsibility to collect and analyze the comparison data, which may be difficult to obtain. Make sure data will be available and accessible before including an additional comparative measure in the Accountability Plan.

The Accountability Plan provides an opportunity to measure the results of special components of the school's program or mission. It offers the best opportunity to highlight the unique and unusual elements that the school adds to the broader education marketplace. This is especially important for elementary schools that include middle school preparation as part of their mission or middle schools that include high school preparation as part of their mission. If, for example, the school has a unique performing arts program, emphasizes citizenship training and community involvement, or has a special sports program that most other schools do not, a non-academic measure

7. In the case of norm-referenced tests, progress, expressed in NCE scores, is measured as a gain in the relative rank of students in relation to a national sample. A cohort of students maintaining the same NCE score means remaining in the same relative position or making the same year-to-year progress as students with similar scores in the national sample. A cohort of students showing an increase in percentile rank or NCE score means that it has made greater progress than expected by virtue of moving to a higher relative position compared to the national sample. No gain (i.e., zero change) in NCEs means making no more progress than expected compared to the national sample. An increase of 3 or 4 NCEs means showing greater progress than expected compared to the national sample. This degree of progress, however, does not in itself indicate that students continuing on this trajectory are likely to pass Regents exams and graduate from high school.

might address how much progress students are expected to make in those areas in addition to their academic progress. These measures can reinforce what is unique about the school.

Examples of an Additional Non-Academic Measure

- Every teacher will have an individual professional development plan and demonstrate progress in at least five of seven domains.
- Each year, 85% of students will complete 30 hours of community service.
- Students will demonstrate adherence to the core values as evidenced by 75% of visitors indicating positive student behavior on exit surveys.
- All teachers will participate in training in the use of technology and demonstrate technology integration into their instructional practice.

ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES

Parent and Student Satisfaction: Parent and student satisfaction measures may be based on the results of an annual parent survey, or address such issues as the persistence with which parents continue to enroll their children or the annual student attendance rate. The criteria of success for these measures should be ambitious, but consistent with high-performing schools.

Examples of Satisfaction Measures

- Each year, parents will express satisfaction with the school's program based on the school's parent survey in which at least two thirds of all parents provide a positive response to each of the survey items.
- Each year, 90% of all students enrolled during the course of the year return the following September.
- Each year, the school will have an average daily student attendance rate of at least 95%.

Legal and Fiscal Outcomes: These measures may highlight some aspect of the school being in legal compliance and fiscally sound. The measures should be concrete and may demonstrate a school's performance after having been out of compliance in a specific area or for having faced specific fiscal challenges. Note that such measures should not just quantify inputs expected in a normal education program.

Examples of Compliance Measures

- Each year, the school will increase its expenditure on students with disabilities programming by \$100,000 to address past underfunding.
- Each year, the school will take address and correct all internal control or compliance deficiencies, if any, identified by its external auditor or the Institute.

ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND REVISION

The Accountability Plan is a critical component of the charter, providing a formal blueprint for school performance leading up to renewal. Finalizing the document will take some time, during which there will be discussions with the Institute, reviews of drafts among school stakeholders, and submission of a number of iterations of the Accountability Plan to the Institute for its review.

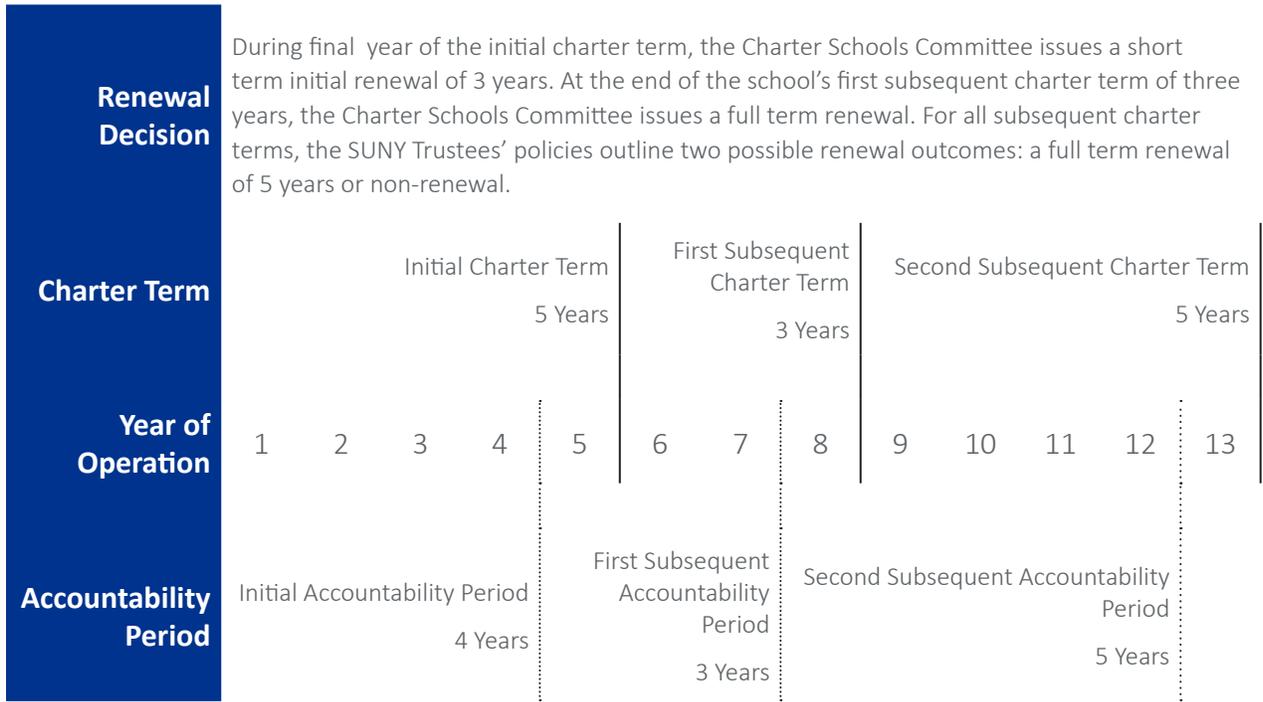
INITIAL ACCOUNTABILITY PLANS

While applicants for schools who submit proposals include a draft Accountability Plan in their applications, a chartered education corporation must complete a final version by the end of the first year of operation.

The drafting of the initial Accountability Plans as part of proposals for establishing schools is meant to encourage schools to begin addressing the challenges of measuring progress before the beginning of the school's operation, but SUNY's timeline also recognizes that the Accountability Plan's development typically extends into the first year of operation.

An Initial Accountability Plan will cover a school's first four years of operation (not including planning years if the school took them), which is known as the Accountability Period. Because the first renewal decision is made during the school's fifth year of operation, i.e., prior to the end of the first charter period, student performance results from the final year of the charter term are not included in the initial Accountability Period and are, therefore, not part of the initial charter renewal process. Should the school be renewed, however, results from that fifth year of operation will be the first year of the subsequent Accountability Period, which will be addressed by the subsequent Accountability Plan.

Sample School Accountability Plan Periods: Initial Short Term Renewal



SUBSEQUENT ACCOUNTABILITY PLANS

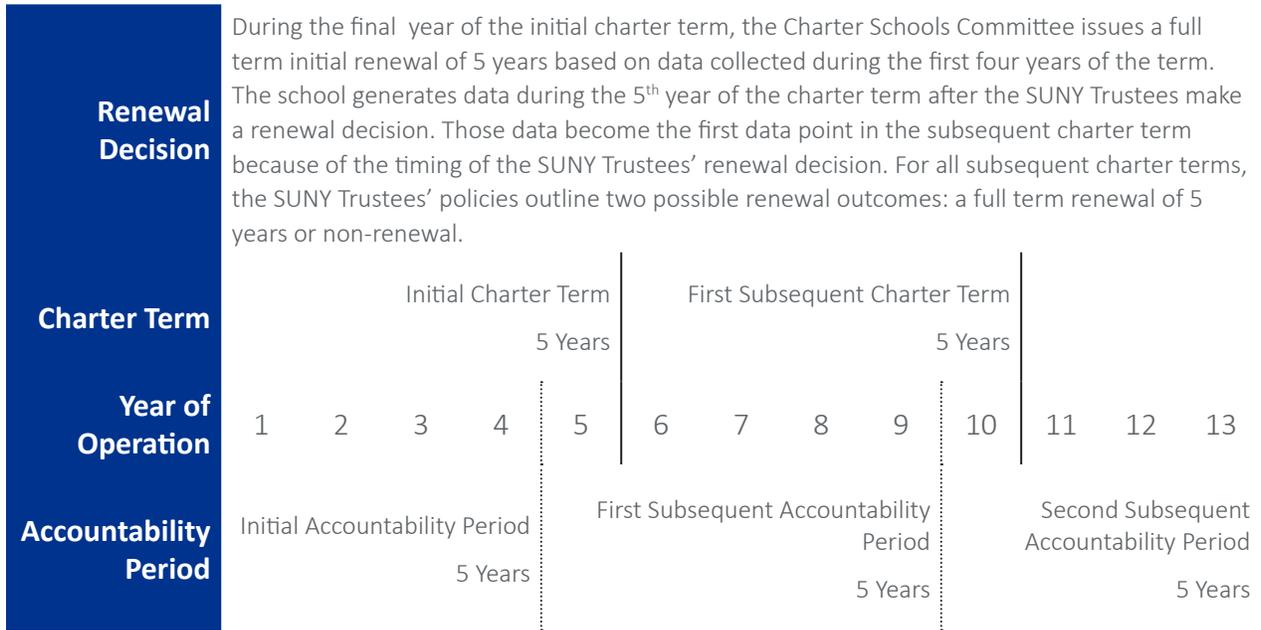
As part of the renewal process, schools must submit a new proposed Accountability Plan as part of their renewal application. The Institute and the school will undertake the same iterative process described above to develop a new Accountability Plan that will be incorporated into the school's new charter should it be renewed. Again, the Accountability Period covered by this plan will include the last year of the previous charter term through the next-to-last year of the new charter term.

Examples of Subsequent Accountability Periods:

- If a school in its fifth year applies for renewal and receives a three-year renewal, its first subsequent accountability period covers the fifth through seventh years of operation, i.e., the last year of its first charter term and the first two years of its second charter term.
- If this school in its eighth year of operation and the last year of its subsequent three-year charter period again applies for renewal and this time receives a five year renewal, the new accountability period would cover the eighth through the twelfth years of operation, i.e., the last year of the three year charter period plus the next four years of the new charter term. See the chart above for an illustration.

- If a school in its fifth year applies for renewal and receives a full term, five-year renewal, its first subsequent accountability period covers the fifth through ninth years of operation, i.e., the last year of its first charter term and the first four years of its second charter term. The timing of the SUNY Trustees’ subsequent renewal decisions thereafter require the end of the Charter Term to lag behind the end of the Accountability Period by one year in perpetuity.

Sample School Accountability Plan Periods: Initial Full Term Renewal



FINAL COMMENTS

The purpose of the Accountability Plan is to define with specificity the goals and outcome measures for the school and its students throughout the life of its charter. The annual Accountability Plan Progress Report will document the school’s progress in meeting each of the goals included in the Accountability Plan. A school’s progress toward achieving its goals will play a critical role in the renewal process.

While the Accountability Plan remains in effect for the duration of a school’s charter, it may be amended upon request and with the Institute’s permission. Such changes may require that the charter be revised (requiring in turn approval by the SUNY Trustees and the review and comment of the Board of Regents).



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