

# THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*SCHOOL EVALUATION REPORT*  
**NEW YORK CITY CHARTER  
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS**

*VISIT DATE: MARCH 12 - 13, 2019*  
*REPORT DATE: JUNE 6, 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 12 - 13, 2019 to New York City Charter School of the Arts (“City School of the Arts”). 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 SUNY Trustees approved the original charter for City School of the Arts on October 15, 2015. The school opened its doors in the fall of 2016, initially serving 98 students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. City School of the Arts is in its third year of its initial charter term, currently enrolling students in 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade with a chartered enrollment of 306 students. The school is located in New York City Community School District (“CSD”) 2 at 26 Broadway, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY.

The mission of City School of the Arts is:



*To inspire a diverse community of young people to engage with the arts as a pathway to rich and rigorous academic scholarship and a creative, purposeful life.*

Leaders at City School of the Arts founded the school with the intention of utilizing arts education as an approach to strengthen and develop students’ achievement in core content areas. The school strives to incorporate arts into core content areas and produces multiple showcases each school year. Though the intention is an arts integrated curricular program, the Institute did not see consistent evidence the school has solidified this vision.

Due to scheduling issues, the board was not able to meet with the Institute visit team until May 28, 2019. Rather than delay the findings of the academic program, the Institute released the report in draft form to the board and school leader without a finalized Board Oversight section on April 9, 2019.

Between the visit to the academic program and the board interview on May 28, 2019, the board made the difficult decision to change the school leadership for the 2019-20 school year. The board appointed the current director of learning and teaching to the head of school position. The founding head of school will transition to a different role but remain at the school demonstrating a strong passion to see the school succeed.

# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

## 2017-18 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

At the beginning of the Accountability Period,<sup>1</sup> 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"<sup>2</sup> and states the educational programs at a charter school must "meet or exceed the student performance standards adopted by the board of regents"<sup>3</sup> 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/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/accountability/).

In 2017-18, the second year of its initial four year Accountability Period and first year during which all measures included under its English language arts ("ELA") and mathematics Accountability Plan goals were applicable, City School of the Arts did not meet either of its key academic goals in ELA or mathematics. The school met its No Child Left Behind ("NCLB") goal. The school's science goal is not yet applicable.

### ELA

In 2017-18, City School of the Arts did not meet its key academic Accountability Plan goal in ELA. The school did not exceed the target for any of its comparative or growth measures. With 46% of its students enrolled in at least their second year scoring at or above proficiency, the school's performance fell 25 percentage points below CSD 2 and 29 percentage points below the absolute target of 75%. The school also failed to meet its comparative effect size measure, posting an effect size far below the target of 0.3 for the second consecutive year. This performance indicates that in comparison to schools across the state enrolling similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students, City School of the Arts performed lower than expected. The school posted a mean growth percentile of 40 in 2017-18, falling under the target of 50 for the second year in a row. This record of growth signals that the school struggles to catch students up to grade level expectations and to the performance of statewide peers who performed similarly in prior years.

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. In the case of initial renewal, the Accountability Period covers the first four years of the charter term.

2. Education Law § 2850(2)(f).

3. Education Law § 2854(1)(d).

# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

## MATHEMATICS

City School of the Arts also failed to meet its mathematics goal in 2017-18. At 42%, the percentage of the school's 7<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in at least their second year scoring at or above proficiency on the state's mathematics exam fell 33 percentage points below the absolute target and 32 percentage points below the performance of CSD 2. The school also performed lower than expected compared to demographically similar schools across the state for the second year in a row. The school's 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students posted a mean growth percentile that fell seven points below the target of 50, indicating that the school does not grow the learning of all students such that they will be ready to succeed in high school after leaving City School of the Arts.

## SCIENCE

The New York State science exam is only administered in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. As of 2017-18, City School of the Arts did not enroll students in 4<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and therefore did not generate data to evaluate attainment of its science goal.

## NCLB

In 2017-18, the state's accountability system did not identify City School of the Arts as a focus charter school and therefore the school met the NCLB goal.

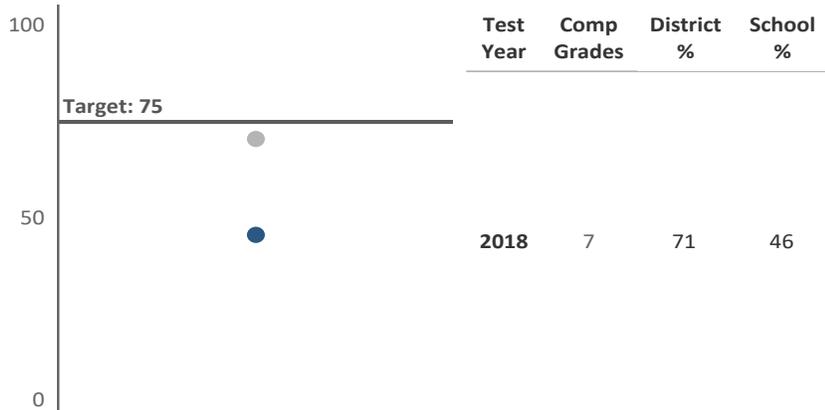
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# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

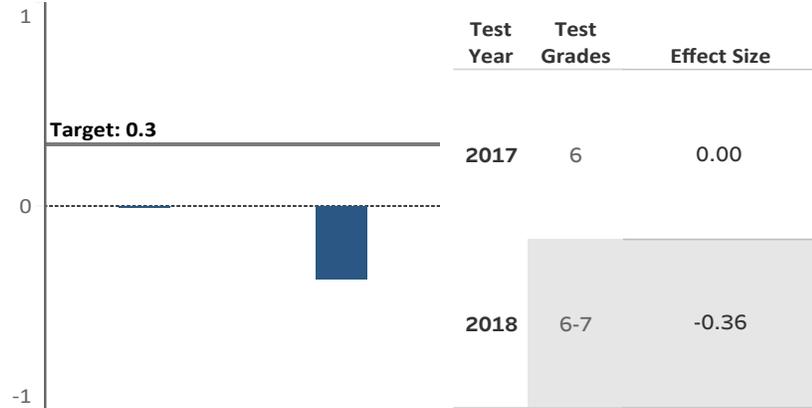
## NEW YORK CITY CHARTER SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

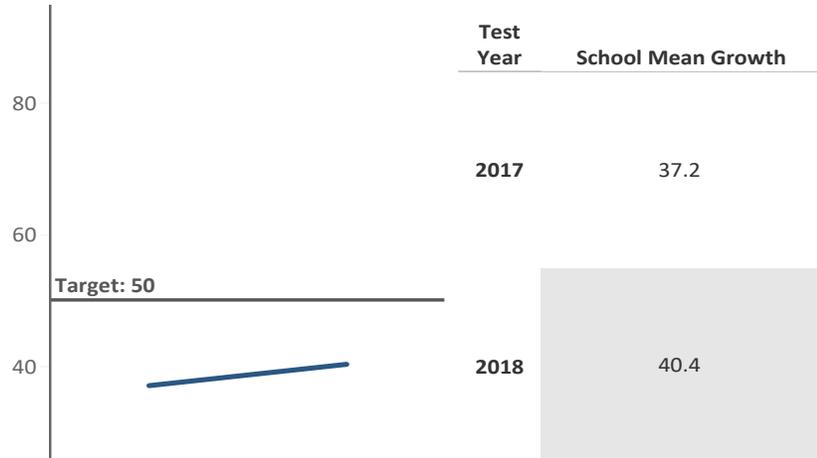
**Comparative Measure: District Comparison.** Each year, the percentage of students at **the school** in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in ELA will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the **district**.



**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**.



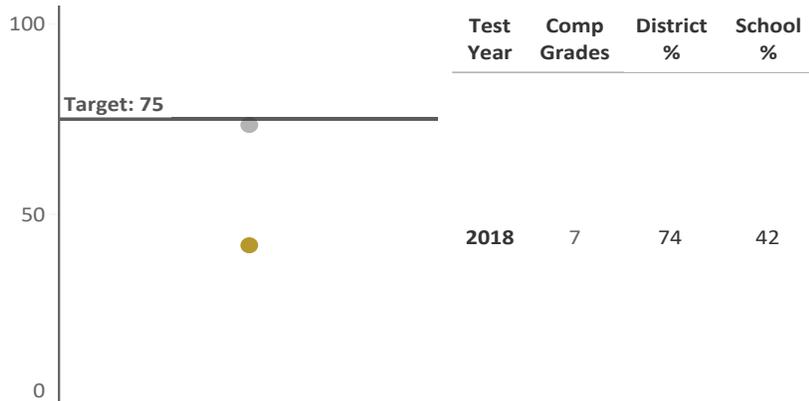
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# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

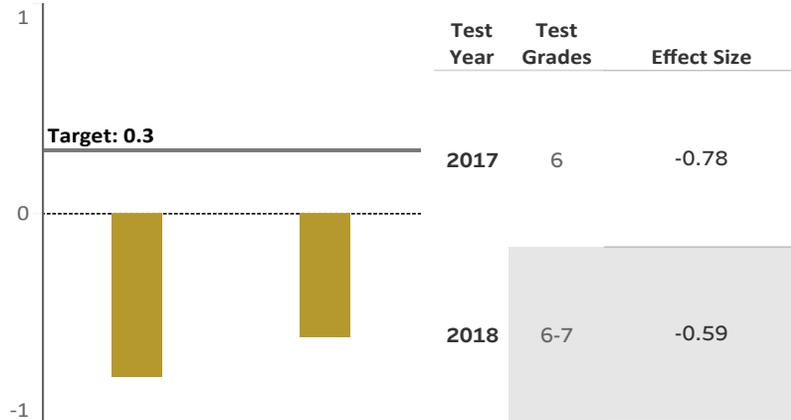
## NEW YORK CITY CHARTER SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

### MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

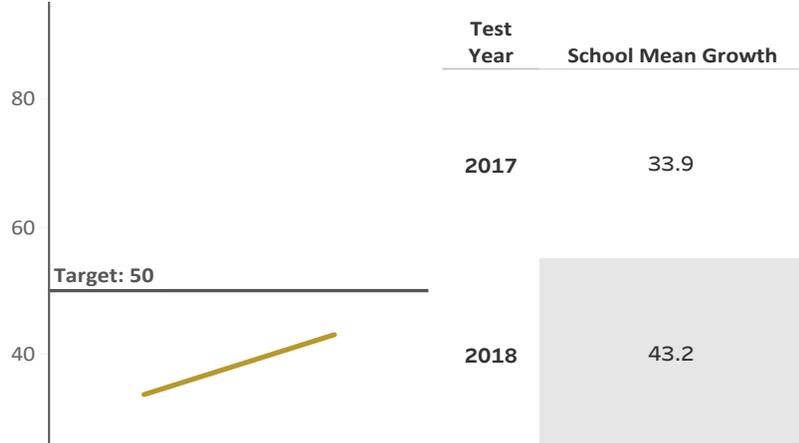
**Comparative Measure: District Comparison.** Each year, the percentage of students at **the school** in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in Mathematics will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in **the district**.



**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

## NEW YORK CITY CHARTER SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

### 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**.

NA

### SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE

	2017	2018
<b>Enrollment Receiving Mandated Academic Services</b>	16	38
<b>Tested on State Exam</b>	16	26
<b>School Percent Proficient on ELA Exam</b>	18.8	15.4
<b>District Percent Proficient</b>	18.6	37.4
	2017	2018
<b>ELL Enrollment</b>	2	1
<b>Tested on NYSESLAT Exam</b>	2	1
<b>School Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress on NYSESLAT</b>	s	s

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,<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

## SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1B

### DOES CITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS HAVE AN ASSESSMENT SYSTEM THAT IMPROVES INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT LEARNING?

City School of the Arts has an assessment system in place that produces varying qualities of data, limiting leadership's ability to measure the impact of the academic program on student learning. Leaders and teachers do not strategically use data to drive instructional decisions. The school does not yet systematically use data to establish consistent expectations for student learning and teacher performance.

- City School of the Arts regularly administers assessments aligned to the school's curricula and state standards; however, for 2018-19, the school initiated a new set of exams and so the school lacks evidence for whether the exams are valid and reliable. Previous to this school year, the school administered exams from the Achievement Network but determined that the tests did not fully align to the school's curricula or align to state test results. The school began creating in-house trimester exams for ELA, mathematics, and other core content areas pulling materials from released test items to ensure the tests align to the rigor of the state standards. Teachers administer the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Reading Inventory four times per year to identify individual Lexile levels. Teachers create and administer formative and summative assessments including unit exams, quizzes, exit tickets, writing pieces, and projects. The school established some formal assessments in studio art courses such as piano, where teachers grade 6<sup>th</sup> grade student performances against the New York State School Music Association ("NYSSMA") piano juries rubric, but the school has not yet standardized assessments for the touchstone art and music programs for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

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](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/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/suny-renewal-benchmarks/).

# BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

- The school is developing a valid and reliable process for scoring assessments. Teachers collaboratively score trimester exams by reviewing and grading extended response questions against a common exemplar and rubric. For 2018-19, the school began having teachers formally analyze trimester exams with results disaggregated by state standard. Leaders continue to build teachers' skills to use results to drive instructional decision making. The school has not yet established a system for using assessment data to formally adjust the curricular program, though academic department leaders have made informal changes throughout the year. Leaders use portions of weekly grade level meetings to review trimester exam results with teachers. The school has a consistent standard for what grades teachers should submit every week but has not yet normed practices for teachers to score and analyze in-class assignments and assessments.
- During the third year of its charter term, the school has established systems to make assessment data accessible to teachers and school leaders. School leaders maintain a series of spreadsheets aggregating student data from trimester exams, Lexile levels, and previous state test results. Teachers and leaders use an online data system to view trimester exam items and analyze results. As this is the first year the school is using these systems, leaders continue to develop and establish consistent assessment monitoring systems that will allow teachers to utilize data to drive instruction effectively.
- City School of the Arts does not yet have a clear set of expectations for teachers to use assessment results to meet student needs by adjusting instruction, grouping students, and identifying students for special intervention. Some teachers create remediation plans for struggling students based on trimester exam data. Some teachers use Lexile levels to create small groups for the school's flex time block. While teachers report using data to establish some interventions and drive instruction, the school does not yet have a consistent framework that drives instructional practices based on assessment results. For example, though many teachers reported having an action plan template to complete after each trimester exam, teachers did not have clear expectations on how to fully execute the plans or to follow up on student progress.
- The school has not established formal goals, benchmarks, or expectations for student performance, so leaders do not currently use assessment results to develop professional development topics or to evaluate teacher effectiveness. Without clear goals and benchmarks, leaders are unable to target professional development sessions to meet specific needs of the school. City School of the Arts' evaluation framework does not include student achievement results as a measure. Leaders discuss student outcomes with teachers at grade level meetings and individual check in meetings.

# BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

## SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1C

### DOES CITY SCHOOL OF THE ART'S CURRICULUM SUPPORT TEACHERS IN THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING?

Without a clear picture of expected student outcomes in each grade and content area, the curriculum does not yet provide all students with rigorous learning opportunities that align with the school's mission. In its third year of operation, the school is establishing essential materials to support teachers with instructional planning as well as new systems and capacity for continued development. The school lacks clear and consistent expectations for instructional planning and delivery, which limits the occurrence of purposeful, standards aligned lessons.

- The school is in the process of building a curricular framework that provides a fixed, underlying structure, aligned to learning standards and across grades, though it does not yet consistently include specific student achievement expectations. For ELA, the school combines ELA and social studies for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade humanities courses, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade has standalone ELA and history content areas. Teachers create the school's ELA curriculum with oversight from leaders. The school implemented time in the daily schedule for guided reading this school year, but has not yet established a clear framework or set of expectations for consistently rigorous instruction during this time. For mathematics, the school uses modules from EngageNY with adaptations made by leaders and teachers. The school's science curriculum is based on state standards and the Next Generation Science Standards and is only partially developed. Studio arts teachers are responsible for developing the curricula within their disciplines including piano, visual arts, strings, theater, digital music, dance, and choir. The school is beginning to develop a framework for how teachers will integrate the arts into the core academic curriculum, but teachers do not yet implement or have a clear definition of how lessons should integrate the arts across all grades and disciplines.
- In addition to the framework, the school has supporting tools that provide a bridge between the curriculum framework and lesson plans. Leaders create scope and sequence documents for ELA, mathematics, and science. During summer professional development, teachers work with leaders to create outlines for unit plans that include essential questions and a map for the year based on the principles of Understanding by Design.<sup>6</sup> Leaders work with teachers throughout the year to finalize unit plans and support lesson plans with a consistent process for providing teachers with feedback. Based on these documents, teachers know what to teach and when to teach it.

6. For more information, please see [www.authenticeducation.org/ubd/ubd.lasso](http://www.authenticeducation.org/ubd/ubd.lasso).

# BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

- The school has an informal process for developing and reviewing its curricular documents and its resources for delivering the curriculum. Department chairs drive curricular decision making and informally update documents throughout the year, though the school has not yet established a formal system to reflect on and revise curricula. Some teachers conduct a review of curricular materials and plans and expressed the desire to continue this work during the summer. At the time of the Institute's visit, leaders were just beginning to establish expectations for arts integration across all disciplines with the start of planning for the school's annual musical.
- City School of the Arts is establishing systems to develop teachers' skills to plan purposeful and focused lessons. For 2018-19, the school introduced a common lesson plan template for mathematics, ELA, and science; however, the quality of planning is inconsistent across grade levels and content areas. Leaders have not yet established expectations for what high quality planning should look like. Teachers submit lesson plans on a weekly basis to department heads, and leaders provide feedback both in writing and verbally. Teachers appreciate the consistency of weekly meetings and receiving feedback on plans, though the school has not yet established clear expectations of what defines quality planning and instructional delivery. Through a review of lesson plans, classroom observations, and interviews with staff members, the Institute did not consistently see evidence of high quality planning and instructional delivery that ensured all students have access to and master rigorous grade level content.

## SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1D

### IS HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION EVIDENT THROUGHOUT CITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS?

Consistently high quality instruction is not evident at City School of the Arts. School leaders do not yet have a clear instructional vision or expectations for high quality instruction across City School of the Arts. Teachers do not regularly or effectively use techniques to check for student understanding. As shown in the chart that follows, during the evaluation visit, Institute team members conducted 24 classroom observations following a defined protocol used in all evaluation visits.

# BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

		GRADE			
		6	7	8	Total
CONTENT AREA	ELA	4	2	2	8
	Math	2	3	2	7
	Soc Stu			2	2
	Science	2	1		3
	Arts Courses	3	1		4
	Total	11	7	6	24

- Half of the teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school's curriculum (13 out of 24 lessons observed). Most teachers include an objective in each lesson that identifies a skill or standard for the lesson activity. Teachers do not consistently plan criteria for success or how they would measure each objective. Some lessons do not include comprehensive planning and lack specificity in regard to the objective, questioning strategies, and purpose. For example, in a few guided reading lesson plans, teachers simply scripted high level questions but did not map out how they would facilitate student learning to arrive at the objective, or plan or communicate the desired learning outcome. In some classrooms with two teachers, the Institute did not see strong evidence of clear roles and responsibilities between both teachers.
- Few teachers regularly and effectively use techniques to check for student understanding (5 out of 24 lessons observed). Most teachers' efforts to monitor student learning are whole group and provide little or no data on individual students' progress toward mastery of the objective. Many interactions fail to engage multiple students or gather data on their learning. Teachers primarily rely on students with raised hands to check for understanding, and most do not employ strategies to increase student accountability. Teachers do not actively name criteria for student work, monitor student work against those criteria, or provide clear, actionable feedback to students.
- Few 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 (7 out of 24 lessons observed). Across all content areas, lessons are typically teacher driven with minimal opportunities for students to engage deeply in content or skills independently. Teachers regularly complete student thinking rather than allowing for productive struggle. When students present answers that are not fully correct, teachers accept the response or lower the rigor of tasks. Across observations, the Institute observed a high ratio of teacher talk to student talk.

# BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

- Many teachers have effective techniques and routines that result in safe classroom environments focused on academic achievement (15 out of 24 lessons observed), which aligns to the school's emphasis and focus on developing environments in which students feel safe with strong relationships with teachers. In these classrooms, teachers use timers to ensure the pace of the lesson is urgent. While there are very few instances of behavioral disruptions across the school, many students opt out of completing assignments. Some teachers struggle to manage student behavior due to the lack of clear expectations and effective methods for monitoring and correcting behavior resulting in lost learning time and quality.

## DOES CITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS HAVE STRONG INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP?

City School of the Arts leaders have not yet established a clear instructional vision to drive high quality teaching and learning consistently across the school. In its third year, City School of the Arts is establishing effective instructional leadership practices now that the leadership team has grown to full capacity. Leadership is starting to put coaching and support mechanisms in place for teacher growth and development.

In May 2019, at the time of the board interview, the school board made the decision to modify the leadership team for the 2019-20 school year. While the founding head of school plans to remain at the school in the role of a literacy specialist, the current director of learning and teaching will transition into the head of school position. The evaluation presented below is based on the evidence that the Institute collected during the March 2019 visit.

- City School of the Arts' leadership establishes some expectations to hold teachers accountable and improve student learning, but the school has not yet consistently established or communicated a clear vision for instructional practices. The school model emphasizes autonomy for teachers in making instructional decisions and design; however, teachers expressed a desire to have a clearer understanding and guidelines for what practices are teacher owned and which practices are schoolwide. In regard to expectations for arts integration, the school is refining its definition of arts integration as part of its mission and instituted a common lesson plan template across content areas for this school year.
- City School of the Arts' leadership team is now at full capacity, creating the space for leaders to support the development of the teaching staff. The head of school leads the academic leadership team, which consists of an assistant principal and director of

# BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

learning and teaching. The artistic leadership team consists of a director of music and director of visual and performing arts. The school also established a humanities chair position to support the development of humanities and English teachers.

- With a full leadership team in place, the school is beginning to provide systematic coaching to all teachers; however, the coaching in place is not yet resulting in high quality instruction across the school. Leaders meet with teachers on a weekly basis to review lesson plan feedback and provide observation feedback, but with a lack of a fully formed instructional vision, the coaching and support do not yet result in improved instructional strategies across the school based on the Institute’s classroom observations.
- City School of the Arts is establishing systems and collaboration times that allow teachers to plan together through grade level meetings and whole school collaboration time on a weekly basis; however, the school has not yet formalized clear collaboration times for special education teachers with content area teachers. Whole school collaboration meetings are opportunities for staff members to participate in team building activities and professional development activities or content level meetings. At the time of the Institute’s visit, the school was beginning to establish some protocols that include formal time for teaching artists and content area teachers to discuss integration activities with the upcoming school musical. While grade level teams and content area teachers report meeting consistently, the school relies more on informal meetings for teaching artists to share plans and participate in planning events.
- City School of the Arts leaders do not yet implement a comprehensive professional development program that develops the competencies and skills of all teachers. While the school delivers professional development activities consistently, leaders do not yet target specific academic and pedagogical practices that are key levers for improving student outcomes. For example, guided reading is a new initiative this school year, but leaders have dedicated little time to developing teachers’ skills in this pedagogical area. At the time of the visit, the school spent the previous four weeks’ professional development sessions discussing and designing arts integrated activities across content areas for the upcoming schoolwide musical, demonstrating that the school is beginning to use collaboration and professional development times in alignment with the school’s mission.
- City School of the Arts’ leaders are establishing systems to hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement. Leaders identify accountability as one of the three schoolwide priorities for this year. One aspect of this was establishing requirements for teachers to submit lesson plans on a weekly basis to receive feedback. Teachers also meet in grade level meetings and one on one check in meetings to discuss

# BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

student achievement data from exit tickets and trimester exams. The school's teacher and leader evaluation framework does not factor in student achievement results, but teachers and leaders are aware of gaps in student achievement and urgency to improve outcomes for students. Because the lesson planning template and feedback cycles are new, the systems have not yet resulted in high quality teaching and planning consistently across grade levels.

## DOES CITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS MEET THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF AT-RISK STUDENTS?

In its third year of operation, City School of the Arts is beginning to establish systems to support students with disabilities and students who struggle academically; however, given the school's current results for these subgroups of students, the school's programs are not yet effective. The school lacks a compliant program to support English language learners ("ELLs").

- City School of the Arts has clear procedures for identifying at-risk students. The school uses the New York City Department of Education ("NYCDOE") student information system to identify students with Individualized Education Programs ("IEPs") and ELLs. The school has procedures in place to administer the Home Language Identification Survey and the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners ("NYSITELL"), when necessary. To identify students who struggle academically, the school has adopted a Response to Intervention ("RTI") framework for the 2018-19 school year. Grade teams review trimester exam scores and Lexile levels to determine which students require intervention. If students do not show improvement after six weeks of in-class intervention, the school's student support team discusses further interventions and possible referrals for special education services.
- City School of the Arts has the necessary resources to provide academic interventions that support students struggling academically but lacks evidence to support the effectiveness of these interventions. For students struggling academically, the school offers small group guided reading instruction three times per week, phonics instruction one time per week, and mathematics intervention through small group pull out sessions during the regular class period. The school does not yet have state assessment data to identify whether these supports are effective, and lacks a system to monitor all struggling students' progress on internal assessments. The Institute observed guided reading instruction that lacked strong objectives and lacked strategic instruction and questioning based on student need.

# BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

- For students with disabilities, the school provides special education teacher support services (“SETSS”), has at least one integrated co-teaching (“ICT”) classroom per grade, provides counseling services, and contracts with external providers for related services. However, given that only 15% and 16% of students with disabilities scored proficient on the state exam in ELA and mathematics, respectively, the school’s programs are not demonstrating strong results for this subgroup of students. City School of the Arts’ ELL program is out of compliance, as the school does not currently have a formal English language acquisition program or trained staff to provide language support to the school’s three ELLs.
- City School of the Arts lacks a system to monitor at-risk students’ progress. Intervention teachers individually monitor students’ progress through end of class assessments, trimester exams, and Lexile scores. The school currently lacks clear guidelines for how teachers should use data to monitor students’ progress toward intervention goals. School leaders recognize a need to improve this aspect of the assessment and data review process. The assistant principal oversees the special education program and is creating a shared document through which staff can view at-risk students’ assessment data.
- The school lacks effective systems for general education teachers and intervention providers to collaborate consistently and formally on academic support. Special education team members attend grade team meetings to discuss general intervention plans. ICT co-teachers may informally meet to plan upcoming lessons but the school does not provide formal time to do so or mandate instructional collaboration. School leaders do not require ICT teachers to create lesson plans, and ICT teachers’ and SETSS providers’ review of general education teachers’ plans is inconsistent. The Institute’s review of lesson plans showed little to no instructional differentiation for students based on assessment data or IEP and intervention goals.
- City School of the Arts provides some professional development to support at-risk students’ needs. School leaders provided a schoolwide training on leading guided reading groups during summer professional development. For other trainings to support at-risk students, school leaders will recommend or approve teachers’ external professional development requests based on teachers’ interest. School leaders had not yet held schoolwide trainings for mathematics intervention or support for ELLs.

# BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

## SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 20

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

Although City School of the Arts is beginning to put in place some instructional and operational systems, school leaders are still developing a clear vision for how high quality instruction and arts will integrate to form a cohesive academic program that meets its Accountability Plan goals.

- City School of the Arts has an administrative structure with staff, operations, and procedures that currently allow it to carry out the academic program. In its third year of operation and due to low state assessment scores, school leaders' priorities have shifted to focus more on rigorous academics, leading to changes in the school leadership model. The school created the assistant principal role and director of teaching and learning role this school year to be part of the leadership team with the head of school. The addition of these two roles has added instructional capacity at the school, and leaders now provide more consistent coaching and weekly feedback on lesson plans. The director of instrumental music and voice and the director of visual and performing arts oversee all arts programming. Although the director of teaching and learning provides support to the arts directors to provide instructional coaching to the arts teachers, the school lacks a system to ensure schoolwide collaboration for ensuring high quality instruction throughout the school. The director of operations oversees all duties related to facilities, supplies, and the school's budget.
- City School of the Arts is establishing a system for student discipline. The dean of students oversees the school's discipline system. For this school year, leaders led professional development sessions to review and align on the school's discipline practices. The school is incorporating practices related to race and equity through its work with an external provider. While the school does not have a schoolwide behavior management system, the new dean of students is working to align teachers' consistency of delivering consequences. For teachers who struggle with behavior management techniques, the dean meets with the assistant principal to troubleshoot support for these teachers.
- As City School for the Arts has reached full capacity, leaders are establishing a vision for the type of teachers the school recruits and retains. The school has experienced high levels of teacher turnover in its first three years; however, leaders report only one departure from the 2017-18 school year as regrettable. Now that leaders have a better definition of the type of teacher needed at the school and the school has a long-term facility, they predict less turnover for the 2019-20 school year.

# BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

- City School of the Arts allocates sufficient resources to support its goals. Staff members have access to necessary materials, and the arts program is well-resourced with equipment, staffing, and external events. The school also hired a full-time director of high school placement and partnerships to support students with entry into private, district, and charter high schools. As part of its Accountability Plan, the school is proposing specific additional measures related to high school entrance into arts programs. For the 2018-19 school year, 39 students auditioned for admission into Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, a highly selective district high school focused on arts education, and nine students gained admission for the next school year.
- The school maintains its enrollment to meet its budget, but it is at the lower end of its allowable enrollment. The school's enrollment and retention of ELLs continues to be far below targets. At the time of the visit, the school's enrollment was 255 students, at 83% of their chartered enrollment. City School of the Arts is in its third different facility since the school's opening in the fall of 2016, and the school cites this as the primary reason for lower student retention and enrollment. School leaders are aware of the school's low enrollment of ELLs and plans to consider additional recruitment efforts including a lottery preference.

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

### SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 2D

The City School of the Arts board is establishing practices to provide effective oversight of the school to achieve the school's Accountability Plan goals. During the 2018-19 school year, the board made the difficult decision to adjust the school's leadership, shifting the founding head of school to a new role. The board is reflective about how this transition informs its role as a governing body for the future.

- Board members possess the appropriate skills and are beginning to establish structures and procedures with which to govern the school and oversee management of school operations. Members have skills in law, finance, K-12 education, governance, operations, and the arts. The board recognizes a need to expand the diversity of its membership, and with the pending departure of two trustees, plans to seek out new members beginning in summer 2019. The board establishes a committee structure to leverage individual members' expertise. The board recognizes a need to continuously reflect on its governance strategies and plans to work over the summer to establish more consistent practices.

# BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

- The City School of the Arts board recognizes a need to improve the collection of school level information regarding academic achievement, other program information, and finances. Over the charter term, the board relied primarily on one school leader to provide all information. In reflection, the board recognized that relying on one staff member, as well as the need to improve its governance skills, did not help to give the board a clear and holistic understanding of the school. As such, the board does not yet developed a clear data dashboard or reporting mechanism to have a clearer picture of the school's program. The board recognizes the development of a data dashboard as an area to improve so that it can also have a longitudinal understanding of the school's data.
- The board also recognizes a need to improve its oversight of its compliance and reporting mechanisms from the school. For the upcoming summer and school year, the board has an opportunity to establish clear systems and roles and responsibilities of school -based staff members to ensure that reporting to the Institute is timely and accurate. Over the charter term, the school has failed to meet multiple deadlines including accurately reporting and gaining approval of board members leading to a lack of quorum. As of May 2019, the board has the appropriate number of members to reach quorum at meetings to conduct business given its by-laws.
- The board establishes clear long-term priorities. The board's main priority for the upcoming summer and start of the 2019-20 school year is to ensure a smooth leadership transition for the current director of learning and teaching to the head of school position. Over the three years of the school's existence, the board supported the school with three separate facilities, the transitions involved, and navigating between co-located and private facility issues. Now in 2018-19, the school is in a stable, long-term facility. The board also recognizes a priority to continue focusing on improving student outcomes and solidifying a vision for both instruction and arts integration. Working with school leaders, the board finalized its Accountability Plan to include additional measures that focus on social emotional learning and arts successes including admission to competitive arts-based high schools.
- The board is developing strategies to recruit and hire key personnel. It successfully managed the transition of the founding head of school to a different role and identified a new head of school from the current leadership team. Before making the transition decision, members gathered feedback from staff members via surveys and conversations.

City School of the Arts

# Ax

APPENDICES

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# APPENDIX A: School Overview

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES<sup>1</sup>

### CHAIR

Danal Abrams

### VICE CHAIR

Laura Blankfein

### TREASURER

Matthias Ederer

### SECRETARY

Benjamin Gliklich

### TRUSTEES

Adam Falkner

Jose De Jesus

Randall Iserman

Laurence Heilbronn

## SCHOOL LEADERS

### HEAD OF SCHOOL

*Jamie Davidson (2016-17 to Present)*

## SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT <sup>2</sup>	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	PROPOSED GRADES	ACTUAL GRADES
2016-17	102	99	96%	6	6
2017-18	204	166	81%	6 - 7	6 - 7
2018-19	306	266	87%	6 - 8	6 - 8

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

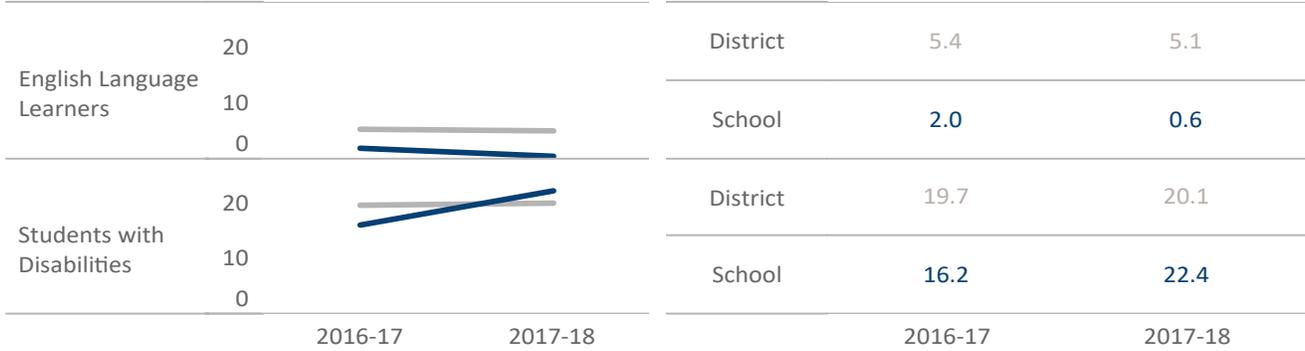
2. Source: Institute's Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

# APPENDIX A: School Overview

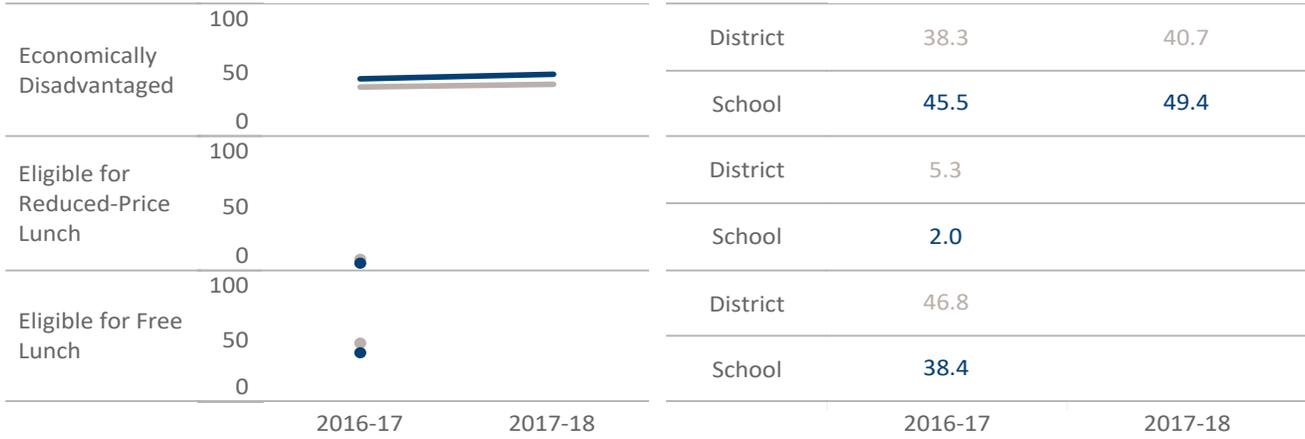
New York City Charter School of the Arts

CSD 2

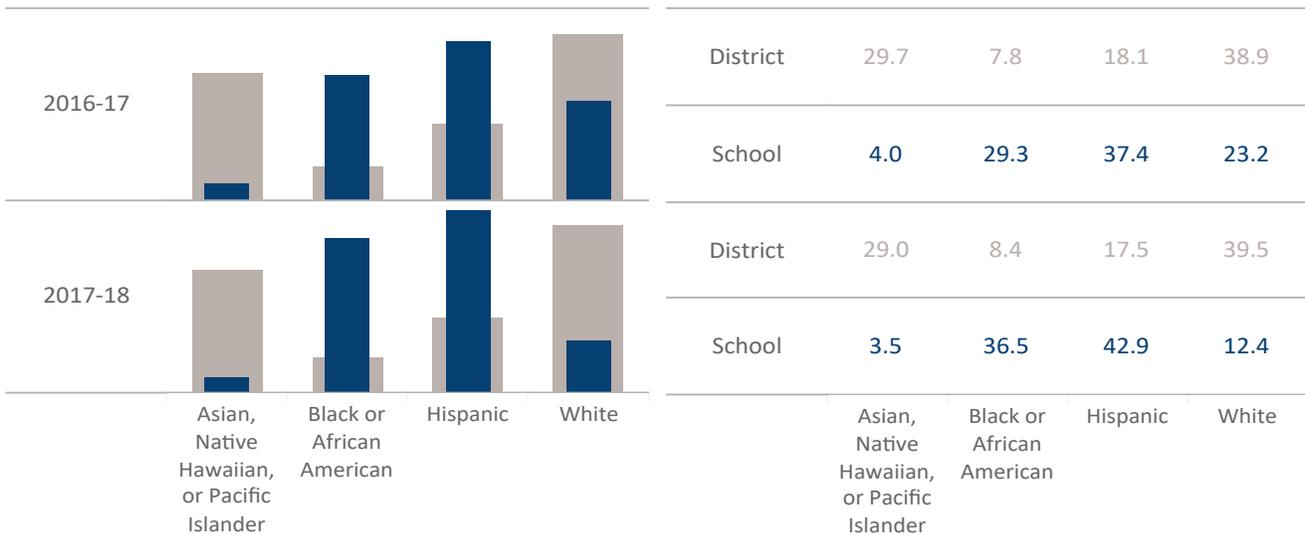
## Student Demographics: Special Populations



## Student Demographics: Free/Reduced Lunch



## Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

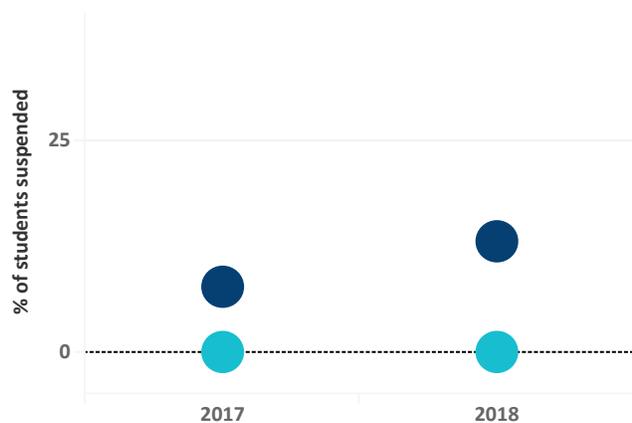


Data reported in these charts reflect BEDS day enrollment counts as reported by the New York State Education Department

# APPENDIX A: School Overview

## New York City Charter School of the Arts

CSD 2



	School ISS Rate	School OSS Rate
2017	0.0	7.7
2018	0.0	13.1

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

	2017	2018
Expulsions	0	1

### New York City Charter School of the Arts's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2017-18

		District Target	School
<b>Enrollment</b>	economically disadvantaged	52.4	54.0
	English language learners	7.0	0.0
	students with disabilities	18.0	18.8
<b>Retention</b>	economically disadvantaged	93.0	80.0
	English language learners	92.4	NA
	students with disabilities	93.7	87.5

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
2016-17	First Year Visit	June 1, 2017
2018-19	Evaluation Visit	March 12 - 13, 2019 May 28, 2019 (Board Interview)

## CONDUCT OF THE VISIT

DATE(S) OF VISIT	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
March 12 - 13, 2019 May 28, 2019	Andrew Kile	Director of School Evaluation
	Kerri Rizzolo	Senior Analyst
	Taryn Cooper	IT Specialist
	Grant Newman	External Consultant

## CHARTER CYCLE CONTEXT

CHARTER TERM	ACCOUNTABILITY PERIOD <sup>3</sup>	ANTICIPATED RENEWAL VISIT
Third Year of Five-Year Initial Charter Term	Third Year of Four-Year Accountability Period	Fall 2020

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?
<p>Guided by a growing body of research that demonstrates that in-depth study in the visual and performing arts results in measurably better academic performance for all students, City School of the Arts will leverage arts-infused learning across all content areas to produce exceptional academic outcomes;</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>City School of the Arts will employ intervention methods grounded in the arts to maximize student engagement, provide targeted academic supports for struggling students and design creative extensions for those who are ready for more challenging work;</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>City School of the Arts will invest significant resources into a robust professional development program to develop and sustain an innovative, results driven, and collaborative staff;</p>	<p>+</p>
<p>City School of the Arts will build community by supporting students’ socio-emotional wellness through its advisory curriculum developed in partnership with the Community of Unity; and,</p>	<p>+</p>
<p>City School of the Arts’ students will participate in three separate trips per year to Camp Vacamas, the school’s partner wilderness facility in New Jersey, to learn in a natural environment that dramatically contrasts with their life in the city.</p>	<p>—</p>

# APPENDIX B: SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

## New York City Charter School of the Arts

		2015-16 Grades Served				2016-17 Grades Served 6				2017-18 Grades Served 6-7						
		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)	(0)		3	(0)	(0)				
		4				4	(0)	(0)		4	(0)	(0)				
		5				5	(0)	(0)		5	(0)	(0)				
		6				6	36.2 (94)	(0)		6	32.7 (52)	(0)				
		7				7	(0)	(0)		7	45.2 (93)	46.1 (76)				
		8				8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)				
		All				All	36.2 (94)	(0)	NA	All	40.7 (145)	46.1 (76)	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				
						6	121	111	YES	6-7	124	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: Manhattan CSD 2				Comparison: Manhattan CSD 2				Comparison: Manhattan CSD 2						
		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District				
									NA	7	46.1	70.7	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					3									
		4					4									
		5					5									
		6					6	45.5	36.2	36.2	0.00	6	62.3	32.7	47.3	-0.90
		7					7					7	40.6	45.2	46.2	-0.06
		8					8					8				
All					All	45.5	36.2	36.2	0.00	NO	All	48.4	40.7	46.6	-0.36	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				4	0			4	0					
		5				5	0			5	0					
		6				6	37.2			6	33.7					
		7				7	0			7	44.1					
		8				8	0			8	0					
All				All	37.2	50	NO	All	40.4	50	NO					

# APPENDIX B: SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: MATHEMATICS

## New York City Charter School of the Arts

		2015-16 Grades Served				2016-17 Grades Served 6				2017-18 Grades Served 6-7						
		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	(NA)	(NA)		3	(0)	(0)		3	(0)	(0)				
		4	(NA)	(NA)		4	(0)	(0)		4	(0)	(0)				
		5	(NA)	(NA)		5	(0)	(0)		5	(0)	(0)				
		6	(NA)	(NA)		6	33.7 (89)	(0)		6	31.5 (54)	(0)				
		7	(NA)	(NA)		7	(0)	(0)		7	41.3 (92)	42.1 (76)				
		8	(NA)	(NA)		8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)				
		All	(NA)	(NA)		All	33.7 (89)	(0)	NA	All	37.7 (146)	42.1 (76)	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				
						6	115	109	YES	6-7	110	103	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: Manhattan CSD 2				Comparison: Manhattan CSD 2				Comparison: Manhattan CSD 2						
		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District				
									NA	7	42.1	73.8	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					3					3				
		4					4					4				
		5					5					5				
		6					6	45.5	33.7	46.1	-0.78	6	62.3	31.5	42.9	-0.70
		7					7					7	40.6	41.3	50.0	-0.51
		8					8					8				
All					All	45.5	33.7	46.1	-0.78	NO	All	48.6	37.7	47.4	-0.59	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				4	0			4	0					
		5				5	0			5	0					
		6				6	33.9			6	39.0					
		7				7	0			7	45.6					
		8				8	0			8	0					
All				All	33.9	50	NO	All	43.2	50	NO					

VERSION 5.0, MAY 2012

## Introduction

The State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks<sup>1</sup> (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.

# APPENDIX C: SUNY Renewal Benchmarks

## 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.

