



Charter Schools Institute

The State University of New York

Renewal Recommendation Report

New Roots Charter School

REPORT DATE: JANUARY 17, 2014

VISIT DATE: OCTOBER 8-9, 2013

Charter Schools Institute
State University of New York
41 State Street, Suite 700
Albany, New York 12207
518/433-8277
518/427-6510 (fax)
www.newyorkcharters.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
SCHOOL BACKGROUND INFORMATION	1
RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION	2
REQUIRED FINDINGS	2
CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMENTS	4
REPORT FORMAT	7
RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS	8
APPENDIX	24
SCHOOL OVERVIEW	24
SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMENTS	27
FISCAL DASHBOARD	34
PERFORMANCE SUMMARY	36

This report is the primary means by which the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) transmits to the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the “SUNY Trustees”) its findings and recommendations regarding a school’s Application for Charter Renewal, and more broadly, details the merits of a school’s case for renewal. The Institute has created and issued this report pursuant to the *Policies for the Renewal of Not-For-Profit Charter School Education Corporations and Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York* (the “SUNY Renewal Policies”).¹

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

SCHOOL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	September 8, 2008
School Opening Date	September 9, 2009

Current Location

Address	District	Facility	Enrollment	Grades
116 North Cayuga St., Ithaca, NY	Ithaca City School District	Private	151	9-12

¹ Revised September 4, 2013, and available at: <http://newyorkcharters.org/documents/SUNYRenewalPolicies.pdf>.

RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation **Initial Short-Term Renewal**

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the Application for Renewal of the New Roots Charter School to a limited extent and renew its charter only for a period of three years with authority to provide instruction to students in 9th through 12th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Renewal, with a maximum projected enrollment of 200 students.

To earn a Short-Term Renewal, a school must demonstrate that it has compiled a mixed or limited record of educational achievement in meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals, but have in place and in operation at the time of the renewal inspection visit (i) an academic program of sufficient strength and effectiveness, as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks², which will likely result in the school's being able to meet or come close to meeting those goals with the additional time that renewal would permit, and (ii) a governing board and organizational structures that have demonstrated the capacity to meet the school's academic Accountability Plan goals and to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound fashion.

Over the Accountability Period,³ the school has compiled a limited record of educational achievement in meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals, but has in place an academic program of sufficient effectiveness that it is likely with additional time to meet or come close to meeting those goals. The school has a governing board and organizational structure that have demonstrated the capacity to meet academic goals and to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound fashion. The school demonstrates progress in enabling students enrolled for at least two years to succeed on measures in its Accountability Plan. It has a limited overall record of success in meeting its high school graduation and college preparatory goals.

Given the limited amount of standardized assessment data available at the time of an initial renewal review and the challenges that a start-up charter school faces, the SUNY Renewal Policies' renewal options for Initial Renewal all contain both quantitative and qualitative components: respectively, student achievement based on the attainment of Accountability Plan goals and qualitative evidence on the strength and effectiveness of the educational program. Contrasting subsequent renewal reviews, when the SUNY Trustees evaluate a school's academic program almost exclusively by the degree to which the school has succeeded in meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals, in initial renewal reviews, the SUNY Trustees balance a school's progress toward meeting Accountability Plan goals with qualitative data on the strength of the educational program that it has in place at the end of the charter term.

² The Qualitative Education Benchmarks are a subset of the *State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks* (Version 5.0, the "SUNY Renewal Benchmarks"), available at:

<http://newyorkcharters.org/documents/SUNYRenewalBenchmarks5FINAL5-8-12.pdf>.

³ For the purpose of reporting student achievement results, the SUNY Renewal Policies define the Accountability Period as the time the Accountability Plan was in effect. In the case of an Initial Renewal, the Accountability Plan covers the first four years of the initial charter term.

During initial charter terms, all charter schools come to renewal with a limited amount of student assessment data – typically three years of complete Accountability Plan assessment data during the initial four-year Accountability Period. However, in the case of charter high schools, with most measures based on the four-year performance of high school cohorts, the amount of quantitative data is even more limited. The Institute can only evaluate a complete set of data for one four-year high school cohort. In the case of New Roots, four-year data is available for the 2013 graduating class that first enrolled at the school in the 9th grade four years earlier. (2012 graduating class data is also available for students who first entered the school in the 10th grade.)

With two years of achievement results showing that New Roots is approaching the Accountability Plan standards, the Institute found strength in the qualitative evidence of the educational program. As such, New Roots meets the SUNY Trustees’ criteria of having in place and in operation an academic program of sufficient effectiveness, which will likely result in the school’s meeting or coming close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals with the additional time that a short-term renewal of three years would permit.

Required Findings

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

- the school, as described in the Application for Charter Renewal meets the requirements of the Act and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- the school can demonstrate the ability to operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner in the next charter term; and
- given the programs it will offer, its structure and its purpose, approving the school to operate for another three years is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act.⁴

As required by Education Law § 2851(4)(e), a school must include in its renewal application information regarding the means by which it will meet or exceed SUNY’s enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners (“ELLs”), and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch (“FRPL”) program. SUNY⁵ and the Board of Regents finalized the methodology for setting targets in October 2012, and the Institute communicated specific targets for each school in July 2013. In accordance with the statute, the Institute, acting on behalf of the SUNY Trustees, considered the school’s plans for meeting its enrollment and retention targets prior to recommending the renewal application for approval.

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

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

CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMENTS

In accordance with the Act, the Institute notified the school district in which the charter school is located, the Ithaca City School District, regarding the school's Application for Charter Renewal. In addition, the Institute provided notice to public and non-public schools in the same geographic area of New Roots and posted a notice on the Institute's website. As of the date of this report, the Institute received comments from the Ithaca City School District and two additional school districts that send students to New Roots. These comments appear in the Appendix.

Ithaca City School District. The Institute first notes that it accommodated the district's request for additional time to hold its hearing and provide comments on the charter renewal application than required by the Act. The district provided its comments to the Institute only peripherally by passing a resolution to have the Institute provide information and answer questions directly to the district. Some district school board members were troubled by comments raised at its public hearing on the renewal concerning the accuracy of New Roots' student performance data and two complaints submitted to the Institute by opponents of the school who have shared concerns with the Institute and the district over the charter term. The district's formal request is for SUNY to hold the New Roots renewal decision in abeyance until the Institute meets with the district. The Institute has included with the district's letter, the district's summary of public comments for and against the renewal.

The Institute has corresponded with the Ithaca superintendent and continues to work to provide updates and information on the SUNY renewal process and timeline associated with the New Roots renewal. The Institute will continue to provide information as it always has regarding the Act and SUNY processes. However, the Act is clear that the SUNY Trustees' obligation is to provide an opportunity for the districts to comment, to consider any such comments and to pass such comments along to the Board of Regents with any application for renewal. The Institute, acting on behalf of the SUNY Trustees has followed the Act. The SUNY Trustees have no obligation to withhold action on a renewal, and a district has no authority to prevent SUNY from acting on a renewal for want of comments. As the Institute has summarized and analyzed the comments received and the Charter Schools Committee will further consider them, SUNY's obligations are met.

Newfield Central School District. The district urged SUNY to deny the renewal based on concerns as follows:

- **High Dropout Rate.** Based on a very small sample size of 11 students attending New Roots, the district stated that five students in the 2009 cohort had dropped out. As discussed below, New Roots has not generated sufficient graduation data to meaningfully determine graduation and drop-out rates at this time. The Institute bases its recommendations on data from all students and cohorts that attend the school and not one data point. As set forth in the *Is the School an Academic Success* section of this report, the school has come close to meeting its goal of a 75 percent graduation rate with the two available data points.

- **Poor Student Attendance.** The district detailed the absences of New Roots students residing in its district, which ranged from two to 114 days and stated it was worried about the students' success and that there were apparently no consequences for poor attendance at New Roots. Per the Act, charter schools must supply an attendance policy as part of the initial application, but they are not subject to providing only rote responses to absences. In addition, charter schools do not have to socially promote students to the next grade if (within the bounds of due process) the charter school believes the student has missed too much instructional time to progress. As the district noted in an earlier part of its comments, New Roots does make some students repeat grades.
- **Low Success Rates for Regents Exams.** As discussed above, the school has not yet generated sufficient testing data at this time for the Institute to draw reliable conclusions. Nonetheless, as discussed in the *Is the School an Academic Success* section of the report, the school overall has performed well on English Language Arts ("ELA") and math Regents exams.

Groton Central School District. The district opposed the charter renewal based on the following:

- Student academic outcomes did not improve significantly for the district's students who attended New Roots;
- Some students who attended New Roots dropped out or returned to the district and later dropped out;
- New Roots' programs were similar to those offered by the district; and
- The district had experienced some billing issues with the charter school.

With respect to the academic performance issues raised, please see the responses for the Newfield district, above. With respect to the statement that New Roots offers similar programs, the Institute notes that all college prep high school programs share similar elements as students must meet the same Board of Regents requirements for graduation. Lastly, based on observations at New Roots, the school offers a school culture and environment that is markedly different from either a large city school district setting or a small central school district high school setting, which would be the options for most students attending New Roots.

Report Format

The Institute makes the foregoing renewal recommendation based on the school's Application for Charter Renewal, evaluation visits conducted and information gathered during the charter term and a renewal evaluation visit conducted near the end of the current charter term. Given the complexity of developing a full high school organization with the range of subject area expertise necessary to prepare students for Regents exams and given the limited amount of achievement data available at the time of an initial renewal review, the Institute places more emphasis on analyzing the qualitative aspects of the high school's academic program than it does for K-8 schools' initial renewal review, while still accounting for the extent to which the high school achieves its Accountability Plan goals. This renewal recommendation report compiles the evidence below using the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, which specify in detail what a successful school should be able to demonstrate at the time of the renewal review. The Institute uses the following four interconnected renewal questions for framing benchmark statements to determine if a school has made an adequate case for renewal:

1. Is the school an academic success?
2. Is the school an effective, viable organization?
3. Is the education corporation fiscally sound?
4. If the school's charter is renewed, what are its plans for the next charter term, and are they reasonable, feasible and achievable?

The report's Appendix provides a School Overview, copies of school district comments on the Application for Charter Renewal, the SUNY Fiscal Dashboard information for the school and additional evidence on student achievement contained in the Performance Summary.

IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

New Roots is becoming an academic success. Despite its limited two-year mixed record of meeting its key Accountability Plan goals, the school is developing a strong leadership structure and is implementing an instructional program that is likely to support college and career readiness.

Academic Attainment. At the beginning of the charter term, the school developed and adopted an Accountability Plan that set academic goals in high school graduation and college preparation, as well as academic subjects linked to Regents exams and a No Child Left Behind Act (“NCLB”) goal. For each goal in the Accountability Plan, specific outcome measures define the level of performance necessary to meet that goal.

Note: In addition to the specific measures for the high school graduation and college preparatory goals, the Institute also takes into consideration the school’s performance in terms of the state’s recently introduced college and career readiness standard. While the school now only has one measure in ELA and math based on this standard, its Accountability Plan in a new charter term would include a set of measures associated with the Regents recently implemented college and career readiness standards.

Throughout New Root’s four-year Accountability Period and the two years in which the school has had a graduating class and for which complete sets of results are available, the school has had a mixed and, as noted earlier, a limited record of meeting its key academic goals. Based on its two graduation classes, the school has come close to meeting its high school graduation goal. With a target of a 75-percent graduation rate after four years in the Graduation Cohort, New Roots graduated 67 percent in 2011-12 and 67 percent in 2012-13. (Graduation rates for SUNY authorized charter high schools are based on the self-reported Graduation Cohort for Accountability as defined in SED’s SIRS⁶ Manual.) These results are below the Ithaca City School District’s⁷ graduation percent of 78 percent in 2011-12.⁸ (The district’s 2012-13 percent will not be available until June 2014.) The school is making progress in preparing students for graduation by sharply increasing the number of students from 2011-12 to 2012-13 who passed at least three required Regents by the end of their second year in high school. The school enables more than 80 percent of its students who have attended New Roots for at least two years to graduate within four years. In addition, the graduation rate for students with Individualized Education Programs (“IEPs”) is comparable to that of the general population.

Based on limited data, New Roots has not yet met the college preparation goal. In 2011-12, with a 75-percent college matriculation target, 71 percent of the 24 graduates matriculated into a two- or

⁶ SED’s Student Information Repository System.

⁷ In 2012-13, 40 percent of the student population came from the Ithaca City School District; 35 percent came from four regional districts; and 25 percent came from an additional 12 districts. Results for the other districts are comparable to those of Ithaca.

⁸ SED’s public release of the graduation rate data is available in June of the year following the fourth year of the cohort. While SUNY charter school data is available in September following the fourth year of the cohort, district comparison data is not available until June of the following year. As a result, the Institute cannot make comparisons to district graduation rates until one year after the cohort has graduated.

four-year college. In 2012-13, 58 percent of the 44 graduates enrolled in college at the time of the school's November 2013 reporting on graduate activity. An additional 25 percent of the graduates (11 students) report still planning to attend college. About one-third of the cohort had earned college credit for at least two college-level courses completed at New Roots.

New Roots met its ELA goal in 2011-12 and came close to meeting it in 2012-13. It outperformed the district on the percent of students passing the English Regents exam in 2011-12. It met the absolute standard of a 75-percent pass rate with a score of 65 in both years. With 57 percent of the students passing the ELA test with a score of 75 or better in 2012-13, it would have come close to meeting the college and career readiness standard of a 65-percent pass rate if the new college and career readiness Accountability Plan measures were in effect. New Roots also met its math goal in 2011-12, outperforming the district in percent passing a math Regents exam. While it met the absolute measure in 2012-13, it did not meet other math goal measures and performed below the new college and career readiness standard.

By meeting some Accountability Plan goals and coming close to meeting others during the two years for which complete data is available, New Roots is beginning to establish a record of academic success. The recent sharp increase in Regents pass rates in the first two years of high school, qualitative evidence on the excellence of instruction and a 50-percent increase in the school reported proportion of students returning from the previous year – all indicate that the school is on a trajectory of meeting or coming close to meeting achievement standards in the future.

A complete set of results appears in the Performance Summary in the Appendix.

Instructional Leadership. The founding principal/superintendent, who is a forceful steward of the school's mission of providing an interdisciplinary academic program with hands-on, community-based learning in the context of sustainability education, creates a rich learning environment for a diverse student population. The school instills high expectations for teacher performance and student learning. It has recently restructured its instructional leadership to provide teachers with more sustained coaching.

- The school's leadership establishes an environment of high expectations by ensuring that teachers deliberately monitor each student's individual learning targets in order to determine that they are on track to pass Regents exams. At the same time, teachers actively engage students in project work that develops problem solving skills related to the state's rigorous college and career ready standards. Teachers develop individualized student goals in which they set specific individual student targets and regularly meet with students to discuss their progress toward meeting the targets and satisfying achievement requirements.
- The school's instructional leadership team consists of the principal/superintendent, an associate principal, and two academic coordinators. In addition to supervising and coaching teachers, the associate principal has at-risk-student support coordination responsibilities. The academic coordinators teach a number of classes and have curriculum development and senior-year-student-management responsibilities.
- Early in the charter term, New Roots contracted with Expeditionary Learning Schools to provide on-site professional development on implementing inquiry-based, interdisciplinary learning. During subsequent school years and in the summer before the start of the 2013-14 school year, the school has continued to focus on professional development in these areas. A centerpiece of the professional development is using learning targets to focus teachers on assessing student outcomes. Notwithstanding the school-wide emphasis on these professional development topics, instructional leaders encourage teachers to identify their own professional development opportunities based on personal need and interest.
- The instructional leadership team currently meets weekly to troubleshoot immediate issues. The principal/superintendent monitors the academic coordinators' observations and feedback of the instructional staff. The associate principal and coordinators conduct observations with structured written feedback centering their attention on new and inexperienced teachers. Some teachers meet with their coordinator regularly. Teachers met with their respective supervisor at least once by the middle of October to set individual goals aligned to personal growth and pedagogical skill development, as well as to focus on inculcating higher-order thinking skills.
- The school holds weekly staff meetings with a specific professional development agenda and minimal housekeeping. Teachers have ample opportunity to meet as grade-level teams to develop interdisciplinary learning projects, common essential questions and exit tickets. Teachers across different disciplines collaborate in planning strategies for enabling students to meet the Regents exam requirements. Teachers also have occasional opportunity to meet within content areas to vertically align the curriculum.
- The school conducts mid-year and end-of-year teacher evaluations, focusing on accumulated observational evidence and on attainment of personal and professional growth goals, as well as student academic performance. The school develops teacher improvement plans as needed to improve instructional deficiencies that impact student

performance. Some teachers have not been invited to return for reasons related to student performance.

NOTEWORTHY

The New Roots Farm-to-School Program implements a comprehensive and sustainable model within an interdisciplinary farm and classroom curriculum including student access to hands-on gardening for developing systems of local food distribution and training to support food services and staff. The program enables students to explore concepts such as seed starting, garden planning and design, sustainable agriculture and perennial foods, in collaboration with community partners including local farms.

In one example of a current real-world project, students work with a Cornell University landscape-architecture class to design an edible forest garden for the Ithaca Children's Garden. This "learning laboratory" demonstrates how forest ecosystems can provide perpetual food products.

Curriculum & Assessment. The school's curriculum supports teachers in their instructional planning; its informal classroom assessment practices improve student learning.

- The school's curriculum framework consists of the state's Common Core learning standards, Education for Sustainability standards, and the State Education Department's ("SED's") and Environmental Roundtable's environmental curriculum as the basis for developing unit and lesson plans for daily instruction and learning projects.
- Using this framework, teachers develop and/or modify scope and sequence documents for their courses prior to the start of the school year based on student performance outcomes and discussions among grade-level and content-area teams. The process of selecting, developing, and reviewing curriculum documents begins in August with the instructional leadership reviewing curriculum documents and student performance results. Because of this review this process, teachers know what to teach and when to teach it throughout the year.
- Teachers develop interdisciplinary units during grade-level meetings, but report having limited time to discuss curriculum changes in their content area teams. While teachers use data to develop strategies and action plans, neither teachers nor instructional leaders have yet conducted a systematic follow up to evaluate the success of such strategies during the course of the school year.
- Teachers plan purposeful, focused lessons, as evidenced by daily and weekly lesson plans featuring daily learning targets and an agenda of activities that allow students to learn what they need to know to meet the performance goal articulated in the target. Leaders require teachers to post their weekly lesson plans on a shared server so that the leaders can provide oversight and feedback as needed.

- Teachers constantly diagnose student understanding by informally assessing learning activity following a highly personalized instructional approach.
- The school assesses entering students with the Terra Nova norm-referenced test and uses post-test scores to monitor annual growth. Teachers develop their own quarterly and midterm assessments by using Regents items that align to units and standards.
- To ensure monitoring of student progress towards Regents exam success, teachers whose courses terminate in a Regents examination design quarterly assessments patterned on Regents exam content and structure. Teachers review quarterly data in team meetings and develop strategies to support struggling students. Instructional leaders review and monitor these activities.
- The school often enables students in Regents and non-Regents courses to develop deep, conceptual knowledge through experiential, project- and place-based learning in an interdisciplinary curriculum.
- The school is mindful of using assessments that mimic the construct and content of the Regents exams. However, the assessments at times have limited validity in identifying students who are not on track to passing the Regents. Passing courses, in themselves, are not valid predictors of passing Regents. The school has begun to make teachers responsible for providing targeted interventions based on exam results; nevertheless, teachers have not yet received much direct supervision in generating their intervention plans.

Pedagogy. Competent instruction is evident throughout the school, with some pockets of high quality. As shown in the chart below, during the renewal visit, Institute team members conducted 21 classroom observations following a defined protocol used in all school renewal visits.

Classroom Observation Methodology: Number of Observations

		Grade				Total
		9	10	11	12	
Content Area	ELA	2	3	3	2	10
	Math	1		1	3	5
	Science			3		3
	Soc Stu		2			2
	Specials	1				1
	Total	4	5	7	5	21

- Most lesson activities are purposeful with clearly stated learning targets (15 out of 21 classrooms observed). Teachers present concepts with accuracy in clear and age-appropriate terms. In classes where students participate in project-based learning, teachers use a project management perspective to determine whether students completed the day’s activity sufficiently well to move the project forward.

- Teachers imbed abundant and purposeful peer-to-peer interaction in lessons and activities. For example, in one literature lesson, students divided into two groups based on their predictions about what would happen next in a narrative text. Students articulated clear reasons to support their opinions and convinced peers through their own compelling arguments to switch groups and align with the opposite group. In another example, a science teacher continually deflected questions by challenging students to consult with classmates, to check resources or to reinvestigate aspects of their work with lab partners.
- Teachers consistently check for individual student understanding during lessons and provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate mastery of content (18 out of 21 classrooms observed). Teachers circulate around the room to monitor students’ written work and provide individualized feedback, demonstrating familiarity with each student’s abilities. Many teachers use exit tickets to further determine student understanding; however, exit ticket questions or activities are often broad in scope so do not measure specific daily lesson objectives.
- Most teachers include challenging questions and activities in their lessons that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking skills (16 out of 21 classrooms observed). Teachers challenge students to defend and elaborate on their answers and apply concepts to real life situations. For example, students analyze and interpret the meaning of a different, famous quote each day as a warm-up activity. Students then make connections between the quotations, literature they have read, and personal experiences. In a specific example of using real life situations, a math class lesson included students’ collecting real world data (fallen leaves) to analyze statistical problems. The teacher required the students to engage in higher-order thinking to develop strategies for advanced re-sampling techniques in order to identify the error bands for their collected samples.
- Teachers maintain classrooms with a consistent focus on academic achievement (15 out of 21 classrooms observed). Students generally actively engage in lesson activities. Lessons’ interesting content creates an environment conducive to learning and mitigates disruption.
- Teachers give priority to student creativity, debate and discussion, rather than urgent pacing. The school bases its instructional approach on practices from Expeditionary Learning schools, with emphasis on month-long expeditions, as well as project-based and place-based learning.

At-Risk Students. The school addresses the educational needs of at-risk students through a recently introduced systems-approach to interventions; its effectiveness cannot yet be determined.

General Education Students Receiving Targeted Interventions

Program	The school provides push in, pull out support, individualized after-school tutoring services, and Saturday school to students in need of additional intervention. Students can receive supports for both academic and behavioral needs. The school is in the beginning stages of implementing a more systematized approach to its intervention review with an increased focus on monitoring and data analysis.
----------------	--

Staff	The school's student support team (comprised of a special education coordinator, three full-time certified special education teachers, a counselor, the dean of conduct and an academic intervention specialist) provides support for general education students.
Identification Process	The school has an inclusive identification process for at-risk students, based on classroom grades, quarterly assessment data, TerraNova results and teacher recommendations.
Coordination	Classroom teachers and special education teachers meet weekly to plan lessons collaboratively, discuss student progress and plan instructional approaches. General education teachers collaborate with the student support team to create personalized intervention plans for each at-risk student with scheduled follow up meetings.
Progress Monitoring	The team monitors the performance of students receiving interventions using the same assessments as the general population. There is no specific progress monitoring system to measure the effectiveness of academic interventions. The team also monitors behavioral issues on an individualized basis.
Classroom Teacher Professional Development	The special education coordinator presents seminars on the intervention process, differentiation to all staff at pre-service professional development and provides on-going support.

Students with Disabilities

Program	The school provides push in support, resource room, individualized after-school tutoring services and Saturday school to students in need of remediation. It offers counseling in-house to students as necessary; home districts provide speech/occupational therapy/physical therapy services as mandated.
Staff	A special education coordinator, two dually certified teachers, the dean of conduct, a counselor, and an academic intervention specialist provide support for special education students.
Identification Process	The school collaborates with district Committees on Special Education ("CSEs") on monitoring students whom the CSEs have already identified as having special needs or disabilities. The school's student support team makes referrals to CSEs as necessary.
Coordination	General education and special education teachers meet weekly to discuss student progress and plan instructional approaches.
Progress Monitoring	General education teachers are aware of the content of their students' IEP goals, and special education teachers take primary responsibility for tracking progress towards meeting them.
Classroom Teacher Professional Development	The student support team provides on-going professional development to general education teachers by suggesting targeted strategies and instructional techniques to improve student performance in the classroom during their weekly meetings.

		2008 Cohort ⁹	2009 Cohort
Enrollment (N)		()	(11)
Results	Tested on State Regents Exam State Exams (N)	(5)	(9)
	Percent Proficient on State Regents Exam	s	33.3
	Percent Proficient Statewide on State Regents Exam	53.0	N/A

English Language Learners

Program	None.			
Staff	None.			
Identification Process	The school screens students informally during new entrant interviews and requests formal screenings from students' home districts if the interviewers have identified a possible need.			
Progress Monitoring	Not applicable.			
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Enrollment (N)		(0)	(0)	(0)
Results	Tested on NYSESLAT ¹⁰ Exam (N)	N/A	N/A	(N/A)
	Percent Proficient or Making Progress on NYSESLAT			N/A

At the time of the renewal visit, the school had no ELLs and had not established a coordinated program to support any ELLs in developing their English language acquisition skills. The school's low enrollment and the presence of ELLs in the greater community makes development of an ELL program a priority. As a result, the Institute required the school to submit an educationally sound, legally compliant plan for serving ELL students. The school has submitted such a plan and the Institute finds it acceptable for the next full charter term.

The school's board of trustees reports that bolstering student enrollment with particular emphasis on recruiting English language learners is a major priority. However, the immigrant population in and around Ithaca is relatively small, and the board reports that many immigrant families are unwilling to take a chance on a school with a limited record of accomplishment. The board indicates that the school is proactively recruiting students for the next school year through community agencies that work with young people and immigrant populations in the Ithaca region.

⁹ Due to the small size of the subgroup, actual numbers have been suppressed.

¹⁰ New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, a standardized state exam.

IS THE SCHOOL AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

The school is an effective and viable organization. The education corporation board (the “board”) carries out its oversight with attention to the school mission and student achievement as well as a clear sense of its governance responsibilities. The school organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program. During the current charter term, the board with certain minor exceptions has been in general and substantial compliance with the terms of its charter, by-laws, applicable state and federal law, rules and regulations.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Board Oversight. The school board works effectively to achieve the school’s mission and monitors attainment of Accountability Plan goals.

- Board members have expertise in education, non-profit management and finance, as well as higher and K-12 education. The personnel committee evaluates individual personnel circumstances and develops strategic plans for the future; the finance committee conducts ongoing review of budgets cognizant of given staffing levels. The board has put in place structures and procedures with which to govern the school and oversee the 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 now clearly focuses on the interdisciplinary, hands-on, community-based learning and sustainability education in its mission as a means toward the end of enabling students to earn a Regents diploma and to demonstrate readiness for higher education. It carries out its oversight responsibilities by working with the principal/superintendent to develop the school program based on the characteristics of the student population, mission alignment and student achievement data. The principal and lead teacher have provided achievement reports to the board, including trends and comparisons in Regents pass-rates, as well as student graduation rates over varying periods of time.
- The board has monitored recent leader turnover and supports the current restructuring of the leadership, the promotion of key staff members and development of a more comprehensive teacher coaching system. The board now budgets for a college placement counselor and has created a fund to pay for college applications.
- The school’s board of trustees is aware of the diversity of the school’s student body. While the school is dedicated to making college a viable option for all students, board members seek alternative post-secondary options for its graduates other than attending college or university. The board is considering developing a certificate program in permaculture related to sustainable food and farming through an internship program that would provide job opportunities for students after graduation.

Organizational Capacity. New Roots' organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program.

- The school has established a complex organizational structure to support the delivery of a specialized academic program with a dedicated staff filling a variety of specific roles to a small student body. The size of the school requires that individual staff members carry out multiple responsibilities.
- Despite the complexity, the organizational structure provides distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and a well-understood reporting structure.
- At the beginning of the 2013-14 school year, the school has instituted a number of personnel changes in the reporting structure. The effectiveness of these changes remains to be determined.
- The school has recently introduced an expanded leadership team with teachers taking on coordinating and curriculum development responsibilities in addition to their instructional assignments. These leadership functions, coupled with the school culture of individual choice, responsibility and collaboration encourage teachers to take initiative for collaborating with colleagues to develop the school's rich cross-curricular instructional program. The school has developed a web of interconnectedness that supports a range of instructional activities centering on sustainability and community.
- In turn, the school has created a student-centered learning environment focusing on instilling personal responsibility and academic student choice.
- Under the coordination of a grade-level advisor, each cohort – constituted as a 'crew' – receives a four-year sequence of college exploration. With a college application as a graduation requirement, the school instills in all students a sense of being college material, even for those who would not have otherwise considered attending.
- The school has a clear student discipline system centering on restorative justice whereby students take responsibility for their infractions. Because teachers apply the consequences of infractions uniformly, students know what to expect. As a result, teachers report that this proactive discipline has generated a more orderly learning environment and the school has reduced out-of-school suspensions from 100 to 30 over the last two years.
- The school reports that it has limited opportunity to communicate directly with 8th grade students and their families through middle schools in Ithaca and many of the surrounding districts. As a result, of this restrictive outreach, the school cannot easily get the word out about its program and has continually faced the challenge of adequately enrolling the 9th grade. Notwithstanding, the difficulty of filling the 9th grade, once students enroll, they tend to remain at the school in ever increasing proportions. In the last two years, the school reports that the proportion of students returning from the previous year has increased by almost 50 percent.
- 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.
- New Roots has had a mixed and limited two-year record of attaining its Accountability Plan goals, but has in place systems and procedures to support the implementation of a rigorous instructional program that is likely to improve the learning and achievement of a diversity of students and with more time enable the school to meet its Accountability Plan goals.

FAITHFULNESS TO CHARTER & PARENT SATISFACTION

Current Key Design Elements ¹¹	Evident?
Education for sustainability as an integrated principal for applied disciplinary studies,	✓
Real world, community-based learning,	✓
Small school design elements, including advisory groups and service learning	✓
A college preparatory curriculum, including offering concurrent enrollment for college credit.	✓
Use of the Environment as Integrating Context model for curriculum development.	✓
Demonstrating achievement through exhibitions and digital portfolios.	

Parent Satisfaction. Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.¹²

2012-2013	Average Response (Response Rate: 23%)
I am satisfied with the quality of my student’s teachers.	4.19 out of 5.0
The school keeps me informed about my student’s academic progress via regular reports and conferences.	3.69 out of 5.0
My student is more academically engaged as a result of his or her experiences at New Roots.	3.67 out of 5.0
Students at New Roots are not threatened or harassed by other students based on race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship status, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability.	4.0 out of 5.0

Persistence in Enrollment. The school provided the following statistical information in their renewal application materials.

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Percent of Eligible Students Returning From Previous Year ¹³	66	84	95

¹¹ As part of their initial application and their Application for Charter Renewal, schools identify the Key Design Elements that reflect their mission and distinguish the school.

¹² Source: Application for Charter Renewal.

¹³ Source: Application for Charter Renewal.

COMPLIANCE

Governance. In material respects, the school board has implemented, and abides by, adequate and appropriate policies, systems and procedures to ensure the effective governance and oversight of the school. The school board demonstrates an understanding of its role in holding the school leadership accountable for academic results and fiscal soundness, and seeks to preserve the uniqueness of the school's culture.

- The board receives program and fiscal reports at board meetings from school leadership.
- Early in the charter term, the board had to navigate conflict of interest issues regarding the school facility and a trustee's ownership interest.
- The board of staff regularly seeks guidance on compliance issues from the Institute, more so now than in the beginning of the charter term.
- The board did not properly follow a provision in its by-laws to fix the number of trustees and thereafter properly determine quorum. As a result, the board had to revote items from one board meeting where it was determined post hoc that no quorum was present.
- The board and the staff have had to continuously deal with school detractors who were disappointed the charter application was approved. This group has lodged formal and informal complaints incessantly and continuing to the present. The board consults counsel when appropriate, but has also learned to deal with a foe whose sole purpose is to close the school.

Legal Requirements. The education corporation generally and substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of its charter. The Institute found exceptions to the school's general compliance in the following areas.

- FERPA. The Institute noted minor violations of some of the provisions of the federal Family Educational rights and Privacy Act, which did not include any release of protected information.
- Code of Ethics. The education corporation's Code of Ethics did not conform to all of the current requirements of the New York General Municipal Law.
- By-laws. The by-laws appeared to be in need of a few technical revisions.
- ELL Program. Even though the school had no ELL students at the time of the renewal visit, the school did not have in place an effective ELL program that is regularly reviewed and research based in the event it admitted such students.
- FOIL. The school was not in compliance with some minor, technical aspects of the New York Freedom of Information Law ("FOIL") at the time of the renewal visit, which were not the subject of the litigation described immediately below.
- Open Meetings Law. The education corporation was sued by a prior complainant for lack of compliance with the New York Open Meetings Law ("OML") and FOIL. The education corporation lost the Article 78 proceeding regarding its handling of a FOIL request and its use of executive session in trying to procure a contract to install sprinklers. In addition to having to pay some, but not all, attorneys fees sought by the complainant, the education corporation had the distinction of

being the first group under a new statutory provision to face mandatory training by the New York State Department of State's Committee on Open Government.

IS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION FISCALLY SOUND?

Based on evidence collected through the renewal review, New Roots is fiscally sound. The education corporation maintains adequate cash reserves to ensure stable operations. The school's financial model over the next five years reflects annual operating surpluses; however, it also shows a continued reliance on fundraising at the projected maximum enrollment of 200 students. The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard, a multi-year financial data analysis for SUNY authorized charter schools, appears in the Appendix.

Budgeting and Long-Range Planning. Throughout the charter term, New Roots has maintained fiscal soundness through conservative budgeting practices and routine monitoring of revenues and expenses to ensure the availability of sufficient resources, and has made appropriate adjustments when necessary.

- The principal, business and operations manager and the board's finance committee collaborate on the development of conservative budgets.
- The education corporation monitors financial reports on a regular basis and reviews cash flow projections continually.
- New Roots maintains a multi-year financial model.

Internal Controls. New Roots has a history of sound fiscal policies, procedures and practice; it maintains appropriate internal controls.

- The fiscal-policies-and-procedures manual contains all necessary components to abide by the school's mission, generally accepted accounting principles and related laws and regulations.
- In spring 2012, the New York State Comptroller's Office conducted an audit of the school's compliance with its fiscal policies and procedures. The school's administration took immediate action to correct the non-material deficiencies.
- Throughout the charter term, the education corporation's unqualified audit reports disclosed no material weaknesses or concerns related to internal controls.

Financial Reporting. New Roots has complied with financial reporting requirements by providing SUNY, SED and the Institute with required financial reports that were on time, complete and followed generally accepted accounting principles.

Financial Condition. New Roots currently maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. As of June 30, 2013, New Roots had net assets of \$875K, an increase over the prior year. Decreased enrollment may negatively affect its financial condition over the next charter term.

- The education corporation projects an operating deficit in the current fiscal year because of a 19 percent decline in enrollment, which will draw down its cash reserve by approximately \$100K.

- New Roots posts a fiscally sound composite score rating on the Institute’s financial dashboard indicating a consistent level of fiscal stability over the charter contract term.¹⁴
- The education corporation has no long-term debt. New Roots has a bank line of credit of \$20K, which it used prior to receipt of federal Charter Schools Program grant funds and occasionally in the its first two years.

The Fiscal Dashboard, provided in the Appendix, presents color coded tables and charts indicating that New Roots has demonstrated fiscal soundness over the course of its charter term.¹⁵

¹⁴ The composite score assists in measuring the financial health of an education corporation using a blended score that measures the school’s performances on key financial indicators. The blended score offsets financial strengths against areas where there may be financial weaknesses.

¹⁵ The U.S. Department of Education has established fiscal criteria for certain ratios or information with high – medium – low categories, represented in the table as green – gray – red. The categories generally correspond to levels of fiscal risk, but must be viewed in the context of each education corporation and the general type or category of school.

ARE THE SCHOOL'S PLANS FOR THE NEXT CHARTER TERM REASONABLE, FEASIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE?

To the extent that New Roots is making progress toward meeting its key academic goals, continues to implement an educational program that supports achieving those goals, operates an effective and viable organization, and is fiscally sound, its plans to continue to implement the educational program as proposed during the next charter period are reasonable, feasible and achievable.

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

MISSION FOR THE NEXT CHARTER TERM

New Roots Charter School will prepare our diverse student body to meet the challenges of citizenship, work, and life-long learning in the 21st century. Our interdisciplinary academic program will feature hands-on, community-based learning that supports students in solving real-world problems. New Roots Charter School students will earn a Regents diploma and demonstrate readiness for higher education by earning college credit and creating a graduation portfolio that demonstrates that they have met or exceeded all 28 New York State Learning Standards. Our school community will create a model of secondary education that integrates best practices in sustainability education with those proven to support educational equity.

The school's Application for Charter Renewal contains all necessary elements as required by the Act. The proposed school calendar allots an appropriate amount of instructional time to meet or exceed instructional time requirements, and taken together with other academic and key design elements, should be sufficient to allow the school to meet its proposed Accountability Plan goals. The school has amended or will amend other key aspects of the renewal application -- including by-laws, code of ethics and plan to serve ELL students -- to comply with various provisions of the New York Education Law, Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, Public Officers Law and the General Municipal Law, and federal law and regulations, as appropriate.

Plans for the Educational Program.

	Current Charter Term	End of Next Charter Term
Enrollment	151	200
Grade Span	9-12	9-12
Teaching Staff	17	17
Hours of Instruction	1,044	1,044

The same core elements of the instructional program that have enabled New Roots to make progress toward meeting its Accountability Plan goals during the current charter term are likely to enable the school to meet its goals in the next charter term.

Plans for Board Oversight and Governance. Board members express an interest in continuing to serve New Roots in the next charter term and may add additional members in the future.

Fiscal & Facility Plans. Based on evidence collected through the renewal review, including a review of the five-year financial plan, New Roots presents a reasonable and appropriate fiscal and facilities plan for the next charter term. The school's enrollment projections over the next three years show a gradual increase up to 200 students. If enrollment does not increase, the school may not have the resources to fund adequately operations through the next charter term. New Roots' presented budget projections reflect continued reliance on fundraising to cover its revenue shortfall should enrollment not increase.

New Roots plans to continue to use its three current facilities to provide instruction; these facilities can meet the space need of the projected 200 students. The school projects its rent will increase four percent annually during the next charter term. The board is exploring options to consolidate facilities and will do so if it has a feasible option prior to the end of a new charter term. The board is also exploring options to expand in the Clinton House, allowing the school to consolidate more of its operations into the primary facility.

The organization's record of fiscal soundness and the financial projection submitted and reviewed sufficiently demonstrate that New Roots has the ability to operate in a fiscally sound manner during the next charter term. However, meeting or exceeding enrollment targets will be a critical factor in the school's ability to remain fiscally sound. Therefore, the Institute will monitor the school's enrollment and financial condition annually to ensure it remains fiscally sound.

APPENDIX

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Current Mission Statement

New Roots Charter School will prepare our diverse student body to meet the challenges of citizenship, work, and life-long learning in the 21st century. Our interdisciplinary academic program will feature hands-on, community-based learning that supports students in solving real-world problems. New Roots Charter School students will earn a Regents diploma and demonstrate readiness for higher education by earning college credit and creating a graduation portfolio that demonstrates that they have met or exceeded all 28 New York State Learning Standards. Our school community will create a model of secondary education that integrates best practices in sustainability education with those proven to support educational equity.

School Characteristics

School Year	Proposed Enrollment	Actual Enrollment¹⁶	Proposed Grades	Actual Grades
2009-2010	125	100	9-10	9-10
2010-2011	175	115	9-11	9-11
2011-2012	225	171	9-12	9-12
2012-2013	200	191	9-12	9-12
2013-2014	200	151	9-12	9-12

Student Demographics¹⁷

	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13¹⁸	
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of Ithaca City School District Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of Ithaca City School District Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of Ithaca City School District Enrollment
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	1	0	0	0	N/A
Black or African American	5	11	8	11	6	N/A
Hispanic	2	5	4	5	5	N/A
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	0	12	0	12	2	N/A
White	83	69	81	68	79	N/A
Multiracial	10	2	7	3	9	N/A

¹⁶ Source: SUNY Charter Schools Institute's Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

¹⁷ Source: 2010-11 and 2011-12 School Report Cards, SED.

¹⁸ The Institute derived the 2012-13 Students with Disabilities, ELL and Economically Disadvantaged statistics from the school's October 2012 student enrollment report to SED (2012-13 BEDS Report). District data are not yet available.

Special Populations						
Students with Disabilities ¹⁹	--	--	21	13	20	N/A
English Language Learners	0	5	0	5	0	N/A
Free/ Reduced Lunch						
Eligible for Free Lunch	37	26	42	30	--	N/A
Eligible for Reduced –Price Lunch	6	5	5	6	--	N/A
Economically Disadvantaged	--	--	--	--		N/A

Current Board of Trustees²⁰

Board Member Name	Position
Jason Hamilton	Chair
Peter Bardaglio	Vice-Chair
Granger Macy	Treasurer
Synnove Heggoy	Secretary
Conrad Metcalf	Trustee
Roger Richardson	Trustee
Kati Torello	Trustee
Joseph Wilson	Trustee
Tina Nilsen-Hodges	Ex-Officio, non-voting Trustee
Cate Thompson	Family Liaison
Kai Haskins	Student Liaison

School Leader(s)

School Year(s)	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2009-10 to Present	Tina Nilsen-Hodges, Principal and Superintendent

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2009-10	First-Year Visit	Institute	March 25, 2010
2010-11	Evaluation Visit	Institute	May 17-19, 2012
2013-14	Initial Renewal Visit	Institute	October 8-9, 2013

¹⁹ District-level Students with Disabilities enrollment data are not available for 2010-11. SED released these district data for the first time in spring 2012.

²⁰ Source: Institute Board Records.

Conduct of the School Renewal Visit

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
October 8-9, 2013	Ron Miller, PhD	Executive Deputy Director for Accountability
	Jeffrey Wasbes	Director of Performance and Systems Analysis
	Heather Wendling	Senior Analyst

SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMENTS



ITHACA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

400 Lake Street, P.O. Box 549, Ithaca, New York 14851-0549

Luvelle Brown, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Tel: (607) 274-2101
Fax: (607) 274-2271

E-mail: luvelle.brown@icsd.k12.ny.us

November 12, 2013

Ms. Susan Miller Barker, Executive Director
Charter Schools Institute
41 State Street
Albany, New York 12207

Dear Ms. Miller Barker,

At its public meeting on Tuesday, November 12, 2013, the Ithaca City School District (ICSD) Board of Education unanimously approved a resolution directing me to invite you to an upcoming Board of Education meeting to share information and answer questions about the New Roots Charter School Renewal.

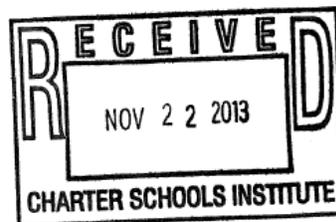
As the home district, the ICSD held a public forum on October 23, 2013 in accordance with the Charter Schools Institute requirements. At that forum and in other public conversations, information has been shared that is deeply troubling for many ICSD Board members and other community members. Specifically, questions regarding the accuracy of achievement data need to be addressed. Questions about the accuracy of data along with the two formal complaints that have been filed against the New Roots Charter School have prompted the ICSD Board of Education to formally request that the Charter Schools Institute hold the charter renewal in abeyance until the previously mentioned conversation with you is held.

Along with this letter, I am including copies of the Board of Education's discussion on this topic and other public comments. We look forward to hearing from you and collaborating to meet the needs of our community's young people

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luvelle Brown".

Luvelle Brown Ed.D



Vision: 6000+Thinkers

Mission: Educate, Engage, Empower

NEW ROOTS CHARTER SCHOOL PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES
October 23, 2013

PRESENT: Robert Ainslie, Chris Malcolm, Jay True, Patricia Wasyliw, Bradley Grainger, Seth Peacock, Eldred Harris , and Judy Maxwell

ABSENT: Sean Eversley Bradwell

CALL TO ORDER

R. Ainslie, President of the Board of Education called the public hearing to order at 6:00 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tami L. Tabone from Dryden Central School District spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Corrine Frantz from the Ithaca City School District spoke against renewal of the New Roots charter.

Frank Araneo from the Ithaca City School District spoke against renewal of the New Roots charter.

Henry Kramer from the Ithaca City School District spoke against renewal of the New Roots charter.

Pat Erich from the Ithaca City School District spoke against renewal of the New Roots charter.

Kai Haskins from the Ithaca City School District spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Ezra Davis from the Ithaca City School District spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Gwen Daniels from the Ithaca City School District spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Pat Stevens from the Dryden Central School District spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Kerry Delisa from the Ithaca City School District spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Maria Gimma, a New Roots teacher, shared a letter in support of New Roots Charter School.

Irene Case from the Ithaca City School District spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Kelly Doolittle from Southern Cayuga Central School District spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Chris Martin from the Ithaca City School District, a teacher at New Roots Charter School, spoke in support of the New Roots charter school.

Joe Giordano from the Ithaca City School District spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Sue Schwartz from the Ithaca City School District, a teacher at New Roots Charter School, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Dave Quinn-Jacobs from the Ithaca City School District, a New Roots parent, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Todd Kuraneul from the Ithaca City School District spoke against New Roots Charter School.

Sebastien Mason, a New Roots graduate, spoke in support of New Roots Charter School.

Jhakeem Halton, a New Roots teacher, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Eric Whelpley, a New Roots teacher, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Andy Morton, a volunteer instructor at New Roots, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Sam Schmidt, a New Roots graduate from the Newfield School District, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Dallas Wiki from Dryden Central School District spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Brooke Greenhouse of Ithaca City School District, a New Roots parent, spoke in support of the New Roots Charter School.

Eric Larson, a New Roots parent of students living in the Newfield School District, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Ella Bard of the Ithaca City School District, a New Roots student, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Carol Chambers of Candor Central School District, a New Roots parent, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Fran Spaight, a New Roots teacher, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Mo Petcov of Dryden Central School District, a New Roots student, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Lorraine Bard of Ithaca City School District, a New Roots parent, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Raymond Van Johnson, a New Roots student, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Ashley Le Cuyer from the Dryden Central School District spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Wade Englehardt shared his experiences and thoughts regarding the New Roots Charter School.

Jane Whiting from Odessa-Montour School District, a New Roots graduate, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Maliki Whitford of Trumansburg Central School District, a New Roots student, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Ian French of Bath Central School District, a New Roots graduate, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Aryeh Zax, a student of the Ithaca City School District, spoke against renewing the New Roots charter.

Annete Roberts, New Roots parent, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Mary Gooding, a New Roots teacher, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

Lecil James, a New Roots student, spoke in support of renewing the New Roots charter.

ADJOURNMENT

R. Ainslie adjourned the hearing at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle DeSilva, District Clerk

Approved by President Rob Ainslie on _____.

Newfield Central School District – via electronic mail

From: [Dr.] Cheryl Thomas [Superintendent]
Sent: Thursday, October 17, 2013 4:45 PM
[]
Subject: New Roots Charter Extension Request

[]

I received notice that the New Roots Charter School has applied for an extension of its charter. I want to express some concerns I have about the school and encourage you to consider these before making your decision.

CONCERN 1: High number of drop-outs

Of the 11 Newfield Central School District students in the 2009 cohort attending New Roots, 5 dropped out of school (54.5% graduation rate).

Of the 4 Newfield Central School District students in the 2010 cohort attending New Roots, one moved away and one is repeating the 11th grade and will not graduate.

CONCERN 2: Poor student attendance

Many of the students have poor attendance records and we are worried about their success. It does not appear that there are consequences or any corrective action taken for excessive absences at New Roots. The chart below outlines the total number of absences for each student during the 2012-13 school year:

Name	Grade	Total Days Absent
Student 1	9	6
Student 2	9	52
Student 3	10	26
Student 4	10	2
Student 5	11	114
Student 6	11	34
Student 7	11	107
Student 8	11	19
Student 9	11	7
Student 10	12	31
Student 11	12	26
Student 12	12	18
Student 13	12	27

CONCERN 3: Low success rates for Regents Exams

For the first few years, New Roots did not test all students taking a Regents level course. For example, in 2011, only 26 of the 38 New Roots students who should have taken the English Regents actually sat for the exam.

The chart below give [sic] a side by side comparison of results (percent passing):

June 2011	New Roots	Newfield
Algebra	49%	84%
Geometry	43%	91%
Trigonometry	33%	78%
Global History	69%	82%
English*	92%	84%
US History*	91%	90%
June 2012	New Roots	Newfield
Algebra	69%	76%
Geometry	55%	83%
Trigonometry	23%	94%
Global History	61%	71%
English	76%	89%
US History	79%	92%

*Did not test all eligible students

For the sake of our students, I urge you to deny New Roots request for an extension to the Charter.

Thank you.

Groton Central School District – via electronic mail

-----Original Message-----

From:[James Abrams, Superintendent]

Sent: Tuesday, October 22, 2013 12:10 PM

[]

Subject: New Roots Extension and Renewal

You have requested comments on the above action.

Groton CSD has had students attend New Roots for each of the three years I have been in the district as superintendent. It does not appear generally to me that the student academic outcomes have improved for the students that attended New Roots. We have had some of our students return further behind and unable to graduate on time. There have also been students who either dropped out from New Roots or returned and later became a drop-out. I was invited and attended an open-house day at New Roots. There [sic] programs and instructors are similar to what students can get at their home district. Certainly, the smaller overall size of the school is important and can have positive impacts. However, it does not appear the outcomes were significantly different. The area where we struggled the most was in the accounting and billing area. We feel that we must remain vigilant in our examination of all of our bills. I admit that this has improved

somewhat in the past year and a half. One of the areas we have noticed seems problematic is in the billing for additional special education services. I would be in favor of a proposal to grant an extension to the end of the year. I would oppose a renewal of their charter. We annually budget about \$100,000 for students to attend New Roots. This represent [sic] about two percent on our tax levy. I believe we have quality programs and work hard at creating a welcoming environment for our students. I remain committed to servicing all of our students and giving them a great place to learn and grow.

FISCAL DASHBOARD

New Roots

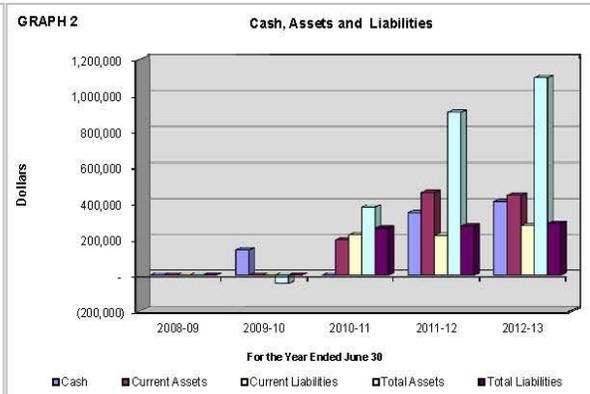
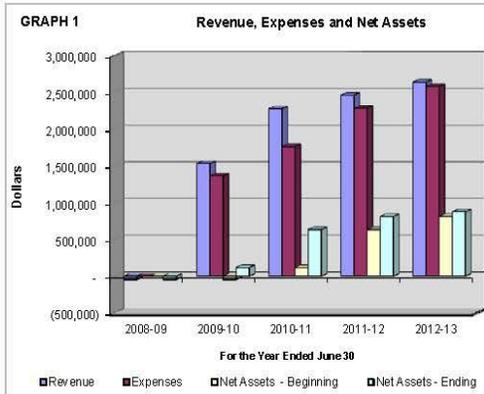
SCHOOL INFORMATION

FINANCIAL POSITION	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Assets						
Current Assets						
Cash and Cash Equivalents - GRAPH 2	-	-	134,941	0	344,559	407,655
Grants and Contracts Receivable	-	-	23,130	186,849	11,147	3,996
Accounts Receivable	-	-	21,037	174,389	79,882	143,302
Prepaid Expenses	-	-	13,107	96,697	5,350	5,350
Contributions and Other Receivables	-	-	-	-	763	1,375
Total Current Assets - GRAPH 2	-	-	192,215	457,935	441,701	561,678
Property, Building and Equipment, net	-	-	165,270	425,636	631,748	596,396
Other Assets	-	(47,246)	19,075	18,907	23,682	23,432
Total Assets - GRAPH 2	-	(47,246)	376,560	902,378	1,097,131	1,181,506
Liabilities and Net Assets						
Current Liabilities						
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	-	-	39,999	46,030	21,874	33,081
Accrued Payroll and Benefits	-	-	111,741	153,203	236,455	273,119
Deferred Revenue	-	-	54,462	-	-	-
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	-	-	12,218	17,343	13,501	-
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable	-	-	1,500	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Current Liabilities - GRAPH 2	-	-	219,920	216,576	271,830	306,200
L-T Debt and Notes Payable, net current maturities	-	-	38,121	52,278	11,776	-
Total Liabilities - GRAPH 2	-	-	258,041	268,854	283,606	306,200
Net Assets						
Unrestricted	-	(47,246)	118,519	553,019	804,640	857,806
Temporarily restricted	-	-	-	80,505	8,885	17,500
Total Net Assets	-	(47,246)	118,519	633,524	813,525	875,306
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	-	(47,246)	376,560	902,378	1,097,131	1,181,506
ACTIVITIES						
Operating Revenue						
Resident Student Enrollment	-	-	1,056,886	1,550,557	1,960,877	2,188,873
Students with Disabilities	-	-	97,097	66,819	174,343	276,286
Grants and Contracts						
State and local	-	-	-	237,585	184,747	8,098
Federal - Title and IDEA	-	-	15,668	64,372	54,638	87,897
Federal - Other	-	-	311,828	288,172	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	35,218
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program	-	-	26,890	35,211	39,600	28,129
Total Operating Revenue	-	-	1,508,169	2,242,716	2,414,205	2,624,501
Expenses						
Regular Education	-	-	857,056	1,131,051	1,544,515	1,585,754
SPED	-	-	85,181	81,165	153,339	213,909
Regular Education & SPED (combined)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	131,405	133,336	181,371	180,177
Total Program Services	-	-	1,073,642	1,345,552	1,859,225	1,979,840
Management and General	-	-	293,087	418,422	426,292	599,290
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-	2,689
Total Expenses - GRAPH 1 / GRAPH 4	-	-	1,366,729	1,763,974	2,285,517	2,581,819
Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations	-	-	141,440	478,742	128,688	42,682
Support and Other Revenue						
Contributions	-	-	21,957	7,427	38,745	7,807
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-	6,877
Miscellaneous Income	-	(47,246)	2,368	28,836	12,567	4,415
Net assets released from restriction	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support and Other Revenue	-	(47,246)	24,325	36,263	51,312	19,099
Total Unrestricted Revenue	-	(3,728)	1,488,976	2,198,474	2,537,037	2,634,985
Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue	-	(43,518)	43,518	80,505	(71,520)	8,615
Total Revenue - GRAPH 1	-	(47,246)	1,532,494	2,278,979	2,465,517	2,643,600
Change in Net Assets	-	(47,246)	165,765	515,005	180,000	61,781
Net Assets - Beginning of Year - GRAPH 1	-	(47,246)	118,519	633,524	813,524	813,524
Prior Year Adjustment(s)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Assets - End of Year - GRAPH 1	-	(47,246)	118,519	633,524	813,524	875,305
Functional Expense Breakdown						
Personnel Service						
Administrative Staff Personnel	-	-	262,357	269,672	341,344	398,358
Instructional Personnel	-	-	452,881	520,536	790,712	902,781
Non-Instructional Personnel	-	-	15,914	102,428	59,182	67,306
Personnel Services (Combined)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Salaries and Staff	-	-	731,152	892,636	1,191,238	1,368,425
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes	-	-	135,203	170,856	243,036	299,756
Retirement	-	-	34,021	55,029	91,108	106,512
Management Company Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-
Building and Land Rent / Lease	-	-	111,077	188,839	267,708	275,443
Staff Development	-	-	70,543	50,532	13,262	15,583
Professional Fees, Consultant & Purchased Services	-	-	32,236	89,358	126,968	213,655
Marketing / Recruitment	-	-	26,490	26,836	22,181	14,190
Student Supplies, Materials & Services	-	-	44,927	55,671	66,662	52,176
Depreciation	-	-	13,498	32,468	50,455	60,893
Other	-	-	167,581	201,748	213,299	175,186
Total Expenses	-	-	1,366,729	1,763,973	2,285,517	2,581,819
ENROLLMENT						
Chartered Enroll	-	-	125	175	225	225
Revised Enroll	-	-	-	-	-	-
Actual Enroll - GRAPH 4	-	-	125	175	171	189
Chartered Grades	-	P-Year	9-10	9-11	9-12	9-12
Revised Grades	-	-	-	-	-	-

New Roots

SCHOOL ANALYSIS

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	
Primary School District	Ithaca						
Per Pupil Funding	11,162	12,113	12,113	12,670	12,670	12,670	
Increase over prior year	1.0%	8.5%	0.0%	4.6%	0.0%	0.0%	
PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN							Average - 5
Revenue							Yrs. OR Charter Term
Operating	-	-	12,065	12,816	14,118	13,888	13,000
Other Revenue and Support	-	-	195	207	300	101	234
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	-	12,260	13,023	14,418	13,989	13,234
Expenses							
Program Services	-	-	8,589	7,689	10,873	10,475	9,050
Management and General, Fundraising	-	-	2,345	2,391	2,493	3,185	2,410
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	-	10,934	10,080	13,366	13,660	11,460
% of Program Services	0.0%	0.0%	78.6%	76.3%	81.3%	76.7%	78.7%
% of Management and Other	0.0%	0.0%	21.4%	23.7%	18.7%	23.3%	21.3%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses - GRAPH 5	0.0%	0.0%	12.1%	29.2%	7.9%	2.4%	15.3%
Student to Faculty Ratio				17.2	13.0	14.3	
Faculty to Admin Ratio				2.0	2.9	2.9	
Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - GRAPH 6							
Score	-	-	-	1.4	2.4	2.4	2.1
Fiscally Strong 1.5 - 3.0 / Fiscally Adequate 1.0 - 1.4 / Fiscally Needs Monitoring 1.0 - 0.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	Fiscally Adequate	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong
Working Capital - GRAPH 7							
Net Working Capital	-	-	(27,705)	241,359	169,871	255,478	127,842
As % of Unrestricted Revenue	0.0%	0.0%	-1.9%	11.0%	6.7%	9.7%	5.3%
Working Capital (Current) Ratio Score	-	-	0.9	2.1	1.8	1.8	1.5
Risk (Low > 3.0 / Medium 1.4 - 2.9 / High < 1.4)	N/A	N/A	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Rating (Excellent > 3.0 / Good 1.4 - 2.9 / Poor < 1.4)	N/A	N/A	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quick (Acid Test) Ratio							
Score	-	-	0.8	1.7	1.6	1.8	1.4
Risk (Low > 2.5 / Medium 1.0 - 2.4 / High < 1.0)	N/A	N/A	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Rating (Excellent > 2.5 / Good 1.0 - 2.4 / Poor < 1.0)	N/A	N/A	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good
Debt to Asset Ratio - GRAPH 7							
Score	-	-	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Risk (Low < 0.50 / Medium 0.51 - .95 / High > 1.0)	N/A	N/A	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent < 0.50 / Good 0.51 - .95 / Poor > 1.0)	N/A	N/A	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Months of Cash - GRAPH 8							
Score	-	-	1.2	0.0	1.8	1.9	1.0
Risk (Low > 6 mo. / Medium 3 - 6 mo. / High < 3 mo.)	N/A	N/A	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Rating (Excellent > 6 mo. / Good 3 - 6 mo. / Poor < 3)	N/A	N/A	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor



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

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

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

	2010-11				MET	2011-12				MET	2012-13				MET		
English Language Arts																	
ABSOLUTE MEASURES																	
	2007 Cohort N		%			2008 Cohort N		%			2009 Cohort N		%				
1. Each year, 75 percent of students will score at least 65 on the Regents English exam.	N		%			32		96.9		YES	53		75.5		YES		
2. Each year, 75 percent of students who scored at Level 1 or 2 on their NYS 8 th grade ELA exam will score at least 65 on the Regents English exam.	Low Performing Entrants N		%			Low Performing Entrants N		%			Low Performing Entrants N		%				
	N		%			NA		NA		NA	NA		NA		NA		
3. Each year, the Accountability Performance Level (APL) on the Regents English exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state's NCLB accountability system.	PI		AMO			PI		AMO			APL		AMO				
						194		188		YES	130		163		NO		
COMPARATIVE MEASURE																	
4. Each year, the percent of students passing the Regents English exam with a score of 65 or above will exceed that of students from the local school district.	Comparison: Ithaca CSD					Comparison: Ithaca CSD					Comparison: Ithaca CSD						
	School		District			School		District			School		District				
						96.9		84.0		YES	75.5		NA		NA		
GROWTH MEASURES																	
5. Each year, the group of students in their 2nd year of high school who have taken a norm-referenced literacy test for two years will reduce by one-half the difference between their previous year's average NCE and an NCE of 50.	2009 Cohort N		Target	Result		2010 Cohort N		Base	Target	Result		2011 Cohort N		Base	Target	Result	
					-	37		60.7	60.8	63.1	YES	43		68.4	68.5	69	YES
Mathematics																	
ABSOLUTE MEASURES																	
	2007 Cohort N		%			2008 Cohort N		%			2009 Cohort N		%				
1. Each year, 75 percent of students will score at least 65 on a NYS Regents mathematics exam.	N		%			32		90.6		YES	53		83		YES		
2. Each year, 75 percent of students who scored at Level 1 or 2 on their NYS 8th grade ELA exam will score at least 65 on the Regents English exam.	Low Performing Entrants N		%			Low Performing Entrants N		%			Low Performing Entrants N		%				
	N		%			NA		NA		NA	NA		NA		NA		
3. Each year, the Performance Index (PI) on the Regents English exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) set forth in the state's NCLB accountability system.	PI		AMO			PI		AMO			APL		AMO				
						188		186		YES	108		142		NO		
COMPARATIVE MEASURE																	
4. Each year, the percent of students passing the Regents English exam with a score of 65 or above will exceed that of students from the local school district.	Comparison: Ithaca CSD					Comparison: Ithaca CSD					Comparison: Ithaca CSD						
	School		District			School		District			School		District				
			77.0			90.6		80		YES	83		NA		NA		
Growth Measure																	
5. Each year, the group of students in their 2nd year of high school who have taken a norm-referenced mathematics test for two years will reduce by one-half the difference between their previous year's average NCE and an NCE of 50.	2009 Cohort N		Base	Target	Result	2010 Cohort N		Base	Target	Result		2011 Cohort N		Base	Target	Result	
						37		46.0	46.1	50.7	YES	43		57.8	57.9	56.2	NO

	2010-11				MET	2011-12				MET	2012-13				MET
High School Graduation															
ABSOLUTE MEASURES															
1. Each year, 75 percent of students in each Graduation Cohort will pass their core academic subjects by the end of August and be promoted to the next grade.	Cohort	N	% promoted			Cohort	N	% promoted			Cohort	N	% promoted		
	2007	N	%*			2008	32	84		YES	2009	66	67		NO
	2008	N	%*			2009	49	82		YES	2010	52	83		YES
	2009	N	%*			2010	37	75		YES	2011	46	85		YES
	2010	N	%*			2011	36	86		YES	2012	34	85		YES
	All	N	%*			All	154	81.7		YES	All	198	78.5		YES
2. Each year, 75 percent of students will score at least 65 on at least three different Regents exams required for graduation by the completion of their second year in the cohort.	2009 Cohort N		% passing ≥ 3 Regents			2010 Cohort N		% passing ≥ 3 Regents			2011 Cohort N		% passing ≥ 3 Regents		
						53		41.5%		NO	46		59.0%		NO
3. Each year, 75 percent of students will graduate after the completion of their fourth year.	2007 Cohort N		%			2008 Cohort N		%			2009 Cohort N		%		
						34		70.6%		NO	66		66.7%		NO
4. Each year, 95 percent of students will graduate after the completion of their fifth year.	2006 Cohort N		% Graduating			2007 Cohort N		% Graduating			2008 Cohort N		% Graduating		
											36		66.7%		NO
COMPARATIVE MEASURE															
5. Each year, the percent of students graduating after the completion of their fourth year will exceed that of the local school district.	Comparison: Ithaca City Schools					Comparison: Ithaca City Schools					Comparison: Ithaca City Schools				
	School		District			School		District			School		District		
					70.6		78		NO	66.7		NA		NA	
College Preparation															
COMPARATIVE MEASURES															
1. Each year, the average performance of students in the 10th grade will exceed the state average on the PSAT tests in Critical Reading and	Reading	N	School	State		Reading	N	School	State		Reading	N	School	State	
			PSAT	PSAT			31	64	41.2	YES		26	44.2	45.4	NO
	Math	N	School	State		Math	N	School	State		Math	N	School	State	
			PSAT	PSAT			31	35	42.0	NO		26	41.9	46.5	NO
2. Each year, the average performance of students in the 12th grade will exceed the state average on the SAT or ACT tests in reading and mathematics.	Reading	N	School	State		Reading	N	School	State		Reading	N	School	State	
							20	561	483	YES		29	537	483	YES
	Math	N	School	State		Math	N	School	State		Math	N	School	State	
							20	484	500	NO		29	517	500	YES
SCHOOL DESIGNED MEASURES															
3. College Preparation Each year, 75 percent of students will earn college credit for at least two courses completed before graduating high school.	N		%			N		%			N		%		
						32		31%		NO	53		32%		NO
4. College Attainment and Achievement 75 percent of students will matriculate into a 2- or 4-year college.	N		%			N		%			N		%		
						24		71%		NO	44		48%		NO