

THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

SCHOOL EVALUATION REPORT
**HEKETI COMMUNITY
CHARTER SCHOOL**

VISIT DATE: MARCH 7 - 8, 2019
REPORT DATE: APRIL 8, 2019

SUNY Charter Schools Institute

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Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

A collection of colorful pencils and paper clips on a dark grey background. The pencils are arranged in a fan shape, showing various colors including green, blue, red, pink, orange, yellow, green, orange, blue, purple, and brown. There are also several paper clips in various colors like orange, green, pink, blue, and black.

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INTRODUCTION & SCHOOL BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

This School Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school visit on March 7 - 8, 2019 to Heketi Community Charter School (“Heketi”). While the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”) near the end of a charter term, most mid-cycle school evaluation visits focus on a subset of these benchmarks. This subset, the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, addresses the academic success of the school and the effectiveness and viability of the school organization. It provides a framework for examining the quality of the educational program, focusing on teaching and learning (e.g., curriculum, instruction, assessment, and services for at-risk students), as well as leadership, organizational capacity, and board oversight. The Institute uses the established criteria on a regular basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

Appendix A to the report contains a School Overview with descriptive information about the school including enrollment and demographic data, as well as historical information regarding the life of the school. It also provides background information on the conduct of the visit including information about the evaluation team, and puts the visit in the context of the school’s current charter cycle. Appendix B displays the performance summary that contains the school’s performance on the required measures under its ELA and mathematics goals. Appendix C displays the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks.

This report does not contain an overall rating or comprehensive indicator that would specify at a glance the school’s prospects for renewal. Rather, it serves as a summary of the school’s program based on the Qualitative Education Benchmarks. The Institute intends this selection of information to be an exception report in order to highlight areas of concern. As such, limited detail about positive elements of the educational program is not an indication that the Institute does not recognize other indicators of program effectiveness.

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INTRODUCTION & SCHOOL BACKGROUND

SCHOOL BACKGROUND

The State University of New York Board of Trustees (“SUNY Trustees”) approved the original charter for Heketi on September 15, 2010. The school opened its doors in the fall of 2012, initially serving 88 students in Kindergarten and 1st grade. Heketi is in its second year of its second charter term and its charter is due for renewal in the 2019-20 school year. The school has a chartered enrollment of 298 students in Kindergarten – 5th grade. The school is located in New York City Community School District 7 (“CSD 7”) at 403 Concord Ave, Bronx, NY.

Heketi’s mission states:



Our mission is to provide an exceptional educational solution through an integrated educational design with high expectations, extensive academic and social-emotional support, and a high level of family and community engagement.

Heketi’s vision is to implement an educational program that honors the heritage of a large portion of the Spanish speaking population in the South Bronx, and embrace the power of multilingual literacy and reading skills for success and leadership. A dual language program is an essential part of Heketi’s design. The goal for the program is to build students’ Spanish fluency and support English language learners’ (“ELLs”) English language acquisition.

Despite the dedication and efforts of the staff, Heketi currently does not have the structures in place to meet its Accountability Plan goals or meet its vision of producing students who are bilingual and biliterate. The board has not provided strategic long term guidance or accountability for the instructional program. As such, school leaders’ decisions have not produced significantly improved and sustained student achievement.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

2017-18 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

At the beginning of the Accountability Period,¹ 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. Throughout the charter term, the Institute examines results for five required Accountability Plan measures on an annual basis and provides an Accountability Dossier to each school detailing the school's progress toward meeting its Accountability Plan goals. Because the Act requires charters be held "accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results"² and states the educational programs at a charter school must "meet or exceed the student performance standards adopted by the board of regents"³ for other public schools, SUNY's required accountability measures rest on performance as measured by statewide assessments. More information about the required Accountability Plan measures can be found on the Institute's website at www.newyorkcharters.org/accountability/.

In 2017-18, the second year of the school's three year Accountability Period following its Initial Short-Term Renewal, Heketi did not meet either of its key Accountability Plan goals in English language arts ("ELA") or mathematics for the second year in a row. The school will produce one more student achievement data point in 2018-19 that it can use to demonstrate a record of meeting or coming close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals. The school met its science and No Child Left Behind ("NCLB") goals in 2017-18.

1. 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 a subsequent charter term, the Accountability Period covers the final year of the previous charter term and ends with the school year prior to the final year of the current charter term.

2. Education Law § 2850(2)
(f).

3. Education Law § 2854(1)(d).

ELA

In 2017-18, Heketi did not meet its ELA goal after having not met the goal the previous year. With 27% of the school's students enrolled in at least their second year scoring at or above proficiency, the school is far from meeting the absolute target of 75%. The school's proficiency rate fell below the district's performance for the fourth consecutive year. Heketi also failed to meet the target for its comparative effect size measure performing lower than expected in comparison to schools across the state enrolling similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students. The school posted a growth score marginally above the target of 50 in 2017-18. However, given the school's record of low absolute achievement in ELA, this level of growth does not indicate that the school is sufficiently growing the performance of all students such that they are performing at or above proficiency by the time they leave the school after 5th grade. Additionally in 2017-18, the difference in growth scores between the 4th and 5th grade cohorts was large, providing further evidence that the school struggles to improve the learning of all students.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

MATHEMATICS

Heketi also failed to meet its mathematics goal in 2017-18 as it had the previous year. After narrowly outperforming the district in 2016-17, the percentage of the school's students enrolled in at least their second year fell below the district by over two percentage points in 2017-18. While the school's overall proficiency rate was marginally higher than the proficiency rate of students enrolled for at least two years, the performance is not meaningfully distinguishable from the district's achievement. In comparison to demographically similar schools across the state, Heketi performed lower than expected. While the school met the target of 50 for its growth measure, the mean growth percentile for the school's 5th grade cohort was substantially lower than the 4th grade cohort. None of the 39 tested 5th grade students scored at or above proficiency on the mathematics exam in 2017-18. The school failed to move any students to proficiency for the same cohort when those students were enrolled in 4th grade during the 2016-17 school year.

SCIENCE

In 2017-18, Heketi met its science goal when 91% of its 4th grade students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficiency. The school's performance exceeded both the absolute target of 75% and the district's proficiency rate of 77%.

NCLB

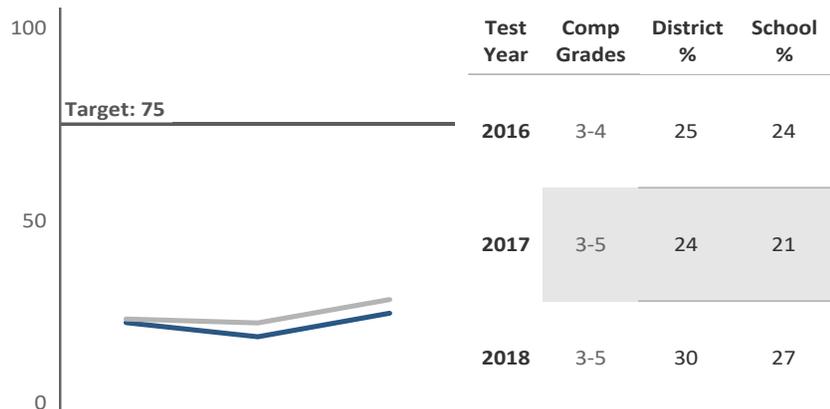
Heketi met its NCLB goal in 2017-18 as the school was not identified as a focus charter or as requiring a local assistance plan under the state's accountability system.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

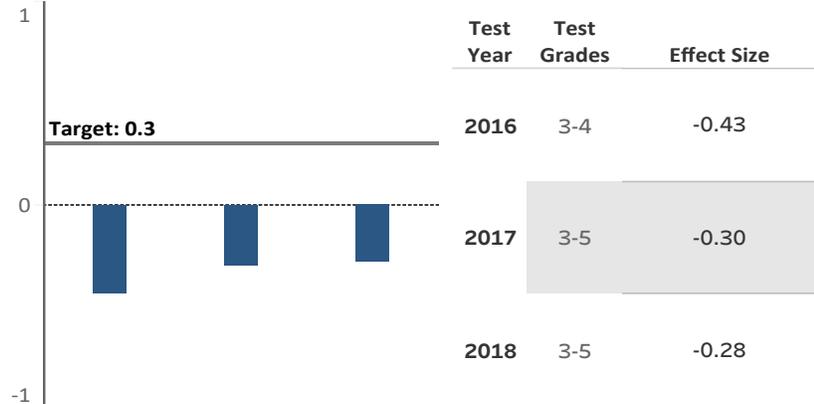
HEKETI COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

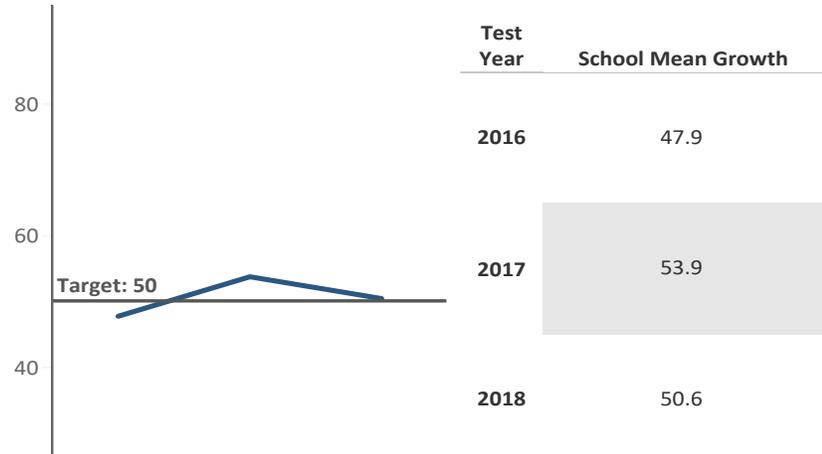
Comparative Measure: District Comparison. Each year, the percentage of students at **the school** in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in ELA will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the district.



Comparative Measure: Effect Size. Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance by an effect size of 0.3 or above in **ELA** 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, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile in **ELA**.

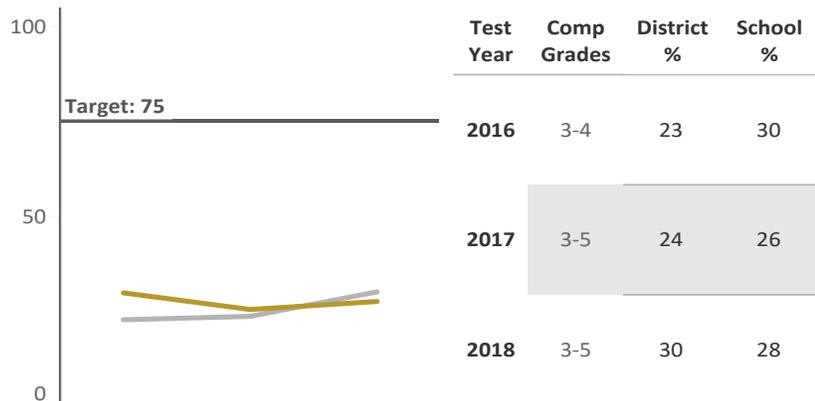


ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

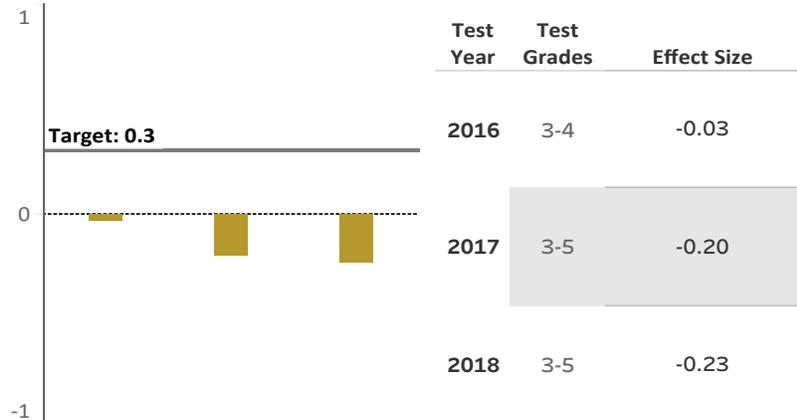
HEKETI COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

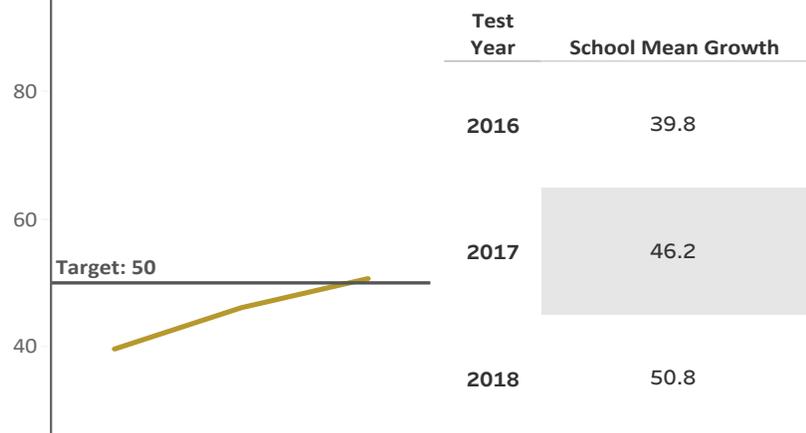
Comparative Measure: District Comparison. Each year, the percentage of students at **the school** in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in mathematics will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in **the district**.



Comparative Measure: Effect Size. Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance by an effect size of 0.3 or above in **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, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile in **mathematics**.

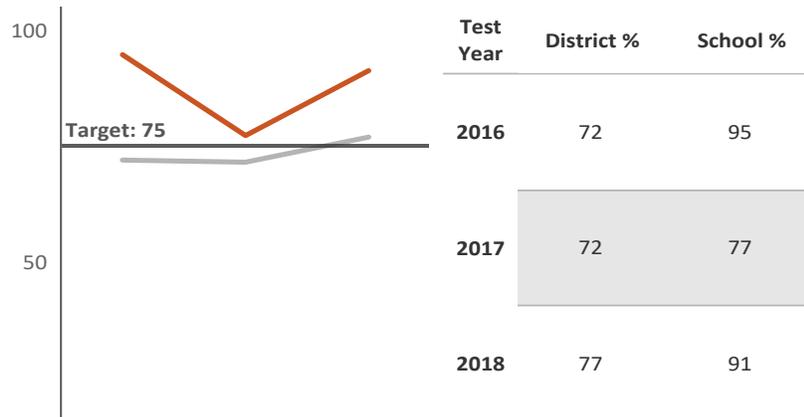


ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

HEKETI COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

SCIENCE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

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**.



SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE

	2016	2017	2018
Enrollment Receiving Mandated Academic Services	46	47	46
Tested on State Exam	11	18	20
School Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	0.0	5.6	10.0
District Percent Proficient	7.5	7.4	11.5
	2016	2017	2018
ELL Enrollment	61	64	64
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam	60	50	64
School Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress on NYSESLAT	26.7	14.0	17.2

The academic outcome data about the performance of students receiving special education services and ELLs above is not tied to separate goals in the school's formal Accountability Plan.

The NYSESLAT, the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, is a standardized state exam.

"Making Progress" is defined as moving up at least one level of proficiency. Student scores fall into five categories/proficiency levels: Entering; Emerging; Transitioning; Expanding; and, Commanding.

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 and indicates this with an "s."

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

QUALITATIVE BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, grounded in the body of research from the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University,⁴ 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.⁵

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1B

DOES HEKETI HAVE AN ASSESSMENT SYSTEM THAT IMPROVES INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT LEARNING?

In the final year of its Accountability Period, Heketi initiated a new assessment system, which leads the school with a lack of information regarding year to year comparative data. Though the board and school leaders state a goal of 75% of students reaching proficiency in ELA and mathematics, leaders have not established measurable goals that indicate the school is making progress toward these goals. Leaders lack effective strategies to use data to monitor students' progress and adapt support for teachers and students.

- Although Heketi regularly administers a variety of assessments, the school's lack of a strategic long term plan for curricula and instruction led to leaders making multiple sudden changes in the past three years in response to low student achievement data. This year, for every grade, the school administers the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System ("F&P") at least twice per year, the Early Learning Accomplishment Profile ("E-LAP") as an ELA interim assessment three times per year, and the Northwest Evaluation Association MAP ("MAP") as a mathematics interim assessment six times per year. To assess students' language proficiency in Spanish, the school administers the F&P and DIBELS in Spanish, school created Spanish language interim assessments, LAS Links to assess proficiency at the end of the year, and other curricular assessments. School leaders and teachers focus heavily on the F&P and the interim assessments to provide data for coaching plans and in-class remediation. Given the changes, the school does not have year over year comparative data from interim assessments to help determine specific progress made with student achievement, target teacher and student intervention, and gain a clear sense of the assessments' predictive value for state tests.

4. An extensive body of research identifying and confirming the correlates of effective schools exists dating back four decades. Selected sources include: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/80/77488.pdf>; and http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/fryer/files/dobbie_fryer_revision_final.pdf.

5. Additional details regarding the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks are available at: www.newyorkcharters.org/suny-renewal-benchmarks/.

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

- Teachers attempt to use assessment results to meet students' needs, but leaders do not consistently hold teachers accountable for the effective implementation of teachers' action plans to address student misconceptions. During each interim assessment cycle, teachers meet in grade level teams to norm scoring on short response or open ended response questions. After scoring the assessments, teachers then meet in grade teams during data days to access data from the school's online data repository, analyze the data, create an action plan, and reteach and reassess students. Teachers discuss reassessments during grade level meetings. However, instructional leaders do not consistently provide oversight to the reteach process and do not ensure that teachers consistently incorporate observation feedback into these action plans. Overall, the percentage of students who have achieved mastery on the school's mathematics interim assessments has increased by only one percent from the September to the January administration.
- School leaders do not consistently use data to evaluate teacher performance and develop coaching strategies. The school director uses the Danielson Framework for Teaching Evaluation to evaluate teachers' performance, which is primarily based on classroom observation data. The teacher evaluation process does not include consideration of students' assessment data, and the school director has not communicated specific benchmark targets for students' performance on schoolwide assessments. Instructional leaders do not systematically use student achievement data to develop coaching strategies.

DOES HEKETI'S CURRICULUM SUPPORT TEACHERS IN THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING?

Heketi recognizes significant deficiencies in its current curricular programs. In the middle of its 7th year of operation, the school is beginning to transition to a new curricular program after switching programs multiple times due to a lack of meaningful results in a short period of time. The inconsistent curricular framework and lack of leaders' effective oversight hinder teachers' ability to implement the curriculum with fidelity and create strong instructional plans. Lesson plans lack deliberate questioning that engages students in higher order thinking and lack meaningful strategies for using data to drive instructional practices.

- Heketi lacks a consistent curricular framework that provides a structure for teachers and students, due to the school's sudden curricular changes. This year, the school uses Foundations for ELA, Wilson Reading for phonics instruction, TERC Investigations and Exemplars for mathematics, Word Study and Words Their Way for Spanish language arts, FOSS for science, and Expeditionary Learning for both social studies and science.

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

In December 2018, based on students' interim assessment results, school leaders stopped using the curricula implemented at the beginning of the year, to instead focus on test preparation primarily using ReadyNY for both ELA and mathematics in 3rd – 5th grade. During its charter term, the school has made several curricular changes without identifying long term curricular priorities. The Institute's classroom observations show an inconsistent implementation of these curricula across grade levels and content areas, and lessons that lack students' engagement in higher order thinking. The Institute did not find consistent evidence that school leaders give teachers the necessary supports to internalize and implement the curriculum.

- The school lacks a clear process for selecting and reviewing its curriculum. Although school leaders made curricular changes in response to low assessment data, leaders lack a strategic plan for the process that will be used to select future curriculum that ensures students' achievement in the short and long term, and aligns to the school's mission.
- The continuous curricular changes impact teachers' ability to plan purposeful lessons and implement the curricula with fidelity. For the first half of the school year, instructional coaches focused lesson plan feedback through an intellectual preparation process, limiting feedback to only one lesson plan per week for the grade level, resulting in a lack of oversight in the coherence of lessons in each subject. Starting January 2019 after the school's second round of interim assessments, coaches began working together to give collective feedback on lesson plans for general education, special education, and the dual language program. However, in the absence of clear schoolwide goals beyond achieving 75% proficiency, lesson plans do not effectively drive instruction. Though leaders now collect and review lesson plans weekly, the plans lack deliberate questioning strategies that engage students in higher order thinking. The school collects data frequently yet lacks meaningful strategies for how the data drives instructional practices. For example, leaders may instruct teachers to reteach a lesson that resulted in low end of class assessment data. However, lesson plan feedback does not consistently include strategies for how the teacher should reteach to make the lesson more impactful.

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1D

IS HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION EVIDENT THROUGHOUT HEKETI?

In the absence of a clear long term instructional vision and effective coaching, instruction throughout the school lacks rigor. The Institute did not observe teacher questioning that consistently gauges all students' understanding of the lesson objective. Students rarely engage in activities that promote higher order thinking and lessons lack urgency. As shown in the chart that follows, during the evaluation visit, Institute team members conducted 19 classroom observations following a defined protocol used in all school evaluation visits. Of the 19 classroom observations, nine were of dual language classes.

		GRADE						
		K	1	2	3	4	5	Total
CONTENT AREA	ELA		2	1	1	2	2	8
	Math	1	1	1	2	1	1	7
	Science	1			1	1		3
	Other						1	1
	Total	2	3	2	4	4	4	19

- While lessons in 13 of 19 observations included a stated purpose for each lesson that was posted on the board, the activities included in the lessons and strategies for instruction and student work were not purposeful and not effective. Some lessons lack purpose and do not fully engage students in meaningful work that leads to mastery of the objective. For example, in one science class, teachers asked students to make observations about a set of samples, but teachers did not explain how these observations were related to the objective and did not hold students accountable for the quality of their observations.
- Less than half of teachers regularly and effectively check for students' understanding (8 out of 19 lessons observed). Although teachers attempt to ask questions to gauge students' mastery, teachers do not consistently gauge understanding of the entire class. Teachers rely on a few volunteers to answer questions posed to the whole class, rather than intentionally calling on specific students or using whole class techniques. During independent work time, teachers do not consistently provide feedback to all students. In multiple lessons observed, teachers allowed students to work independently without providing any feedback.

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

- Teachers do not engage students in activities that promote higher order thinking (1 out of 19 lessons observed). Teachers ask questions throughout the lesson but the questions do not motivate or allow students to engage in critical thinking. Teachers oversimplify the material and do not push students to explain and justify their thinking or analyze each other's work. For example, in one mathematics classroom, students worked independently on a rigorous word problem. Then, rather than engaging students in a high level discussion related to the objective, the teacher simply called on one student who had completed the problem correctly to explain every step of the work, without checking incorrect students' understanding or allowing students to explain the thought process behind each step.
- Teachers do not maximize learning time or create a consistent focus on high academic achievement (7 out of 19 classrooms observed). Students are compliant, but lesson pacing is slow and does not align to pacing stated in teachers' lesson plans. Teachers do not hold students to a high standard of completing and fully engaging in the expected work during the class period. For example, in one classroom the three teachers did not attempt to re-engage two students who were not completing work. Additionally, a minute and a half after teachers gave the direction to start independent work, one teacher stated that all students should be reading the story. However, only nine of the 23 students in the class were reading, and the three teachers did not correct the remaining students or push them to work with urgency.

DOES HEKETI HAVE STRONG INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP?

Since Heketi's Short-Term Renewal in 2017, leadership turnover, staff vacancies, and the board's lack of direction and urgency around the academic program have hindered the establishment of strong instructional leadership systems resulting in little to no evidence of success on which to make a winning case for charter renewal. Though the current leadership team has brought in new curricular and instructional supports this year to improve student achievement, the school lacks evidence to show the efficacy of these changes.

- School leadership has not established an environment of high expectations for teacher and student performance. Now in its 7th year of operation, school leaders are shifting more focus on the academic program having previously prioritized promoting strong culture and relationships between staff members, students, and families. Although school leaders and teachers cite the goal of attaining 75% proficiency on schoolwide

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

and state assessments, school leaders do not articulate specific benchmark goals to identify acceptable student progress above 27% and 28% of students scoring at or above proficiency in ELA and mathematics, respectively. As such, leaders fail to clearly communicate clear performance standards to teachers and students and hold teachers accountable for student achievement.

- The current instructional leadership structure does not fully support the development of all teaching staff. The school's intended organizational structure for instructional leaders consists of a school director, ELA instructional specialist, dual language specialist ("DL specialist"), and the director of curriculum and assessment ("DCA"). Due to a vacancy in the ELA specialist role, one team member has taken on both the ELA specialist and DL specialist role ("ELA/DL specialist") and spends the majority of time supporting the ELA teachers. As such, the ELA/DL specialist lacks the capacity to provide curricular and instructional supports to the dual language teachers.
- Although instructional leaders have made significant changes to the coaching system partway through the current school year, the Institute did not find evidence that coaching improves teacher effectiveness and raises student achievement. The ELA/DL specialist coaches the dual language and ELA teachers, the DCA coaches the mathematics and science teachers, and the special education coordinator coaches the special education teachers. Each week instructional leaders discuss one particular lesson with the teacher, observe that lesson, then meet with the teacher to review the data from that lesson. Instructional leaders provide feedback based on the Danielson rubric and record the feedback in a shared tracker. However, instructional leaders' feedback inconsistently provides clear action steps for teacher instruction, and leaders do not record teachers' progress as evidenced by follow up classroom observations or student assessment data. It is not clear that teachers are able to track their own instructional progress. Given the recent changes to the school's coaching system, the school could not provide evidence to show the impact of coaching on student achievement.
- Instructional leaders provide opportunities for grade level teams to plan within grade levels, but Heketi lacks structures to ensure all subjects have rigorous, aligned content. At the start of the school year, dual language teachers and the ELA/DL specialist met monthly to plan curriculum and instruction. At the time of the Institute's visit, the dual language team had not met since December, due to the ELA/DL specialist not having the time to fulfill both dual language program and ELA instructional duties. Due to a lack of consistent and sustained oversight, the dual language curriculum lacks coherence and vertical alignment.
- Instructional leaders' do not deliver a professional development program that develops all teachers' skills. Heketi's professional development activities align to the school's professional development goals of improving small group instruction and improving

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

student writing skills in core content classes. However, although the school provides the dual language program to about half of its students, the school has provided little professional development that is targeted to dual language instruction.

- Instructional leaders do not effectively hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement. The school director uses the Danielson rubric to provide informal observations and formal mid-year and end-of-year evaluations to teachers. Formal teacher evaluations do not include appraisals of students' performance, and in the absence of specific benchmark achievement goals, school leaders are unable to effectively hold teachers accountable. Additionally, final written evaluations from the 2017-18 school year were inconsistently completed, and at the time of the Institute's visit in early March 2019, the school director had not started mid-year evaluations. Leaders recognize a need to improve in this area and are working with an external consultant to put accountability systems in place. However, the efforts to establish accountability systems are late in the school's charter term.

DOES HEKETI MEET THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF AT-RISK STUDENTS?

Results for at-risk students demonstrate that Heketi has not established an effective at-risk program to support students with disabilities and English language learners ("ELLs"). Leaders recognize a need to improve its supports for at-risk students, and in its 7th year of operation, the school is only beginning to implement consistent systems to support at-risk students.

- In its seventh year of operation, Heketi has still not fully established a system to identify students with disabilities and students who struggle academically. At the beginning of the year the child study response to intervention ("RTI") team administered DIBELS in English and Spanish languages to identify students who struggle academically. Based on feedback from an external consultant, the school is now piloting a new multi-tiered support system ("MTSS") in 3rd grade to identify students who need more intensive supports, including referrals to the district Committee on Special Education for potential evaluations for special education services. At the time of the Institute's visit, the pilot program was in its first week of operation, and leaders had not set expectations for how to provide intensive supports for students struggling academically in other grades. To identify ELLs, the school administers the Home Language Identification Survey to newly registered families and conducts follow up interviews with families and students. The school then administers the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners ("NYSITELL"), when appropriate.

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

- The school's intervention programs do not meet the needs of at-risk students. The DCA and special education director oversee the guided reading program in 2nd – 5th grade, the school's main intervention support. Teachers group students by reading level across grades and use the Leveled Literacy Intervention program. Heketi provides integrated co-teaching ("ICT") classes and special education teacher support services ("SETSS") to students with disabilities. At the time of the Institute's visit the school had a special education teacher vacancy in the 4th grade for the entire school year. Heketi also has vacancies for two reading specialist positions. Staff vacancies have required the SETSS teacher and general education teachers to spend additional time providing interventions.
- Heketi's model is to serve ELLs through the dual language program but the school lacks consistency in its services. For the 2018-19 school year, the school has two ELL teachers, one of which is a long term substitute teacher with English to Speakers of Other Languages ("ESOL") certification who replaced a full time teacher in December 2018. The ELL teachers provide push in and pull out services. Despite these efforts, the school recognizes its at-risk programming is ineffective. On the 2018 state assessments, only 10% of the school's students with disabilities scored at or above proficiency in ELA and five percent in mathematics while over 32% of general education students scored at or above proficiency on both assessments.
- Heketi is only now beginning to put in place systems to monitor at-risk students' progress. The DCA uses the school's electronic data system to disaggregate interim and F&P data by different subgroups. The DCA and special education coordinator then group students for guided reading and the new MTSS tiered interventions. The school's new special education coordinator has only recently implemented a system to monitor and track students' IEP goals and ELLs' language proficiency. School leaders have identified a need to use a more robust set of student data to monitor progress but were still beginning to use their student information system to collect data at the time of the Institute's visit.

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 2A

IS HEKETI FAITHFUL TO ITS MISSION AND DOES IT IMPLEMENT THE KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN ITS CHARTER?

Heketi makes efforts to be faithful to its mission and implement its key design elements, but is not implementing its dual language immersion program with fidelity. School leaders and the board do not hold staff members and students to high expectations. Instruction is not effectively data driven and only half of students have access to dual language instruction.

- The school follows a dual language instruction model that differs by grade and content areas. Teachers teach a content area either only in English, only in Spanish, or alternate teaching curricular units in English and Spanish. The model used this year differs from what the school used last school year. The Institute did not find evidence that either of these models have been effective, as students have not shown consistent improvement in Spanish language proficiency levels. Based on the limited data the school could provide, students who have been in Heketi's dual language program for two or more years have not shown the expected proficiency level on the Spanish LAS Links assessment, and only 42% of students in the dual language program showed grade level mastery on the school's mid-year administration of the English language F&P assessment.
- Heketi's dual language courses do not lead to students' biliteracy and bilingualism in Spanish. To improve state assessment scores, school leaders made a change to the dual language model from this year to last year. The dual language program model is haphazard; in some courses, teachers switch languages halfway through each curricular module or unit, while in other courses teachers teach solely in English or solely in Spanish. The school does not have data to show how the current program structure supports students' Spanish language mastery in addition to content mastery.
- The school does not provide sufficient resources to the dual language program. Because school leaders and the board prioritize increasing ELA and mathematics scores, the ELA/DL specialist spends the majority of time supporting the ELA program. Leaders do not regularly provide feedback on teachers' dual language program implementation and instructional practices. School leaders have not provided dual language specific professional development sessions during the current school year. Teachers do not consistently plan for or provide instructional differentiation based on students' fluency levels. The Institute observed lesson plans and classroom instruction that lacks targeted differentiation and high quality dual language instructional practices. Based on data the school provided to the Institute, in 2017-18, 65% of 3rd and 4th grade students scored below proficiency on the LAS Links assessment of Spanish fluency, with over half of those students scoring in the lowest proficiency level.

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 2C

DOES THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM?

The school organization does not effectively support the delivery of the educational program. Because of leadership vacancies, the school decreased support for the dual language and special education programs. Although the school's instructional leadership team recognizes the need for improvement and has implemented various new initiatives over the course of this year, leaders have lacked urgency and fidelity in implementing coaching structures in past years. The school lacks evidence for how the new initiatives enable stronger academic outcomes.

- The school's organizational structure does not enable the school to carry out its academic program. The school's leadership team consists of the school director, DCA, ELA/DL specialist, director of operations, and director of development. In its 7th year of operation, the school has only now created the DCA position to aid in data driven instructional support. The school lacks the capacity to support the entire program due to four staff vacancies in the special education and dual language programs.
- School leaders do not allocate the appropriate resources to achieve goals, and the school does not retain quality staff. At the time of the Institute's visit the school enrolled 266 students, a decline of 16 students from the previous school year. The decrease in enrollment led the school director and board to initiate a hiring freeze for a bilingual reading specialist, family advocate, ELA instructional specialist, and reading specialist. As a result of the continued staff vacancies, instructional leaders cannot provide curricular, instructional, and pedagogical support to the school's dual language and special education programs.
- Heketi's school leaders and board lack a long term, clear strategic plan on how to meet the school's academic goals and review the schools' programs. Leaders recognize a need to make improvements, but lack a clear and precise path to improvement in the absence of academic achievement goals. The school introduced a myriad of curricular programs throughout the charter term but the implementation of each has not shown growth in student achievement. For this school year, leaders implement the current instructional coaching system; however, the Institute did not find evidence that the system will lead to consistent and sustained student achievement.

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

- Heketi’s staff members apply consistent discipline practices. The behavior specialist oversees school discipline and during the summer provided Responsive Classroom professional development sessions. In classroom observations, the Institute did not observe behavior problems and the school’s in-school and out-of-school suspension rates have been less than three percent throughout the duration of the charter term. Despite the calm school culture, Heketi’s staff fails to provide an academic program that enables students’ achievement against state standards.

DOES THE BOARD WORK EFFECTIVELY TO ACHIEVE THE SCHOOL’S ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS?

The board does not work effectively to achieve the school’s Accountability Plan goals. In its 7th year of operation, the board continues to lack effective oversight of the school’s academic program to enable short and long term student achievement.

- Heketi’s board members have the skills that should allow it to monitor the school’s academic program but does not retain its members. In December 2018 two board members resigned due to conflict of interest issues. The board has since elected two new members, but another current member plans to resign this school year. The current five board members have skills in finance, business, teaching in dual language settings, and community engagement. Despite all of these skills, the board expresses a lack of capacity. The board seeks additional members with expertise in finance and education, and seeks a member of the school’s surrounding community.
- The board does not establish clear long term academic goals nor benchmarks for tracking the school’s progress. Board members cite a goal to reach 75% of students scoring at or above proficiency on state and school assessments, and monitors assessment, discipline, and attendance data through its data dashboard at monthly board meetings. However, the board has not established specific benchmark goals to monitor the school’s progress toward meeting the 75% proficiency rate, and settles for achievement similar to the school’s low performing district of location.
- The board does not regularly evaluate its own performance nor that of the school leader. The board is making changes to the school director’s performance evaluation rubric to be more comprehensive. Although in its 7th year, the board does not consistently complete school leader evaluations that hold the leader accountable for specific measures and goals. The board has completed self assessments at various points since the school’s founding, but has not finalized a process to consistently use to evaluate its performance.

Heketi

Ax

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RENEWAL
BENCHMARKS

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APPENDIX A: School Overview

BOARD OF TRUSTEES¹

CHAIR

Jamie Knox

SECRETARY

Glory Carrion-Gomes

TRUSTEES

Edwin Cespedes

Ana Maria Correa

Sarah Kawaling

SCHOOL LEADERS

PRINCIPAL

David A. Rosas, School Director (2017-18 to Present)

Cynthia Rosario, Principal (2012-13 to 2016-17)

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT ²	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	PROPOSED GRADES	ACTUAL GRADES
2012-13	88	91	103%	K-2	K-1
2013-14	132	136	103%	K-3	K-2
2014-15	208	198	95%	K-4	K-3
2015-16	258	244	95%	K-5	K-4
2016-17	306	273	89%	K-5	K-5
2017-18	298	282	95%	K-5	K-5
2018-19	298	266	89%	K-5	K-5

1. Source: The Institute's board records at the time of the visit.

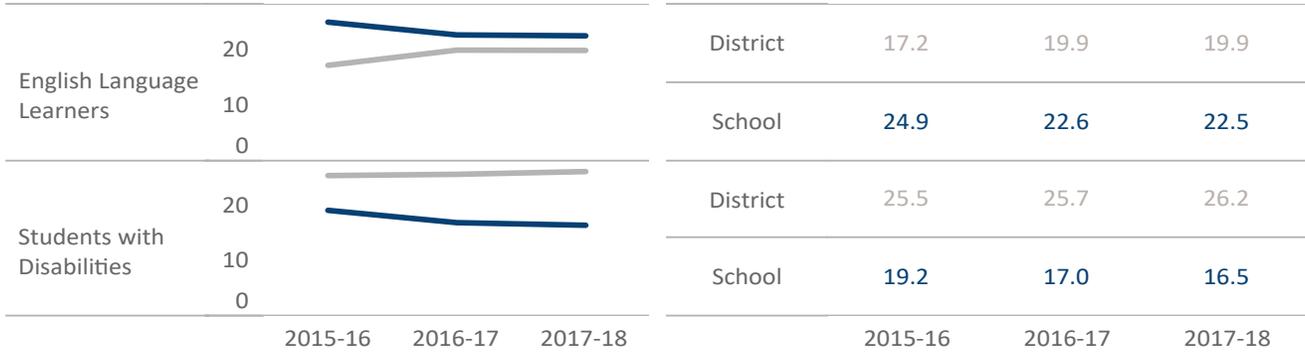
2. Source: Institute's Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

APPENDIX A: School Overview

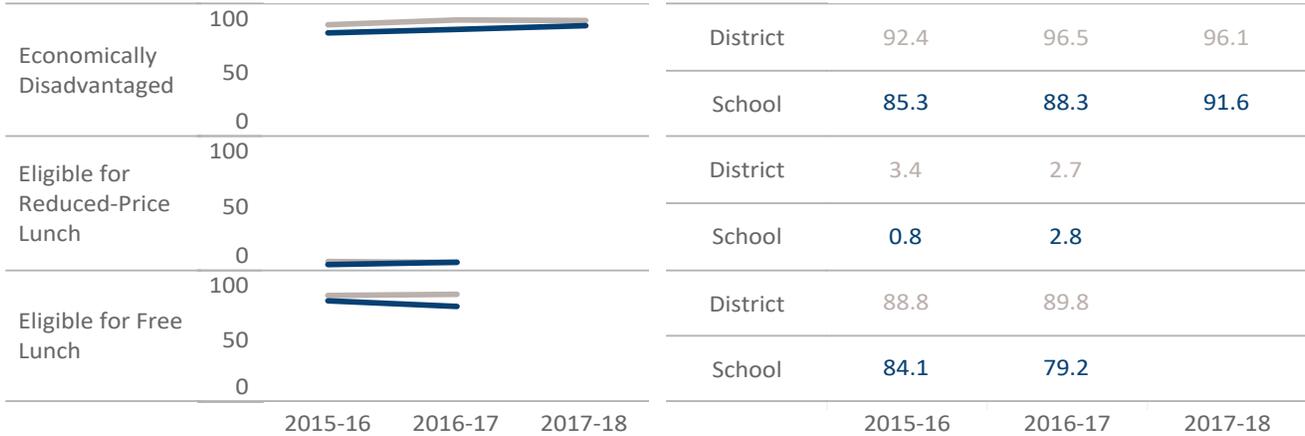
Heketi Community Charter School

CSD 7

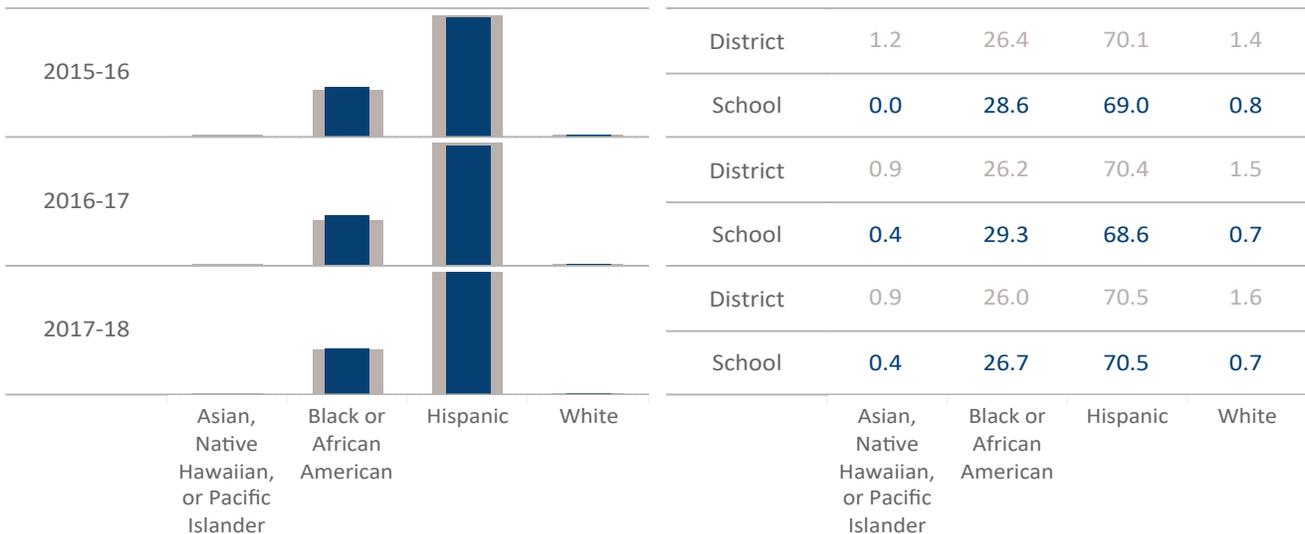
Student Demographics: Special Populations



Student Demographics: Free/Reduced Lunch



Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

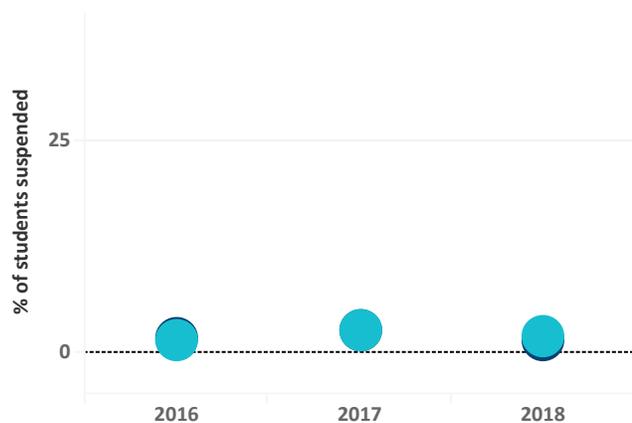


Data reported in these charts reflect BEDS day enrollment counts as reported by the New York State Education Department

APPENDIX A: School Overview

Heketi Community Charter School

CSD 7



	School ISS Rate	School OSS Rate
2016	1.2	1.6
2017	2.5	2.5
2018	1.8	1.4

CSD data suitable for comparison are not available. The percentage rate shown here is calculated using the method employed by the New York City Department of Education ("NYCDOE"): the total 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.

Persistence in Enrollment: The percentage of students eligible to return from previous year who did return



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

	2016	2017	2018
Expulsions	0	1	0

Heketi Community Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2017-18

		District Target	School
Enrollment	economically disadvantaged	95.6	91.6
	English language learners	21.7	22.5
	students with disabilities	21.9	16.5
Retention	economically disadvantaged	92.6	94.6
	English language learners	93.5	95.3
	students with disabilities	93.3	91.7

Data reported in these charts reflect information reported by the school and validated by the Institute.

APPENDIX A: School Overview

SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY

SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
2012-13	First Year Visit	April 25, 2013
2015-16	Evaluation Visit	April 19, 2016
2016-17	Initial Renewal	October 13 - 14, 2016
2018-19	Evaluation Visit	March 7 - 8, 2019

CONDUCT OF THE VISIT

DATE(S) OF VISIT	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
March 7 - 8, 2019	Kerri Rizzolo	Senior Analyst
	Andrew Kile	Director of School Evaluation
	Sonia Park	External Consultant
	Sonia Vasquez	External Consultant

CHARTER CYCLE CONTEXT

CHARTER TERM	ACCOUNTABILITY PERIOD ³	ANTICIPATED RENEWAL VISIT
Second year of three-year subsequent charter term	Third year of three-year Accountability Period	Fall 2019

3. Because the SUNY Trustees make a renewal decision in the last year of a charter term, the Accountability Period ends in the next to last year of that charter term. For schools in initial charter terms, the Accountability Period is the first four years that the school provides instruction. For schools in subsequent charter terms, the Accountability Period includes the last year of the previous charter term through the next to last year of the current charter term.

APPENDIX A: School Overview

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS:

ELEMENT	EVIDENT?
Clear and transparent accountability	-
Relentless commitment to high expectations for all	-
Data-driven instruction	-
Investment in social-emotional support	+
Dual language immersion program	-

APPENDIX B: SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Heketi Community Charter School

		2015-16 Grades Served K-4				2016-17 Grades Served K-5				2017-18 Grades Served K-5							
		Grades	All % (N)	2+ Years % (N)	MET	Grades	All % (N)	2+ Years % (N)	MET	Grades	All % (N)	2+ Years % (N)	MET				
Absolute Measure	1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above proficiency on the New York State exam.	3	17.6 (34)	18.8 (32)		3	22.2 (45)	19.5 (41)		3	42.9 (42)	42.4 (33)					
		4	28.9 (38)	29.4 (34)		4	19.4 (36)	15.6 (32)		4	37.2 (43)	34.3 (35)					
		5	(0)	(0)		5	26.9 (26)	29.2 (24)		5	5.0 (40)	5.4 (37)					
		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	23.6 (72)	24.2 (66)	NO	All	22.4 (107)	20.6 (97)	NO	All	28.8 (125)	26.7 (105)	NO				
Absolute Measure	2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State exam will meet the Measure of Interim Progress set forth in the State's ESSA accountability system.	Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PI	MIP					
		3-4	79	104	NO	3-5	88	111	NO	3-5	101	101	YES				
Comparative Measure	3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Comparison: Bronx CSD 7				Comparison: Bronx CSD 7				Comparison: Bronx CSD 7							
		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District					
		3-4	24.2	25.2	NO	3-5	20.6	24.2	NO	3-5	26.7	30.2	NO				
Comparative Measure	4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted performance on the state exam by an effect size of 0.3 or above based on a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students statewide.	Grade	% ED	Actual	Predicted	ES	Grade	% ED	Actual	Predicted	ES	Grade	% ED	Actual	Predicted	ES	
		3	89.1	17.6	28.5	-0.57	3	87.8	22.2	30.0	-0.44	3	89.6	42.9	38.3	0.26	
		4	71.7	28.9	34.3	-0.32	4	86.7	19.4	28.3	-0.50	4	91.5	37.2	35.0	0.12	
		5					5	85.3	26.9	23.4	0.23	5	95.1	5.0	22.3	-1.25	
		6					6					6					
		7					7					7					
		8					8					8					
All	80.1	23.6	31.6	-0.44	NO	All	86.8	22.4	27.8	-0.31	NO	All	92.0	28.8	32.1	-0.28	NO
Growth Measure	5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the target of 50.	Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State					
		4	47.9			4	57.2			4	59.0						
		5	0			5	49.7			5	41.3						
		6	0			6	0			6	0						
		7	0			7	0			7	0						
		8	0			8	0			8	0						
All	47.9	50	NO	All	53.9	50	YES	All	50.6	50	YES						

APPENDIX B: SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: MATHEMATICS

Heketi Community Charter School

		2015-16 Grades Served K-4				2016-17 Grades Served K-5				2017-18 Grades Served K-5							
		Grades	All % (N)	2+ Years % (N)	MET	Grades	All % (N)	2+ Years % (N)	MET	Grades	All % (N)	2+ Years % (N)	MET				
Absolute Measure	1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above proficiency on the New York State exam.	3	3.0 (33)	3.2 (31)		3	34.1 (44)	30.0 (40)		3	38.1 (42)	39.4 (33)					
		4	58.3 (36)	56.3 (32)		4	0.0 (36)	0.0 (32)		4	51.2 (43)	45.7 (35)					
		5	(0)	(0)		5	51.9 (27)	52 (25)		5	0.0 (39)	0.0 (36)					
		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	31.9 (69)	30.2 (63)	NO	All	27.1 (107)	25.8 (97)	NO	All	30.6 (124)	27.9 (104)	NO				
Absolute Measure	2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State exam will meet the Measure of Interim Progress set forth in the State's ESSA accountability system.	Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PI	MIP					
		3-4	99	101	NO	3-5	81	109	NO	3-5	94	103	NO				
Comparative Measure	3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Comparison: Bronx CSD 7				Comparison: Bronx CSD 7				Comparison: Bronx CSD 7							
		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District					
		3-4	30.2	23.1	YES	3-5	25.8	24.0	YES	3-5	27.9	30.4	NO				
Comparative Measure	4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted performance on the state exam by an effect size of 0.3 or above based on a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students statewide.	Grade	% ED	Actual	Predicted	ES	Grade	% ED	Actual	Predicted	ES	Grade	% ED	Actual	Predicted	ES	
		3	89.1	3.0	31.0	-1.27	3	87.8	34.1	35.2	-0.05	3	89.6	38.1	41.1	-0.15	
		4	71.7	58.3	38.0	1.09	4	86.7	0.0	28.2	-1.46	4	91.5	51.2	33.3	0.9	
		5					5	85.3	51.9	28.4	1.24	5	95.1	0.0	25.6	-1.55	
		6					6					6					
		7					7					7					
		8					8					8					
All	80.1	31.9	34.6	-0.04	NO	All	86.8	27.1	31.1	-0.20	NO	All	92.0	30.6	33.5	-0.23	NO
Growth Measure	5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the target of 50.	Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State					
		4	39.8			4	45.9			4	65.2						
		5	0			5	46.6			5	35.2						
		6	0			6	0			6	0						
		7	0			7	0			7	0						
		8	0			8	0			8	0						
All	39.8	50	NO	All	46.2	50	NO	All	50.8	50	YES						

VERSION 5.0, MAY 2012

Introduction

The State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks¹ (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”) serve two primary functions at renewal:

- They provide a framework for the Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) to gather and evaluate evidence to determine whether a school has made an adequate case for renewal. In turn, this evidence assists the Institute in deciding if it can make the required legal and other findings in order to reach a positive recommendation for renewal. For example, the various benchmarks that the Institute uses to determine whether the school has had fiscally responsible practices in place during the last charter period allow the Institute to determine with greater precision whether the school will operate in a fiscally sound manner during the next charter period, a finding that the New York Charter Schools Act requires the SUNY Trustees to make.
- At the same time that the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks provide a framework for the Institute to collect and review evidence, they also provide the school with a guide to understanding the Institute’s evaluative criteria. As the Institute uses the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks (or some subset of them) as the framework for conducting its ongoing school evaluation visits, school leaders should be fully aware of the content of the Benchmarks at the time of renewal.

The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks are organized into four inter-connected renewal questions that each school must answer when submitting a renewal application. The benchmarks further reflect the interwoven nature of schools from an academic, organizational, fiscal and/or legal perspective. For example, the Institute could reasonably place many of the academic benchmarks under the heading of organizational effectiveness. More generally, some redundancy exists because the Institute looks at the same issue from different perspectives.

Precisely how the Institute uses the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, during both the renewal process and throughout the charter period, is explained in greater detail in the Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University of New York (the “SUNY Renewal Practices”), available on the Institute’s website at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/renewal/>. Responses to frequently asked questions about the Institute’s use of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks appear below:

- The Institute does not have a point system for recommending renewal. A school cannot simply tally up the number of positive benchmark statements in order to determine the Institute’s recommendation
 - Some benchmarks are weighed more heavily than others. In particular, the Institute gives the greatest weight to how well the school has met its academic Accountability Plan goals.

1. Research on public school reform, known as the effective schools movement, has embraced the premise that, given certain organizing and cultural characteristics, schools can teach all children the intended curriculum and hold them to high academic standards. Over the decades, the accumulated research into effective schools has yielded a set of common characteristics that all effective schools share.

These characteristics are so consistently prevalent among successful schools that they have come to be known as the Correlates of Effective Schools.

The Renewal Benchmarks adapt and elaborate on these correlates.

APPENDIX C: SUNY Renewal Benchmarks

- Despite the fact that the Accountability Plan comprises only a single benchmark, a school’s performance on that benchmark is critical. In fact, it is so important that while the Institute may recommend non-renewal for fiscal and organizational failures (if sufficiently serious), excellence in these areas will not excuse poor academic performance.
- The Institute does not use every benchmark during every kind of renewal review, and how the benchmarks are used differs depending on a school’s circumstances. For example, the Qualitative Education Benchmarks (Benchmarks 1B-1F, 2C and 2D) are given far less weight in making a renewal decision on schools that the Institute has previously renewed. Similarly, less weight is accorded to these benchmarks during an initial renewal review where a school has consistently met its academic Accountability Plan goals.
 - The Institute also may not consider every indicator subsumed under a benchmark when determining if a school has met that benchmark, given the school’s stage of development or its previous track record.
- Aside from Benchmark 1A on academic Accountability Plan goals (which is singular in its importance), no school should fear that a failure to meet every element of every benchmark means that it is not in a position to make a case for renewal. To the contrary, the Institute has yet to see a school that performs perfectly in every respect. The Institute appreciates that the benchmarks set a very high standard collectively. While the Institute certainly hopes and expects that schools aim high, it is understood that a school’s reach will necessarily exceed its grasp in at least some aspects.

In this fifth edition of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, the Institute has made some revisions to the Qualitative Educational Benchmarks, namely those benchmarks used for ongoing school evaluation visits, to streamline the collection of evidence. For example, the Institute has incorporated Student Order and Discipline into Pedagogy, and Professional Development into Instructional Leadership. The Institute has rewritten some of the overarching benchmark statements to capture the most salient aspects of school effectiveness, organizational viability, legal compliance, and fiscal soundness. Some of the bulleted indicators within benchmarks have been recast or eliminated. Finally, the Institute has added some indicators to align the benchmarks with changes in the Charter Schools Act (e.g., provisions in meeting enrollment and retention targets when assigned and abiding by the General Municipal Law).

It is important that the entire school community understand the renewal process. All members of a school’s leadership team and board should carefully review both the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks and the SUNY Renewal Practices. Note that a renewal overview document for parents, teacher and community members is also available on the Institute’s website at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/renewal/>. Please do not hesitate to contact the Institute with any questions.

RENEWAL QUESTION 1

IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1A

OVER THE ACCOUNTABILITY PERIOD, THE SCHOOL HAS MET OR COME CLOSE TO MEETING ITS ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS.

The Institute determines the extent to which the school has met the Accountability Plan goals in the following areas:

- English language arts;
- mathematics;
- science;
- social studies (high school only);
- NCLB;
- high school graduation and college preparation (if applicable); and
- optional academic goals included by the school.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1B

THE SCHOOL HAS AN ASSESSMENT SYSTEM THAT IMPROVES INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT LEARNING.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school regularly administers valid and reliable assessments aligned to the school's curriculum and state performance standards;
- the school has a valid and reliable process for scoring and analyzing assessments;
- the school makes assessment data accessible to teachers, school leaders and board members;
- teachers use assessment results to meet students' needs by adjusting classroom instruction, grouping students and/or identifying students for special intervention;
- school leaders use assessment results to evaluate teacher effectiveness and to develop professional development and coaching strategies; and
- the school regularly communicates to parents/guardians about their students' progress and growth.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1C

THE SCHOOL'S CURRICULUM SUPPORTS TEACHERS IN THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school has a curriculum framework with student performance expectations that provides a fixed, underlying structure, aligned to state standards and across grades;
- in addition to the framework, the school has supporting tools (i.e., curriculum maps or scope and sequence documents) that provide a bridge between the curriculum framework and lesson plans;
- teachers know what to teach and when to teach it based on these documents;
- the school has a process for selecting, developing and reviewing its curriculum documents and its resources for delivering the curriculum; and
- teachers plan purposeful and focused lessons.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1D

HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION IS EVIDENT THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL.

The following elements are generally present:

- teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school's curriculum;
- teachers regularly and effectively use techniques to check for student understanding;
- teachers include opportunities in their lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem solving skills;
- teachers maximize learning time (e.g., appropriate pacing, on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students); transitions are efficient; and
- teachers have effective classroom management techniques and routines that create a consistent focus on academic achievement.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1E

THE SCHOOL HAS STRONG INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge and pedagogical skills) and in which teachers believe that all students can succeed;
- the instructional leadership is adequate to support the development of the teaching staff;
- instructional leaders provide sustained, systemic and effective coaching and supervision that improves teachers' instructional effectiveness;

APPENDIX C: SUNY Renewal Benchmarks

- instructional leaders provide opportunities and guidance for teachers to plan curriculum and instruction within and across grade levels;
- instructional leaders implement a comprehensive professional development program that develops the competencies and skills of all teachers;
- professional development activities are interrelated with classroom practice;
- instructional leaders regularly conduct teacher evaluations with clear criteria that accurately identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses; and
- instructional leaders hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1F

THE SCHOOL MEETS THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF AT-RISK STUDENTS

The following elements are generally present:

- the school uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students including students with disabilities, English language learners and those struggling academically;
- the school has adequate intervention programs to meet the needs of at-risk students;
- general education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the general education program;
- the school adequately monitors the progress and success of at-risk students;
- teachers are aware of their students' progress toward meeting IEP goals, achieving English proficiency or school-based goals for struggling students;
- the school provides adequate training and professional development to identify at-risk students and to help teachers meet students' needs; and
- the school provides opportunities for coordination between classroom teachers and at-risk program staff including the school nurse, if applicable.

RENEWAL QUESTION 2

IS THE SCHOOL AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 2A

THE SCHOOL IS FAITHFUL TO ITS MISSION AND HAS IMPLEMENTED THE KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN ITS CHARTER.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school faithfully follows its mission; and
- the school has implemented its key design elements.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 2B

PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS ARE SATISFIED WITH THE SCHOOL.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school regularly communicates each child's academic performance results to families;
- families are satisfied with the school; and
- parents keep their children enrolled year-to-year.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 2C

THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION EFFECTIVELY SUPPORTS THE DELIVERY OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school has established an administrative structure with staff, operational systems, policies and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program;
- the organizational structure establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
- the school has a clear student discipline system in place at the administrative level that is consistently applied;
- the school retains quality staff;
- the school has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals;
- the school maintains adequate student enrollment;
- the school has procedures in place to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for special education students, ELLs and students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch, and adjusts its recruitment efforts accordingly; and
- the school regularly monitors and evaluates the school's programs and makes changes if necessary.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 2D

THE SCHOOL BOARD WORKS EFFECTIVELY TO ACHIEVE THE SCHOOL'S ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS.

The following elements are generally present:

- board members possess adequate skills and have put in place structures and procedures with which to govern the school and oversee management of day-to-day operations in order to ensure the school's future as an academically successful, financially healthy and legally compliant organization;
- the board requests and receives sufficient information to provide rigorous oversight of the school's program and finances;
- it establishes clear priorities, objectives and long-range goals, (including Accountability Plan, fiscal, facilities and fundraising), and has in place benchmarks for tracking progress as well as a process for their regular review and revision;
- the board successfully recruits, hires and retains key personnel, and provides them with sufficient resources to function effectively;
- the board regularly evaluates its own performance and that of the school leaders and the management company (if applicable), holding them accountable for student achievement; and
- the board effectively communicates with the school community including school leadership, staff, parents/guardians and students.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 2E

THE BOARD IMPLEMENTS, MAINTAINS AND ABIDES BY APPROPRIATE POLICIES, SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES.

The following elements are generally present:

- the board effectively communicates with its partner or management organizations as well as key contractors such as back-office service providers and ensures that it receives value in exchange for contracts and relationships it enters into and effectively monitors such relationships;
- the board takes effective action when there are organizational, leadership, management, facilities or fiscal deficiencies; or where the management or partner organization fails to meet expectations; to correct those deficiencies and puts in place benchmarks for determining if the partner organization corrects them in a timely fashion;
- the board regularly reviews and updates board and school policies as needed and has in place an orientation process for new members;
- the board effectively recruits and selects new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity;

APPENDIX C: SUNY Renewal Benchmarks

- the board implements a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with that set forth in the charter and with the General Municipal Law—and consistently abides by them throughout the term of the charter;
- the board generally avoids conflicts of interest; where not possible, the board manages those conflicts in a clear and transparent manner;
- the board implements a process for dealing with complaints consistent with that set forth in the charter, makes the complaint policy clear to all stakeholders, and follows the policy including acting on complaints in a timely fashion;
- the board abides by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee election and the removal and filling of vacancies; and
- the board holds all meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law and records minutes for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings.

THE SCHOOL SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLIES WITH APPLICABLE LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS AND THE PROVISIONS OF ITS CHARTER.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school compiles a record of substantial compliance with the terms of its charter and applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations including, but not limited to, submitting items to the Institute in a timely manner, and meeting teacher certification (including NCLB highly qualified status) and background check requirements, FOIL and Open Meetings Law; the school substantially complies with the terms of its charter and applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- the school abides by the terms of its monitoring plan;
- the school implements effective systems and controls to ensure that it meets legal and charter requirements;
- the school has an active and ongoing relationship with in-house or independent legal counsel who reviews and makes recommendations on relevant policies, documents, transactions and incidents and who also handles other legal matters as needed; and
- the school manages any litigation appropriately and provides litigation papers to insurers and the Institute in a timely manner.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 2F

RENEWAL QUESTION 3

IS THE SCHOOL FISCALLY SOUND?

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 3A

THE SCHOOL OPERATES PURSUANT TO A LONG-RANGE FINANCIAL PLAN IN WHICH IT CREATES REALISTIC BUDGETS THAT IT MONITORS AND ADJUSTS WHEN APPROPRIATE.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school has clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures;
- board members, school management and staff contribute to the budget process, as appropriate;
- the school frequently compares its long-range fiscal plan to actual progress and adjusts it to meet changing conditions;
- the school routinely analyzes budget variances; the board addresses material variances and makes necessary revisions; and
- actual expenses are equal to, or less than, actual revenue with no material exceptions.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 3B

THE SCHOOL MAINTAINS APPROPRIATE INTERNAL CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES.

The following elements are generally present:

- the school follows a set of comprehensive written fiscal policies and procedures;
- the school accurately records and appropriately documents transactions in accordance with management's direction, laws, regulations, grants and contracts;
- the school safeguards its assets;
- the school identifies/analyzes risks and takes mitigating actions;
- the school has controls in place to ensure that management decisions are properly carried out and monitors and assesses controls to ensure their adequacy;
- the school's trustees and employees adhere to a code of ethics;
- the school ensures duties are appropriately segregated, or institutes compensating controls;
- the school ensures that employees performing financial functions are appropriately qualified and adequately trained;
- the school has systems in place to provide the appropriate information needed by staff and the board to make sound financial decisions and to fulfill compliance requirements;
- a staff member of the school reviews grant agreements and restrictive gifts and monitors compliance with all stated conditions;
- the school prepares payroll according to appropriate state and federal regulations and school policy;

APPENDIX C: SUNY Renewal Benchmarks

- the school ensures that employees, trustees and volunteers who handle cash and investments are bonded to help assure the safeguarding of assets; and
- the school takes corrective action in a timely manner to address any internal control or compliance deficiencies identified by its external auditor, the Institute, and/or the State Education Department or the Comptroller, if needed.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 3C

THE SCHOOL HAS COMPLIED WITH FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS BY PROVIDING THE SUNY TRUSTEES AND THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WITH REQUIRED FINANCIAL REPORTS THAT ARE ON TIME, COMPLETE AND FOLLOW GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES.

The following reports have generally been filed in a timely, accurate and complete manner:

- annual financial statement audit reports including federal Single Audit report, if applicable;
- annual budgets and cash flow statements;
- un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses, and enrollment;
- bi-monthly enrollment reports to the district and, if applicable, to the State Education Department including proper documentation regarding the level of special education services provided to students; and
- grant expenditure reports.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 3D

THE SCHOOL MAINTAINS ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO ENSURE STABLE OPERATIONS. CRITICAL FINANCIAL NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL ARE NOT DEPENDENT ON VARIABLE INCOME (GRANTS, DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISING).

The following elements are generally present:

- the school maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly;
- the school maintains adequate liquid reserves to fund expenses in the event of income loss (generally three months);
- the school prepares and monitors cash flow projections;
- If the school includes philanthropy in its budget, it monitors progress toward its development goals on a periodic basis;
- If necessary, the school pursues district state aid intercepts with the state education department to ensure adequate per pupil funding; and
- the school accumulates unrestricted net assets that are equal to or exceed two percent of the school's operating budget for the upcoming year.

RENEWAL QUESTION 4

IF THE SCHOOL'S CHARTER IS RENEWED, WHAT ARE ITS PLANS FOR THE TERM OF THE NEXT CHARTER PERIOD, AND ARE THEY REASONABLE, FEASIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE?

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 4A

KEY STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS OF THE SCHOOL, AS DEFINED IN THE EXHIBITS OF THE APPLICATION FOR CHARTER RENEWAL, ARE REASONABLE, FEASIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE.

Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:

- the school is likely to fulfill its mission in the next charter period;
- the school has an enrollment plan that can support the school program;
- the school calendar and daily schedules clearly provide sufficient instructional time to meet all legal requirements, allow the school to meet its proposed Accountability Plan goals and abide by its proposed budget;
- key design elements are consistent with the mission statement and are feasible given the school's budget and staffing;
- a curriculum framework for added grades aligns with the state's performance standards; and
- plans in the other required Exhibits indicate that the school's structure is likely to support the educational program.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 4B

THE SCHOOL'S PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ALLOW IT TO MEET ITS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS.

Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:

- for those grades served during the last charter period, the school has plans for sustaining and (where possible) improving upon the student outcomes it has compiled during the last charter period including any adjustments or additions to the school's educational program;
- for a school that is seeking to add grades, the school is likely to meet its Accountability Plan goals and the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks at the new grade levels; and
- where the school will provide secondary school instruction, it has presented a set of requirements for graduation that students are likely to meet and that are consistent with the graduation standards set by the Board of Regents.

APPENDIX C: SUNY Renewal Benchmarks

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 4C

THE SCHOOL PROVIDES A REASONABLE, FEASIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE PLAN FOR BOARD OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNANCE.

Based on elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:

- school trustees are likely to possess a range of experience, skills, and abilities sufficient to oversee the academic, organizational and fiscal performance of the school;
- plans by the school board to orient new trustees to their roles and responsibilities, and, if appropriate, to participate in ongoing board training are likely to sustain the board's ability to carry out its responsibilities;
- if the school plans to change an association with a partner or management organization in the term of a future charter, it has provided a clear rationale for the disassociation and an outline indicating how it will manage the functions previously associated with that partnering organization; and
- if the school is either moving from self-management to a management structure or vice-versa, or is changing its charter management organization/educational service provider, its plans indicate that it will be managed in an effective, sound and viable manner including appropriate oversight of the academic and fiscal performance of the school or the management organization.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 4D

THE SCHOOL PROVIDES A REASONABLE, FEASIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE FISCAL PLAN INCLUDING PLANS FOR AN ADEQUATE FACILITY.

Based on the elements present in the Application for Charter Renewal:

- the school's budgets adequately support staffing, enrollment and facility projections;
- fiscal plans are based on the sound use of financial resources to support academic program needs;
- fiscal plans are clear, accurate, complete and based on reasonable assumptions;
- information on enrollment demand provides clear evidence for the reasonableness of projected enrollment; and
- facility plans are likely to meet educational program needs.

