



# Renewal Recommendation Report Albany Community Charter School

Report Date: February 12, 2016

Visit Date: September 21-22, 2015

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# INTRODUCTION AND REPORT FORMAT

## INTRODUCTION

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

## REPORT FORMAT

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> Version 5.0, May 2012, available at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Benchmarks.pdf](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Benchmarks.pdf).

## INTRODUCTION AND REPORT FORMAT

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

# RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

## RECOMMENDATION: FULL-TERM RENEWAL

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Albany Community Charter School for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grades in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal, with a projected total enrollment of 675 students.

To earn a Subsequent Full-Term Renewal, a school must demonstrate that it has met or come close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals.<sup>2</sup>

## REQUIRED FINDINGS

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

- The school, as described in the Application for Charter Renewal meets the requirements of the Act and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- The education corporation can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner in the next charter term; and,
- Given the programs it will offer, its structure and its purpose, approving the school to operate for another five years is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act.<sup>3</sup>

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

Although not yet accountable for enrollment and retention targets<sup>5</sup>, Albany Community Charter School ("Albany Community") has initiated efforts to attract and retain students with disabilities,

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<sup>2</sup> SUNY Renewal Policies at page 14.

<sup>3</sup> See New York Education Law § 2852(2).

<sup>4</sup> SUNY Trustees' Charter Schools Committee resolution dated October 2, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Enrollment and retention targets apply to all charter schools approved pursuant to any of the Institute's Request for Proposal ("RFP") processes (August 2010 – present) and to charter schools that applied for renewal after January 1, 2011. Albany Community applied for initial renewal in 2010.

## RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

ELLs and students who are eligible applicants for the federal FRPL program. In 2014-15, the school contracted with a marketing and advertising consultant to update its website and manage a social media campaign. The school produces applications, brochures, flyers and other promotional materials in English and Spanish and will translate these materials into other languages as appropriate. In 2014-15, the school's efforts resulted in doubling the number of ELLs enrolled at the school.

Albany Community plans to continue and expand these efforts in its next charter term. The school plans to add a translation feature to its website and make interpreters available for open houses, parent-teacher conferences and other school events. In addition to placing radio, television and print ads, Albany Community intends to conduct targeted outreach with presentations in organizations that serve large immigrant communities. Albany Community also plans to establish relationships with at-risk program staff at feeder schools and specialized programs.

In addition, the school employs a parent coordinator to assist with recruitment at refugee organizations, childcare facilities and other local establishments. It also uses television ads, print media and social media campaigns for its recruitment efforts. Albany Community employs several bi-lingual staff members to assist parents with the application process. In order to retain these students, the school makes efforts to ensure the school's program is culturally relevant to students, such as including Hispanic heritage month events into daily lessons. The special education coordinator is also deliberate in building relationships with parents to ensure the school meets the needs of its students with disabilities.

### CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMENTS

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

## Albany Community Charter School

### BACKGROUND

The SUNY Trustees approved Albany Community's original charter on July 15, 2005. When the school opened its doors in the fall of 2006, it welcomed 104 students in Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Albany Community earned an initial full-term renewal in 2011.

The mission of Albany Community is:

To provide a high quality educational experience for children in the Albany area by building a shared responsibility and commitment for student success. We believe all children can excel in a nurturing and supportive environment of high expectations, love and respect giving them the ability to determine their future success in school and life.

Through a relentless focus on academic achievement and character development, we seek to develop in our students the academic and social skills necessary to enable them to discover their unique gifts and talents in order to become responsible public citizens dedicated to the advancement of one's self, one's family and one's community.

The school is located at 65 Krank Street, Albany, New York for grades K-5 and at 42 S. Dove Street, Albany, New York for grades 6-8. Both locations are in the geographic boundaries of the City School District of Albany ("Albany Public Schools" or the "district"). The school owns the Dove Street location and leases the Krank Street facility. Albany Community has contracted with the Brighter Choice Foundation Inc ("BCF") for limited academic, operations and public affairs services. The most recent contract was executed July 2015 to include curriculum, instructional staff capacity development, instructional implementation and assessment implementation. Albany Community is an independent not-for-profit education corporation.

In the final year of its second charter term, Albany Community serves 666 students in Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Albany Community was originally designed to serve elementary grades only. In response to parent demand at the end of its initial charter term, however, school leaders opted to expand to include middle grades instruction. As a result, the school added one grade per year in each of the first four years of its second charter term, essentially operating in an extended start-up phase. The design and implementation of a middle grades program as well as the process of securing a suitable facility, strained the school's capacity to maintain the level of academic success achieved during Albany Community's initial charter term. The later arrangement to share its executive

## SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

director with Henry Johnson Charter School, also authorized by the SUNY Trustees, created additional challenges for Albany Community. Despite these difficulties, Albany Community came close to meeting its key Accountability Plan goals throughout the charter term. The school consistently outperformed the local district in both English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics, though by smaller margins as it added upper grades.

At the end of its first subsequent charter term, Albany Community has reached its full grade span and has put in place a program that is likely to enable the school to meet or come close to meeting its accountability goals in the future. The school has strengthened its instructional leadership, improved its use of assessment data and adapted key components of its curriculum to meet higher performance standards. The education corporation board (the “board”) provides oversight of the total educational program and continually seeks to improve its governance practices.

Based on the Institute’s review of the school’s performance as posted over the charter term, a review of the Application for Charter Renewal submitted by the school, a review of academic, organizational, governance and financial documentation as well as a renewal visit to the school, the Institute finds that the program as implemented is likely to improve student learning in a future charter term and further the purposes of the Act. For these reasons, the Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees grant Albany Community a Full-Term Renewal.

### NOTEWORTHY

Albany Community’s annual Festival of Nations celebration has grown so popular with parents and other members of the community that the school now hosts the event in the Empire State Plaza Convention Center, which can accommodate close to 2,500 guests.

## IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

Albany Community is an academic success insofar as it has come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals throughout the charter term while growing to include additional grades. The addition of middle school grades left the school in a start-up mode that extended well into this subsequent charter term. As a result, Albany Community's performance declined in later years of the term, but the school continued to outperform the local district. At the time of the renewal visit, Albany Community had in place an educational program likely to enable the school to meet or come close to meeting its accountability goals in the next charter term.

At the beginning of the Accountability Period,<sup>6</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. The Institute examines results for five required Accountability Plan measures to determine ELA and mathematics goal attainment. Because the Act requires charters be held "accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results"<sup>7</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>8</sup> for other public schools, SUNY's required accountability measures rest on performance as measured by state wide assessments. Historically, SUNY's required measures include measures that present schools':

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

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

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

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<sup>6</sup> 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 subsequent renewal, the Accountability Plan covers the last year of the previous charter term through the second to last year of the charter term under review.

<sup>7</sup> Education Law § 2850(2)(f).

<sup>8</sup> Education Law § 2854(1)(d).

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comparative measures and the growth measure while also considering the two required absolute measures and any additional evidence the school presents using additional measures identified in its Accountability Plan. The Institute identifies the required measures (absolute proficiency, absolute Annual Measurable Objective attainment,<sup>9</sup> comparison to local district, comparison to demographically similar schools, and student growth) in the Performance Summaries appearing in Appendix B.

The Accountability Plan also includes science and No Child Left Behind Act (“NCLB”) goals.

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1A:

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

Albany Community has come close to meeting its key English language arts and mathematics goals throughout the charter term. The school also met its science goal every year during the charter term.

During the charter term, Albany Community’s level of student achievement declined as the school added 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at the same time the state transitioned to a new assessment system. The school added its first 6<sup>th</sup> grade class during 2012-13, the same year the state administered a new set of 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade assessments aligned to higher standards.

The Institute analyzes all measures under the school’s ELA and mathematics goals while emphasizing the school’s comparative performance and growth to determine goal attainment. The Institute calculates a comparative effect size to measure the performance of Albany Community relative to all public schools statewide that serve the same grade levels and that enroll students who are similarly economically disadvantaged. It is important to note that this measure is a comparison measure and therefore any changes in New York’s assessment system do not compromise its validity or reliability. Further, the school’s performance on the measure is not relative to the test, but relative to the strength of Albany Community’s demonstrated student learning compared to other schools’ demonstrated student learning.

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

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<sup>9</sup> The state did not calculate an AMO for 2012-13. As such, the Institute will only report on the 2013-14 and 2014-15 results.

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Albany Community met its ELA goal during 2010-11 when it posted results that were higher than the local school district and it performed higher than expected to a large degree compared to demographically similar schools. The school also posted a particularly strong growth score, exceeding the state median by 20 percentile points. While the school's growth scores declined in 2011-12, its comparative effect size continued to exceed its target and the school's absolute performance outpaced the district by 32 percentage points. In 2012-13, the state transitioned to a new assessment system at the same time the school began to expand its enrollment to include middle school grades. Albany Community added a 6<sup>th</sup> grade and the school's ELA performance began to decline. Notwithstanding the drop in absolute scores, the school performed higher than expected to a small degree compared to schools across the state with similar concentrations of economically disadvantaged students. In 2013-14, the school added a 7<sup>th</sup> grade class and made progress towards meeting its ELA goal when it exceeded the local district performance and posted a mean growth score 8 percentile points higher than the prior year. The school maintained its adequate effect size score. During 2014-15, the first year during scores reflected the school's full enrollment and the final year of the school's Accountability Period, it did not meet its ELA goal, posting lower results than the previous year on all comparative and growth measures.

Albany Community's mathematics performance followed a similar trajectory to that of its ELA results over the Accountability Period. During 2010-11, the school posted very strong performance and met its mathematics goal based on its comparative and growth measures. During 2011-12, the school's mathematics growth score dropped dramatically; however, it continued to perform higher than expected to a large degree based on the effect size measure and outperformed the district by 44 percentage points. The subsequent year, the school came close to meeting its mathematics goal when it outperformed the district, posted an effect size narrowly missing the Institute's target of 0.3, and posted a growth score eight percentile points greater than the previous year. The school continued to improve its growth performance in 2013-14 and increased its margin over the Albany Public Schools. During 2014-15, reflecting its full enrollment for the first time, the school's performance declined and it did not meet its mathematics goal, despite continuing to outperform the district.

In science, Albany Community met its goal during the entire Accountability Period. Each year, the rate at which the school's 4<sup>th</sup> graders scored at or above proficiency on the state's 4<sup>th</sup> grade science exam exceeded the school's target of 75%. The school also consistently outperformed the local district. Notably, during 2014-15, the first year that Albany Community administered the state's 8<sup>th</sup> grade science exam in addition to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade science exam, the school outperformed the district by 29 percentage points.

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Although not tied to separate goals in the school's formal Accountability Plan, academic outcome data about the school's students receiving special education services and ELLs appear below for informational purposes.

		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Enrollment (N) Receiving Mandated Academic Services		(15)	(16)	(26)
<b>Results</b>	Tested on State Exams (N)	(6)	(6)	(12)
	School Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	16.7	0	0
	Percent Proficient Statewide	5.0	5.2	5.8

		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
ELL Enrollment (N)		(7)	(6)	(9)
<b>Results</b>	Tested on NYSESLAT <sup>10</sup> Exam (N)	(6)	(6)	(9)
	Percent 'Proficient' or Making Progress <sup>11</sup> on NYSESLAT	50.0	0	33.3

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

<sup>11</sup> Defined as moving up at least one level of proficiency. As of 2014-15, student scores can fall into five categories/proficiency levels: Entering (formerly Beginning); Emerging (formerly Low Intermediate); Transitioning (formerly Intermediate); Expanding (formerly Advanced); and, Commanding (formerly Proficient).

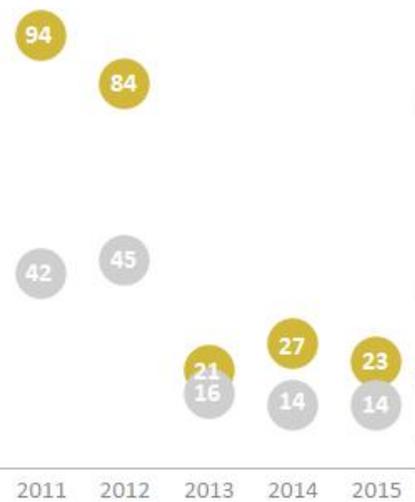
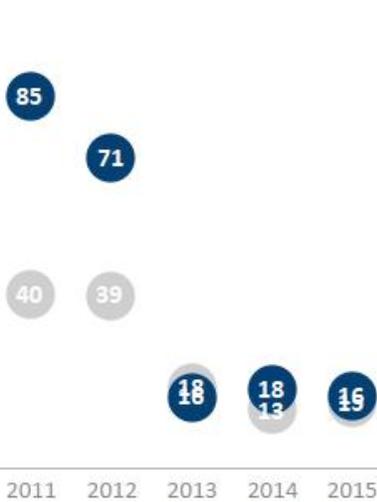
# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

## DESCRIPTION

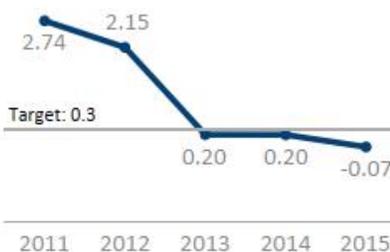
### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

### MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

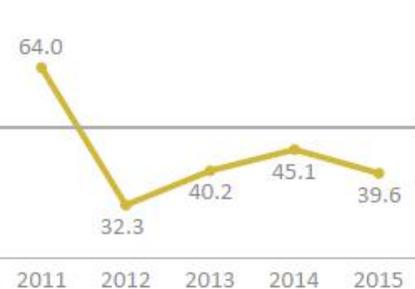
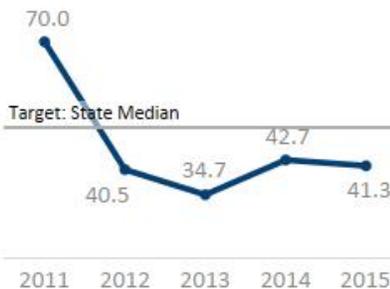
**Comparative Measure: District Comparison.** Each year, the percentage of students at Albany Community in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in **ELA** and **mathematics** will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in Albany City Schools.



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



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



### SCIENCE

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



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The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, grounded in the body of research from the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University,<sup>12</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>13</sup>

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1B:

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

The school is beginning to use its assessment system to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning. The school administers a battery of standardized and school-created assessments that instructional leaders now use to identify areas of weakness in student skills and content knowledge and, in turn, provide teachers with strategies that improve instructional effectiveness.

- The school uses the state's assessments and the Terra Novas as the primary tools to measure student performance and academic growth over the school year. Albany Community monitors student performance during the year using aimsWeb assessments, mock state exams and formative assessments from curricular materials. In addition, Albany Community administers several assessments to identify students who qualify for participation in special intervention groups. Notwithstanding a large battery of assessments, the school's analysis of the results did not provide sufficient detail for teachers to adjust instruction to support students in overcoming their learning deficiencies. Realizing this, the data specialist and instructional leadership team increased the depth of the school's analysis and revised the method for disseminating information during grade level team meetings. Teachers report finding the new content and delivery format useful for addressing the specific learning needs of their students.
- The school uses the state's Common Core rubric to score student writing. Consistent with its identified priority of increasing writing across the curriculum, Albany Community plans to train teachers across all content areas in the use of the rubric to ensure that expectations for student writing are consistent throughout the school. Teachers score assessments internally but trade papers to prevent score inflation. Grade level leaders and instructional leaders ensure that teachers score papers objectively and at the level of rigor that the state standards require.
- The data specialist provides an analysis of assessment scores by standard and item to the school's leaders. The leaders use the data to devise a strategy to coach teachers toward correcting deficiencies in student learning. The instructional leadership team, including the data specialist, rolls out the data analysis and the selected corrective strategies to

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<sup>12</sup> An extensive body of research identifying and confirming the correlates of effective schools exists dating back four decades. Selected sources include: [www.mes.org/correlates.html](http://www.mes.org/correlates.html);

[scholar.harvard.edu/files/fryer/files/dobbie\\_fryer\\_revision\\_final.pdf](http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/fryer/files/dobbie_fryer_revision_final.pdf); and, [gao.gov/assets/80/77488.pdf](http://gao.gov/assets/80/77488.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Additional details regarding the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, including greater specificity as to what the Institute looks for at each school that may demonstrate attainment of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, is available at: [www.newyorkcharters.org/suny-renewal-benchmarks/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/suny-renewal-benchmarks/).

teachers during staff and grade team meetings. Coaches follow up on selected strategies during classroom observations and provide feedback to teachers about how to best address student learning deficiencies. For instance, the school's academic director reviewed the best practices around the use of the "turn and talk" strategy to increase student discourse while checking for understanding during a grade level team meeting after classroom observations revealed that the use of the strategy did not meet the leaders' expectations.

- Albany Community informs parents of their students' academic achievement and behavioral conduct at the school. Parents access student report through a parent portal. The school distributes interim reports and report cards each trimester. Parents acquire report cards during parent teacher conferences. Albany Community also hosts monthly family events at the school. Teachers make regular calls to parents and guardians to report positive student achievements.

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1C:

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

In response to Common Core State Standards and more rigorous state assessments, Albany Community continues to develop a curriculum that supports teachers in their instructional planning. Towards the end of the charter term, the school has made large changes to its program, particularly with regard to elements of the curriculum, which it is continuing to adapt and refine.

- Earlier in the charter term, the school used Harcourt curriculum materials for ELA, science and social studies, as well as GoMath materials for the mathematics program. After hiring external consultants to perform a curriculum audit of the academic program, the school determined that these materials were not sufficient to support students in meeting ELA and mathematics benchmarks. As a result, the school transitioned to the Engage NY program for ELA and mathematics, which provides a fixed, underlying structure, aligned to state standards. Albany Community continues to use Harcourt for its science and social studies program.
- The school now uses pacing guides from Engage NY that the academic director and teachers adjust to align with the school's trimester system. This year, leaders are intentional about providing teachers with more support in instructional planning. For example, the academic director meets with teachers at the elementary academy every week and the middle academy at least twice a week to support teachers in translating curriculum materials and instructional strategies to daily lessons. The data coordinator meets with grade teams weekly to help teachers decipher how to adjust lessons to meet student needs. The school also uses external curriculum consultants for ELA and mathematics to push-in to grade team meetings, providing additional planning and implementation support to teachers.
- These curricular materials, in addition to increased planning supports by school leaders, allow teachers to know what to teach and when to teach it.
- The school is reflective of its performance on state assessments and has recently taken steps to ensure curriculum materials align to common core state standards by conducting

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curriculum analyses and by structuring the curriculum transition into set phases, enabling teachers to internalize and implement the program with fidelity.

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1D:

#### Is high quality instruction evident throughout the school?

Albany Community classrooms maintain consistent focus on academic achievement, but lessons do not require students to engage in higher order thinking. As shown in the chart below, during the renewal visit, Institute team members conducted 30 classroom observations following a defined protocol used in all school renewal visits.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION: NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS

		GRADE									
		K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
CONTENT AREA	ELA		1	4	2	5			2		14
	Math		1	3	1		1	2	2		10
	Science				1		1		1		3
	Soc Stu							1	1		2
	Specials									1	1
	Total		2	7	4	5	3	4	5		30

- Teachers deliver grade appropriate lessons that build on students' previous skill and knowledge and align to state performance standards (25 of 30 classrooms observed). Co-teachers generally work well together and have clear roles in helping students reach lesson objectives.
- Teachers inconsistently assess student understanding during lessons (15 of 30 classrooms observed). In some cases, teachers employ appropriate techniques to check for understanding but fail to use the checks effectively. For example, a teacher ended an ELA lesson and dismissed the class despite seeing that only three of 19 students attempted to complete the assigned exit ticket. Conversely, some teachers regularly and effectively check for understanding while monitoring students' written work, conferencing individually and randomly selecting students to answer questions posed to the whole class. In one particularly effective check during a mathematics lesson, teachers' gauged students' depth of understanding by having students answer peers' questions.
- Few teachers challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem solving skills (9 of 30 classrooms observed). Some lesson plans include opportunities to challenge students, but implementation falls short. Insufficient wait time is a common factor in lessons that do not challenge students. In many cases, teachers ask probing, higher order questions but do not give students sufficient processing time before supplying the answer and/or moving on with the lesson. In a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ELA class, for example, students selected "power books" (books written at a level that presents some degree of challenge for the reader) entirely independently despite the lesson plan specifying that teachers would assist struggling

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readers in finding appropriate texts. As a result, several students selected texts well above their ability levels.

- Albany Community classrooms maintain focus on academic achievement (24 of 30 classrooms observed), but slow pacing inhibits a sense of urgency for learning. Most teachers have effective classroom management techniques and use well-rehearsed routines to minimize transition time. However, many lessons move slowly from one section to the next and leave students with nothing to do while they await further instructions. In a 7<sup>th</sup> grade class, students told not to move on to the next problem on a worksheet began an off-task conversation after waiting several minutes for permission to move on.

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1E:

#### Does the school have strong instructional leadership?

Albany Community's strengthened leadership team has implemented concrete changes to the educational program in response to student performance. Leaders expect the introduction of ongoing data meetings, differentiated coaching cycles and clear school-wide instructional priorities as well as daily academic intervention blocks will drive student growth and improve outcomes. At the end of the charter term, leaders are focusing on developing the skills and competencies of all teachers, particularly in the area of data analysis.

- Albany Community's executive director, principal and academic director serve as the primary instructional leaders and receive support from external ELA and mathematics coaches as well as the school's two assistant principals.
- Grade level meetings serve as effective coaching and professional development sessions as well as opportunities to plan instruction. During weekly grade team meetings with the academic director, structured agendas informed by assessment data and classroom observations drive efficient use of meeting time. The academic director works with teachers to make connections between students' identified skills deficits and planning instruction. During these meetings, teachers share concrete strategies to maximize lesson effectiveness and set consistent performance expectations while norming the use of rubrics.
- At the time of the renewal visit, instructional leaders were beginning to introduce a new tiered coaching system tailored by teacher need. Previously, instructional leaders' efforts with individual teachers were not suitably coordinated to enable identification of trends across classrooms as well as individual teachers' needs.
- Albany Community conducts regular teacher evaluations, but the evaluations reviewed during the renewal visit did not accurately identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses.
- Instructional leaders hold teachers accountable for performance and take action when teachers fail to meet performance expectations. These actions include changing the instructional assignments for teachers deemed to be making progress or have potential and opting not to renew the contracts of teachers not responsive to previous intervention.

## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 1F:

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

The school supports the special learning needs of students with disabilities and students generally at risk of academic failure through consistently monitoring student achievement and adjusting instructional strategies to meet specific learning needs. The school's co-teaching model and daily intervention block provide multiple opportunities to target support. At the time of the renewal visit, Albany Community lacked appropriately trained staff to support ELLs.

- Albany Community uses aimsWeb and state assessment results to identify students who are at risk of academic failure. This year, the school has arranged for all students to receive academic intervention services ("AIS") supports in blocks of time. The data specialist provides information for teachers to determine which skills and content they need to address during AIS blocks.
- Albany Community adequately addresses the educational needs of students with disabilities using push-in and pull-out supports. Students work on the same material as the general class with the close support of special education teachers. General education teachers and the special education staff members confer regularly about the effectiveness of particular strategies and have weekly opportunities to co-plan lessons to ensure that they meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. During grade team meetings, teachers close the feedback loop on the effectiveness of these strategies by analyzing student work products against pre-determined criteria. Specialists offer strategies consistent with students' Individualized Education Program ("IEP") goals but also useful to wide group of students such as increasing wait time for student with auditory processing issues and use of visual aids such as laminated accountable talk rubrics
- The school uses the aimsWeb assessments to monitor the academic progress of students with disabilities and students who are at risk of academic failure. Teachers administer the assessments to students with disabilities weekly to monitor progress toward meeting IEP goals. The school uses Terra Novas and the state's ELA and mathematics assessments to place students in tiered intervention groups for extra support. Teachers and instructional leaders use the aimsWeb data to monitor the progress of students receiving extra interventions towards meeting grade level standards in the skill areas where they demonstrate deficiencies. Teachers analyze student work products to corroborate the aimsWeb results and determine the effectiveness of specific interventions.
- Teachers are keenly aware of students with disabilities' progress toward meeting IEP goals. They meet and coordinate with special education teachers on a regular basis to plan lessons. During these meetings, special education teachers review the progress of students with disabilities and discuss with general education teachers specific strategies that will support the unique learning needs of students with disabilities in their classrooms.
- At the time of the renewal visit, Albany Community did not have an ELL teacher or coordinator, and ELL students were not receiving services sufficient to support their English language acquisition needs. The school identifies a challenging human capital pipeline as the key barrier to hiring a highly qualified candidate.

### IS THE SCHOOL AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

At the end of its second charter term, Albany Community operates as an effective and viable organization that supports the delivery of the educational program. The board meets regularly and ensures the school substantially complies with applicable law and regulations and has worked to identify levers to accelerate student learning. Additional detail on the school's organizational effectiveness is outlined below.

#### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2A:

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

Albany Community is generally faithful to its mission, and evidence supports 8 out of 10 of its key design elements. These are found in the School Background section at the beginning of this report and identified in Appendix A, respectively. Albany Community has not yet fully implemented the school design or generated the consistent academic success promised at the time the SUNY Trustees granted its charter.

#### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2B:

**Are parents/guardians and students satisfied with the school?**

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

**Parent Survey Data.** Albany Community submitted results of its annual parent satisfaction survey with its renewal application. The survey results suggest high levels of satisfaction with teacher communication, school leadership and the program overall. Parent response rates at the elementary and middle grades differed significantly at 34% and 93%, respectively. Given the low elementary parent participation and resulting over-representation of middle grades parents, the survey results might not be useful in framing the results as representative of the school community.

**Parent Focus Group.** The Institute asks all schools facing renewal to convene a representative set of parents for a focus group discussion. A representative set includes parents of students in attendance at the school for multiple years, parents of students new to the school, parents of students receiving general education services, parents of students with special needs and parents of ELLs. The 10 parents in attendance at the focus group indicated strong loyalty to and satisfaction with the school and unanimously noted that they would choose the school again if given the opportunity. Several parents of students with disabilities reported that the school is "very good at breaking down what is in the IEP and providing supports." Parents also voiced satisfaction with Albany Community's commitment to family involvement, pointing to events such as curriculum nights and the annual Festival of Nations celebration.

**Persistence in Enrollment.** An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2014-15, 90.2% of Albany Community's students returned from the previous year. During the current charter term, student persistence has not been below 90%. Student persistence data from previous years of the charter term is available in Appendix A. The Institute

## ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

derived the statistical information on persistence in enrollment from its database. No comparative data from Albany Public Schools or the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) is available to the Institute to provide either state or district wide context. As such, the information presented is for information purposes but does not allow for comparative analysis.

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2C:

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

Albany Community’s organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program.

- The school continues to establish an administrative structure with staff, policies and procedures that allow for distinct lines of accountability. Teachers are aware of whom to report to for what and have a clear sense of each school leader’s role. Albany Community also operates with a parent coordinator and operational staff that allow senior leaders more time for instructional responsibilities such as developing coaching and feedback systems to support teachers.
- The school has clear discipline policies it administers consistently across classrooms. Aside from in-class behavior management systems, teachers have access to several behavior intervention specialists who assist them with addressing students’ social-emotional needs.
- Albany Community struggles to retain high quality staff. In response to high teacher turnover during the charter term and a deficiency of qualified candidates in the Capital Region due to district demand, leaders are developing a partnership with the College of St. Rose, which has a notable elementary and secondary teacher preparation program, to recruit and develop teachers that will serve as a teacher pipeline to the school.
- Albany Community has sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals. In response to assessment data, the school now employs an academic director to assist with the school’s curriculum transitions. Also, recognizing the need to improve school culture and increase teacher retention, Albany Community now utilizes several additional behavior intervention specialists that serve as supports for teachers in classrooms.
- The school maintains adequate student enrollment, reporting 666 students enrolled and 334 students on its waitlist at the time of the renewal visit.
- Albany Community has procedures in place to monitor its progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, ELLs and economically disadvantaged students.
- Albany Community is reflective on the quality of its program and continues to make adjustments to the curriculum, as well as how it supports teachers in implementing the academic program. In response to low assessment data, the school has used several external consultants and evaluators to assess curriculum strengths and weaknesses. It has created additional leadership positions to help address programmatic gaps. The leadership team reviews the way they support teachers in planning and implementing lessons and continue to structure grade level meetings and professional development opportunities to align to school-wide priorities.

## ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2D:

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

The Albany Community board understands its core function is to ensure student success and has taken steps to improve its effectiveness in this regard.

- The school's board members possess a range of skills and experiences relevant to school governance. The board conducts business with an effective committee structure including academic, finance and parent communication committees. Board members report being in the process of recruiting an additional member with K-12 education experience.
- Albany Community's board established performance monitoring and targeted professional development as top academic program priorities for the end of the charter term. It continues to work toward a previously established long-range goal related to facilities and actively monitors progress toward ownership of the Krank Street facility.
- The board has taken steps to ensure its continual development toward ongoing, rigorous oversight of the total educational program. Early in the 2015-16 school year, the board solicited proposals from multiple consulting firms prior to contracting for school evaluation and board development activities throughout the school year. The board also continues to use online resources from BoardOnTrack, a good governance organization based in Massachusetts.
- Though it does not do a comprehensive written evaluation of its performance, the board assesses its effectiveness during annual retreats facilitated by external consultants including a self-evaluation two years ago. The current committee structure grew out of a best practices training session during one of these retreats.
- The board vigorously negotiated the July 2015 service agreement with BCF and the details of the services and bi-monthly progress reporting.
- The board is actively considering incentive pay to help leaders retain staff. The board is also reviewing ways to support and augment school leadership.

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2E:

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

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

- The board has materially complied with the terms of its by-laws and code of ethics.
- The board has a functioning committee structure including executive, academic, finance and parent communications committees. The board receives academic reports as well as regular updates on finances and personnel that enable it to oversee the full educational program.
- The board receives financial reports and information, which it and its finance committee use for planning.
- The board has generally avoided creating conflicts of interest where possible, and where

## ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

conflicts exist, such as with trustees affiliated with BCF, the board has managed those conflicts in a clear and transparent manner through recusal. Further, the board is aware of, and has handled, conflicts related to having several trustees sitting on the board of Henry Johnson Charter School (authorized by SUNY).

- The board successfully sought a charter amendment to add a middle school program. While some questioned the timing of taking on the obligation of a new lease and added grades, parents were supportive and the school was performing exceptionally well at the time.
- The BCF reviewed the parent/student handbook for the board to ensure update and compliance.
- The board has effectively used outside counsel.

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 2F:

[Has the school substantially complied with applicable laws, rules and regulations, and provisions of its charter?](#)

The school generally and substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of its charter. The Institute's records reflect no formal or informal complaints against the school. The Institute noted exceptions in the following areas.

- [By-laws](#). The education corporation's by-laws need to be updated to comply with provisions of the New York Education Law and Not-For-Profit Corporation Law. The Institute will also ensure this is updated prior to the start of a new charter term.
- [Code of Ethics](#). The education corporation's code of ethics needs to be updated to comply with provisions of the New York General Municipal Law and Not-For-Profit Corporation Law. The Institute will also ensure this is updated prior to the start of a new charter term.
- [ELL Program](#). The school's lack of a certified Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages or other qualified instructor puts the school's ELL program out of compliance with applicable federal law even though the school's program was in full compliance at the time of the last renewal visit. The Institute has asked Albany Community to submit a plan bring the program into compliance, which includes strategies to hire a qualified instructor. The Institute will follow up to ensure compliance by the beginning of the renewal charter term.
- [Open Meeting Law](#). In some cases, the board would properly move into executive session but did not note in the minutes the reason therefor. Also, in some cases, the board would adjourn the meeting from executive session without moving back into public session in violation of the New York Open Meetings Law.

## IS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION FISCALLY SOUND?

Based on a review of the fiscal evidence collected through the renewal review, Albany Community is fiscally sound. The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard for Albany Community is included in Appendix D and presents color coded tables and charts indicating that the education corporation has demonstrated fiscal soundness over the course of the charter term.<sup>14</sup>

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3A:

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

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

- The annual budget is developed by the executive director, school leadership and business manager; assumptions are based on historical information.
- The budget is presented to the board finance committee by the executive director for review and once the committee is satisfied the budget is presented to the full board for approval. Implementation of the budget is the responsibility of the executive director.
- Actual to budget comparisons are analyzed for variances.
- The projected budget includes the fees associated with the BCF service agreement for academic, operations and public affairs services at an annual fee of \$75,000 for the annual contract term. Bi-monthly progress reporting of services is required under the agreement.
- The next charter term projection reflects steady enrollment and stable budgets.

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3B:

[Does the school maintain appropriate internal controls and procedures?](#)

The education corporation has generally established and maintained minimal fiscal policies, procedures and internal controls with notable exceptions around the implementation of the nutrition program as detailed below.

- The Institute found the written financial policies to be outdated and minimal. Content areas lacked procedural details include financial reporting, cash disbursements and receipts, payroll, bank reconciliations, fixed assets, grants/contributions, capitalization and accounting, procurement and investments.
- The Institute recommends that the board oversee the updating of the fiscal policies and procedures to include requirements to be in compliance with recent updates to the federal funding guidelines. In addition, the fiscal policies and procedures need updating to include the categories of petty cash, credit card usage, cell phone usage, lunch program and grant management.

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<sup>14</sup> 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.

## FISCAL PERFORMANCE

- The annual audit for June 30, 2014 identified significant deficiencies in the internal controls around the nutrition program and the required paperwork verification and eligibility procedures. A corrective action plan was implemented.
- The annual audit for June 30, 2015 again identified significant deficiencies in the internal controls around the nutrition program. The auditor found deficiencies in the self verification process, where the school must select a pre-determined sample of program applications and contact applicants for verification of income. If proof of income requires a change in the student's status in the program, the applicant must be notified and this action completed in the software system. The auditor's testing identified likely questioned costs of approximately \$32,000, which was quantified by projecting the incorrect findings over the nutrition program as a whole. The auditor recommended the school establish a system of internal controls that designate a person independent of the application, data entry or internal verification process to review each application for eligibility criteria. This person should also ensure authorized applications are posted correctly to the school's nutrition software. A corrective action plan is being implemented.

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3C:

#### Does the school comply with financial reporting requirements?

Albany Community has complied with reporting requirements.

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

### SUNY Renewal Benchmark 3D:

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

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

- Albany Community posts a fiscally strong composite score rating on the Institute's financial dashboard indicating a consistent level of fiscal stability over the charter term.
- Albany Community has relied primarily on recurring operating revenues and accumulated surpluses and is not dependent upon variable income for its financial needs.
- Albany Community prepares and monitors cash flow projections and maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly and retains approximately four months of cash on hand.
- Albany Community owns one facility located on Dove Street, Albany, which houses the 6-8 program and leases a second facility located on Krank Street, Albany, which houses the K-5 program. The Krank Street lease with the BCF expires June 30, 2018 and New Market Tax Credits associated with the financing of the facility by BCF are due to expire in 2017. Based on these timelines, the board is anticipating going into the bond market in late 2016-17 or early 2017-18 to borrow money to purchase the building. The board has designated unrestricted net assets of \$1,000,000 to reduce the cost of facility financing.

## FISCAL PERFORMANCE

- As a new requirement of charter agreements, Albany Community will need to establish a separate bank account for the dissolution fund reserve of \$75,000, which can be funded with \$25,000 over the first three years of the new charter term.

## FUTURE PLANS

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

Albany Community maintains a sound educational program supported by an effective and viable organization, and the education corporation is fiscally sound. Thus, the plans to implement the educational program as proposed during the next charter term are reasonable, feasible and achievable.

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

**Plans for the Educational Program.** Albany Community plans to build on the success of changes implemented late in the current charter term and continue to increase the rigor of the academic program to accelerate student learning. Implementation of these plans is likely to enable the school to meet or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals in its next charter term.

	Current Charter Term	End of Next Charter Term
Enrollment	621	675
Grade Span	K-8	K-8
Teaching Staff	37	44
Days of Instruction	190	190

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

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

Albany Community intends to continue to provide instruction for Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in its two current locations. The school plans to purchase the Krank Street facility during the next charter term.

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

## FUTURE PLANS

York Education Law, Not-For-Profit Corporation Law, Public Officers Law and the General Municipal Law, as appropriate.

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# Appendix A

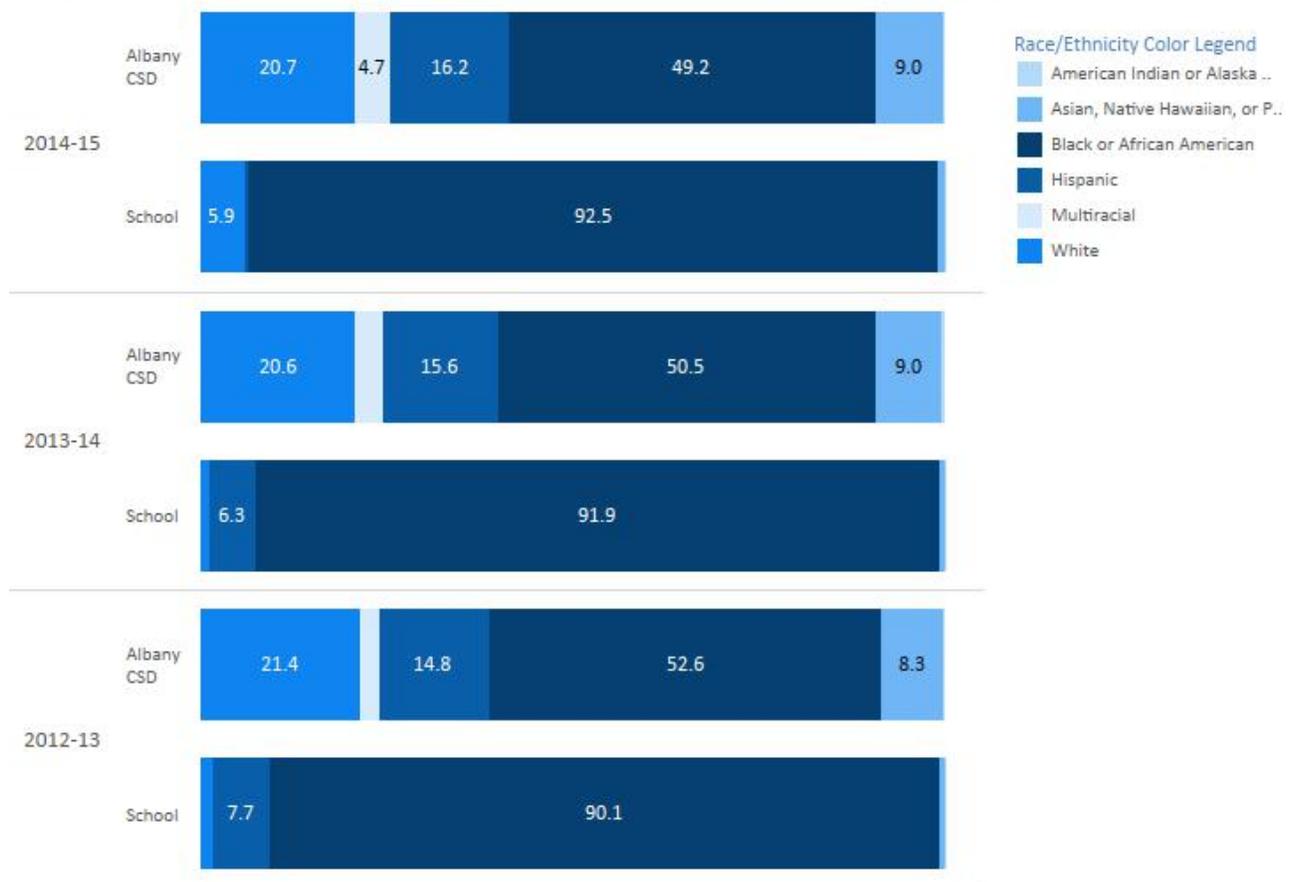
## School Overview

# APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

## Board of Trustees<sup>15</sup>

Board Member Name	Position	Board Member Name	Position
Raimundo Archibald, Jr.	Chair	Bramble Buran	Trustee
Felicia Reid	Trustee	Michael J. Strianese	Trustee
Lekeya Martin	Secretary	Juanita Nabors	Vice Chair

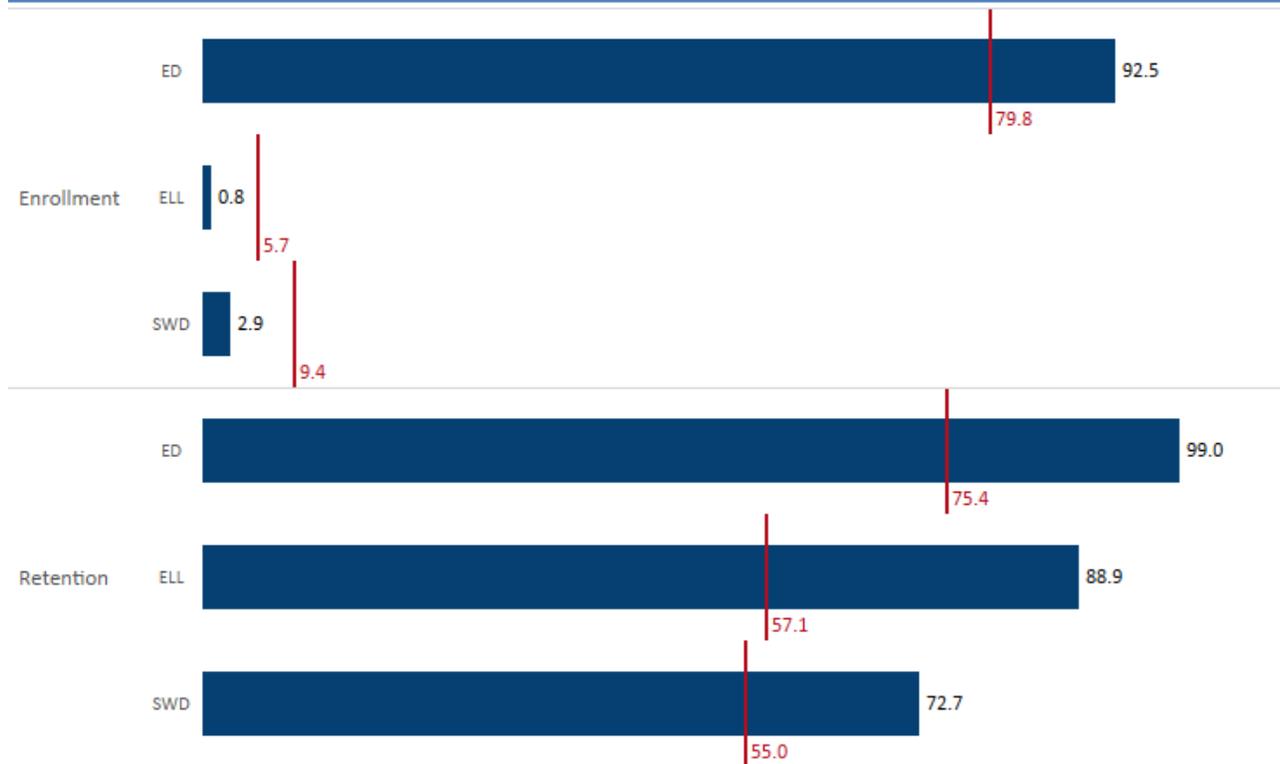
## Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity



<sup>15</sup> Source: The Institute's board records at the time of the renewal review.

# APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

## Enrollment and Retention Targets



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

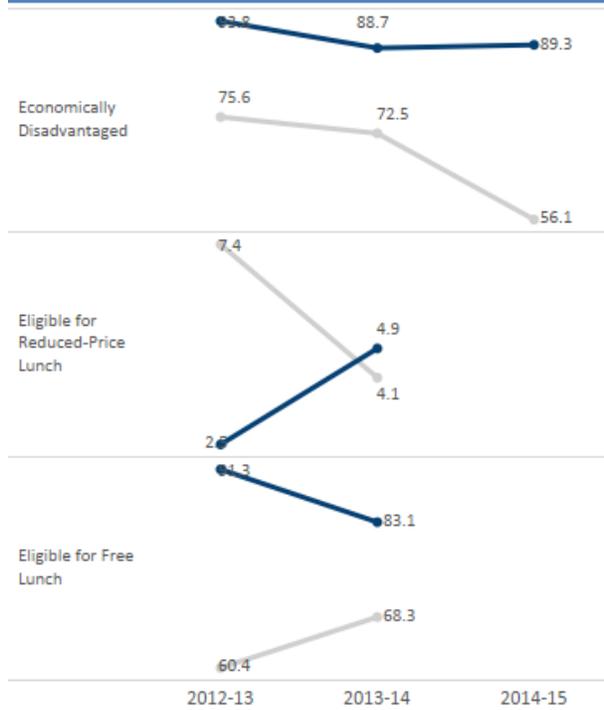
## Persistence in Enrollment



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

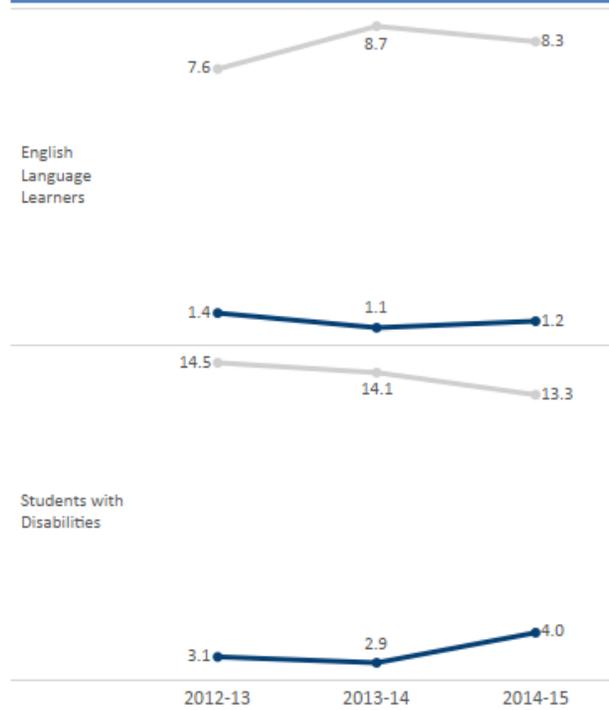
# APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

## Student Demographics: Free/Reduced Lunch



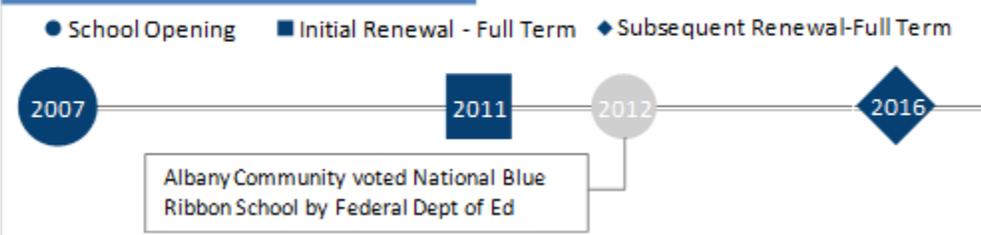
The charts show the trends in enrollment in the **school** and the **district** for each subgroup over the charter term. Reduced-Price and Free Lunch data are not available for 2014-15. Economically disadvantaged includes those students eligible for Free and Reduced-Price lunch among other qualifying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

## Student Demographics: Special Populations



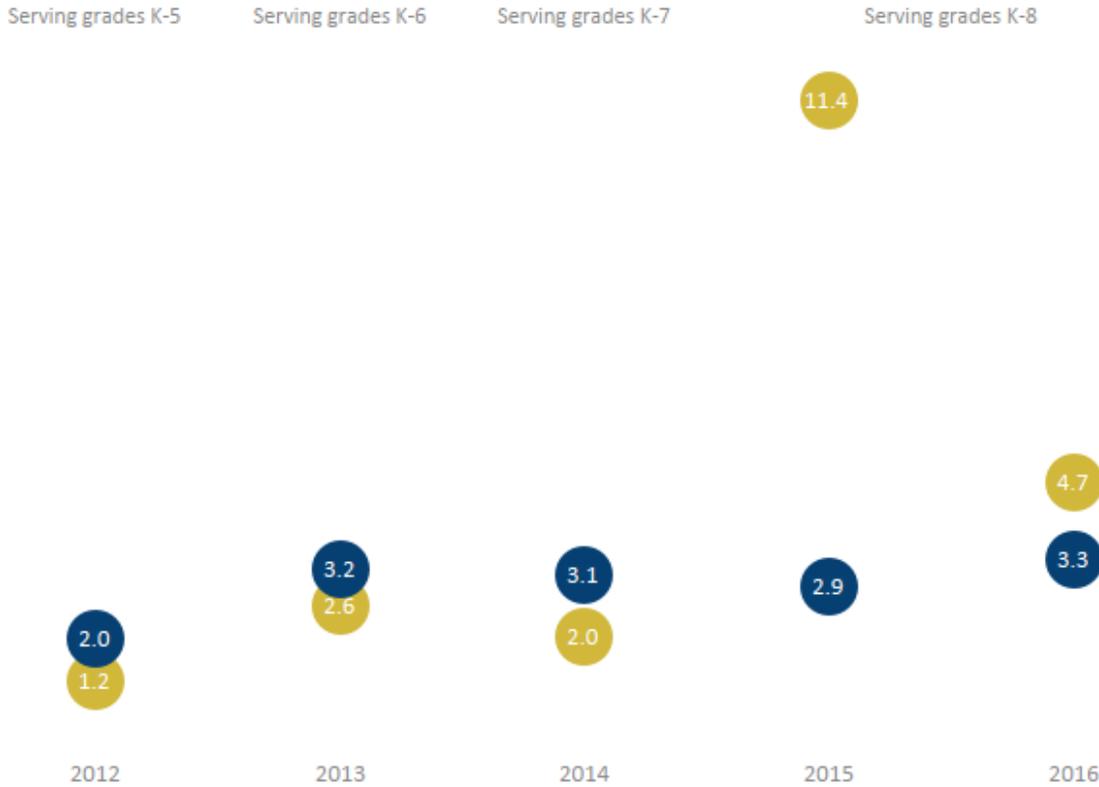
The charts show trends in enrollment in the **school** and the **district** for each subgroup over the charter term.

## Timeline of Charter School Renewal



# APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

## Suspensions: Albany Community Charter School's in school suspension rate and out of school suspension rate.



District comparison data are not available. The percentage rate shown here is calculated using the method employed by the New York City Department of Education: the total the number of students receiving an in school or out of school suspension at any time during the school year is divided by the total enrollment, then multiplied by 100.

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

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
0	0	0	2	1

## APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

### School Characteristics

School Year	Chartered Enrollment	Actual Enrollment <sup>16</sup>	Actual as a percentage of Chartered Enrollment	Proposed Grades	Actual Grades
2006-07	104	104	100%	K-1	K-1
2007-08	182	167	92%	K-2	K-2
2008-09	266	231	87%	K-3	K-3
2009-10	286	298	104%	K-4	K-4
2010-11	346	340	98%	K-4	K-4
2011-12	414	404	98%	K-5	K-5
2012-13	474	469	99%	K-6	K-6
2013-14	543	549	101%	K-7	K-7
2014-15	612	558	91%	K-8	K-8
2015-16	621	666	107%	K-8	K-8

### Key Design Elements

Element	Evident?
Teaching maps for every grade and subject;	+
Blackboard configuration to maximize time on task and student learning;	+
Wall of Fame highlighting achievements of individual students;	+
Using data to improve student learning;	+
Data informed decision making about teacher performance, students' action plans, and curriculum changes;	+
Two instructors per class following a lead/assist model;	+
Extended school day;	+
10 hours of ELA, 6.25 hours of mathematics, 3 hours of science, 3 hours of social studies per week;	+
Professional development of teachers and co-grading of papers to ensure reliability; and,	-
Personal education goals for each student.	-

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

## APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

### School Leaders

School Year(s)	Name(s) and Title(s)
2006-07 through 2010-11	S. Neal Currie, Principal
2011-12 through present	S. Neal Currie, Executive Director Andrea Ralph, Principal

### Parent Satisfaction: Survey Results

2014-15 Albany Community Survey

**Response Rate: 93% (grades 6-8)**

Teacher communication: 92%
School leadership: 93%
Overall: 87%

### School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Date
<b>2006-07</b>	First Year Visit	February 26, 2007
<b>2007-08</b>	Evaluation Visit	February 5, 2008
<b>2008-09</b>	Evaluation Visit	March 30-31, 2009
<b>2009-10</b>	Evaluation Visit	February 9, 2010
<b>2010-11</b>	Initial Renewal Visit	October 13-14, 2010
<b>2015-16</b>	Subsequent Renewal Visit	September 21-22, 2015

### Conduct of the Renewal Visit

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
<b>September 22-23, 2015</b>	Natasha Howard, PhD	Managing Director of Program
	Aaron Campbell	Senior Analyst
	Jeff Wasbes	Executive Deputy Director for Accountability

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# Appendix B

## School Performance Summaries

# APPENDIX B: SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARIES

## SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: English Language Arts Albany Community Charter School



	2012-13			MET	2013-14			MET	2014-15			MET			
	Grades Served: K-6				Grades Served: K-7				Grades Served: K-8						
	Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)				
<b>ABSOLUTE MEASURES</b> 1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State exam.	3	21.5 (65)	20.7 (58)	NA	3	29.7 (74)	27.5 (69)	NA	3	25.3 (75)	24.3 (70)	NO			
	4	15.5 (71)	14.3 (63)		4	25.8 (66)	23.2 (56)		4	26.4 (72)	26.1 (69)				
	5	5.0 (60)	5.8 (52)		5	19.0 (63)	17.2 (58)		5	17.5 (57)	20.9 (43)				
	6	23.2 (56)	24.5 (49)		6	6.3 (64)	3.7 (54)		6	6.7 (60)	7.5 (53)				
	7	(0)	(0)		7	16.9 (59)	14.3 (49)		7	3.3 (61)	1.9 (52)				
	8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)		8	11.3 (62)	13.0 (54)				
	All	16.3 (252)	16.2 (222)		All	19.9 (326)	17.8 (286)		All	15.8 (387)	16.4 (341)				
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Level Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO	NO	Grades	PLI	AMO	NO	Grades	PLI	AMO	NO			
	3-6	84			3-7	80	89		3-8	72	97				
<b>COMPARATIVE MEASURES</b> 3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Comparison: Albany City Schools			NO	Comparison: Albany City Schools			YES	Comparison: Albany City Schools			YES			
	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District				
	3-6	16.2	18.2		3-7	17.8	13.2		3-8	16.4	14.7				
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at proficiency on the state exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students.	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	NO	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	NO	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	NO
	95.4	16.3	14.8	0.20		90.3	19.9	17.3	0.20		89.7	15.8	16.4	-0.07	
<b>GROWTH MEASURE</b> 5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	Grades	School	State	NO	Grades	School	State	NO	Grades	School	State	NO			
	4	32.4			4	46.9			4	51.4					
	5	36.1			5	41.9			5	48.4					
	6	35.9			6	32.5			6	34.1					
	7	0.00			7	49.7			7	34.8					
	8	0.0			8	0.0			8	37.7					
	All	34.7	50.0		All	42.7	50.0		All	41.3	50.0				

# APPENDIX B: SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARIES

## SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: Mathematics Albany Community Charter School



	2012-13 Grades Served: K-6			MET	2013-14 Grades Served: K-7			MET	2014-15 Grades Served: K-8			MET			
	Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)				
<b>ABSOLUTE MEASURES</b>															
1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State exam.	3	32.3 (65)	27.6 (58)		3	29.7 (74)	29.0 (69)		3	36.0 (75)	37.1 (70)				
	4	12.7 (71)	12.7 (63)		4	43.9 (66)	44.6 (56)		4	28.2 (71)	26.5 (68)				
	5	23.3 (60)	23.1 (52)		5	33.3 (63)	32.8 (58)		5	33.3 (57)	41.9 (43)				
	6	19.6 (56)	22.4 (49)		6	6.3 (64)	5.6 (54)		6	8.3 (60)	7.5 (53)				
	7	(0)	(0)		7	20.3 (59)	20.4 (49)		7	4.9 (61)	3.8 (52)				
	8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)		8	16.4 (61)	18.9 (53)				
	All	21.8 (252)	21.2 (222)	NA	All	27.0 (326)	26.9 (286)	NA	All	21.8 (385)	23.0 (339)	NO			
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Level Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO				
	3-6	100			3-7	100	86	YES	3-8	87	94	NO			
<b>COMPARATIVE MEASURES</b>	Comparison: Albany City Schools				Comparison: Albany City Schools				Comparison: Albany City Schools						
3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District				
	3-6	21.2	16.1	YES	3-7	26.9	13.8	YES	3-8	23.0	13.6	YES			
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at proficiency on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students.	% FL	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size			
	95.4	21.8	18.2	0.26	NO	90.3	27.0	24.0	0.18	NO	89.7	21.8	21.2	0.01	NO
<b>GROWTH MEASURE</b>	Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State				
5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	4	33.2			4	58.7			4	39.7					
	5	53.8			5	52.1			5	41.5					
	6	34.2			6	20.1			6	28.7					
	7	0.0			7	49.6			7	45.4					
	8	0.0			8	0.0			8	42.5					
	All	40.2	50.0	NO	All	45.1	50.0	NO	All	39.6	50.0	NO			

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# Appendix C

## District Comments

The Institute has received no district or public comments.

# Appendix D

## School Fiscal Dashboard

# APPENDIX D: SCHOOL FISCAL DASHBOARD



## Albany Community Charter School

### SCHOOL INFORMATION

#### FINANCIAL POSITION

##### Assets

##### Current Assets

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

##### Total Current Assets - **GRAPH 1**

Property, Building and Equipment, net

Other Assets

##### Total Assets - **GRAPH 1**

##### Liabilities and Net Assets

##### Current Liabilities

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

##### Total Current Liabilities - **GRAPH 1**

L-T Debt and Notes Payable, net current maturities

##### Total Liabilities - **GRAPH 1**

##### Net Assets

Unrestricted  
Temporarily restricted

##### Total Net Assets

##### Total Liabilities and Net Assets

#### ACTIVITIES

##### Operating Revenue

Resident Student Enrollment

Students with Disabilities

##### Grants and Contracts

State and Local  
Federal - Title and IDEA  
Federal - Other  
Other

Food Service/Child Nutrition Program

##### Total Operating Revenue

##### Expenses

Regular Education  
SPED  
Regular Education & SPED (combined)

Other

##### Total Program Services

Management and General  
Fundraising

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

##### Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations

##### Support and Other Revenue

Contributions  
Fundraising  
Miscellaneous Income  
Net assets released from restriction

##### Total Support and Other Revenue

Total Unrestricted Revenue

Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue

##### Total Revenue - **GRAPHS 2 & 3**

##### Change in Net Assets

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

Prior Year Adjustment(s)

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

Opened 2006-07					
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
<b>Total Current Assets - GRAPH 1</b>	1,807,835	3,065,687	3,548,745	3,607,259	3,675,929
Property, Building and Equipment, net	187,847	215,883	438,985	5,128,044	4,953,142
Other Assets	161,160	157,500	-	67,252	1,102,592
<b>Total Assets - GRAPH 1</b>	2,156,842	3,439,070	3,987,730	8,802,555	9,731,663
<b>Total Current Liabilities - GRAPH 1</b>	327,837	701,589	741,374	903,756	801,302
L-T Debt and Notes Payable, net current maturities	-	-	-	4,205,992	4,157,228
<b>Total Liabilities - GRAPH 1</b>	327,837	701,589	741,374	5,109,748	4,958,530
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	1,829,005	2,737,481	3,246,356	3,692,807	3,773,133
Temporarily restricted	-	-	-	-	1,000,000
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	1,829,005	2,737,481	3,246,356	3,692,807	4,773,133
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	2,156,842	3,439,070	3,987,730	8,802,555	9,731,663
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	5,227,751	6,224,667	7,170,518	8,413,985	9,515,059
Regular Education	3,001,550	3,473,725	4,613,854	4,941,340	5,629,447
SPED	432,201	558,083	648,645	923,059	988,875
Regular Education & SPED (combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Other	600,961	710,898	760,024	895,622	819,808
<b>Total Program Services</b>	4,034,712	4,742,706	6,022,523	6,760,021	7,438,130
Management and General	416,866	469,268	705,078	1,274,627	1,097,473
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenses - GRAPHS 2, 3 &amp; 4</b>	4,451,578	5,211,974	6,727,601	8,034,648	8,535,603
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations</b>	776,173	1,012,693	442,917	379,337	979,456
Contributions	-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising	552	1,103	266	621	265
Miscellaneous Income	15,763	88,645	20,373	66,493	100,605
Net assets released from restriction	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Support and Other Revenue</b>	16,315	89,748	20,639	67,114	100,870
<b>Total Unrestricted Revenue</b>	5,244,066	6,314,415	7,191,157	8,481,099	9,615,929
<b>Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Revenue - GRAPHS 2 &amp; 3</b>	5,244,066	6,314,415	7,191,157	8,481,099	9,615,929
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	792,488	1,102,441	463,556	446,451	1,080,326
<b>Net Assets - Beginning of Year - GRAPH 2</b>	1,036,517	1,829,005	2,737,481	3,246,356	3,692,807
Prior Year Adjustment(s)	-	(193,965)	45,319	-	-
<b>Net Assets - End of Year - GRAPH 2</b>	1,829,005	2,737,481	3,246,356	3,692,807	4,773,133

# APPENDIX D: SCHOOL FISCAL DASHBOARD



## Albany Community Charter School

### SCHOOL INFORMATION - (Continued)

#### Functional Expense Breakdown

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Personnel Service	417,511	473,028	500,930	702,397	746,645
Administrative Staff Personnel					
Instructional Personnel	1,677,024	1,979,836	2,499,423	2,973,077	3,269,574
Non-Instructional Personnel	17,556	25,849	181,628	219,010	224,761
Personnel Services (Combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Salaries and Staff	2,112,091	2,478,713	3,181,981	3,894,484	4,240,980
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes	419,718	525,911	676,354	862,964	987,583
Retirement	32,393	35,850	42,913	53,922	68,643
Management Company Fees	-	-	-	-	-
Building and Land Rent / Lease	717,384	723,300	1,094,293	899,157	1,041,792
Staff Development	15,666	12,020	25,606	45,608	25,190
Professional Fees, Consultant & Purchased Services	128,732	230,889	213,976	266,609	382,735
Marketing / Recruitment	7,627	9,800	15,161	34,264	26,948
Student Supplies, Materials & Services	405,989	483,203	655,635	662,605	648,158
Depreciation	69,335	64,745	74,802	150,916	250,214
Other	542,643	647,543	746,880	1,164,119	863,360
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>4,451,578</b>	<b>5,211,974</b>	<b>6,727,601</b>	<b>8,034,648</b>	<b>8,535,603</b>

### SCHOOL ANALYSIS

#### ENROLLMENT

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Chartered Enroll	345	375	375	375	375
Revised Enroll	346	414	474	543	612
Actual Enroll - GRAPH 4	340	404	469	549	623
Chartered Grades	K-4	K-4	K-4	K-4	K-4
Revised Grades	-	K-5	K-6	K-7	K-8

#### Primary School District: Albany

Per Pupil Funding (Weighted Avg of All Districts)	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
14,072	14,072	14,072	13,783	13,753	
Increase over prior year	20.2%	0.0%	0.0%	-2.1%	-0.2%

#### PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

Revenue	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Average - 5 Yrs. OR Charter Term
Operating	15,376	15,408	15,289	15,326	15,273	15,334
Other Revenue and Support	48	222	44	122	162	120
<b>TOTAL - GRAPH 3</b>	<b>15,424</b>	<b>15,630</b>	<b>15,333</b>	<b>15,448</b>	<b>15,435</b>	<b>15,454</b>
Expenses						
Program Services	11,867	11,739	12,841	12,313	11,939	12,140
Management and General, Fundraising	1,226	1,162	1,503	2,322	1,762	1,595
<b>TOTAL - GRAPH 3</b>	<b>13,093</b>	<b>12,901</b>	<b>14,345</b>	<b>14,635</b>	<b>13,701</b>	<b>13,735</b>
% of Program Services	90.6%	91.0%	89.5%	84.1%	87.1%	88.5%
% of Management and Other	9.4%	9.0%	10.5%	15.9%	12.9%	11.5%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses - GRAPH 5	17.8%	21.2%	6.9%	5.6%	12.7%	12.5%

#### Student to Faculty Ratio

8.5	9.0	8.4	6.0	-
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#### Faculty to Admin Ratio

6.7	7.5	7.0	11.4	-
-----	-----	-----	------	---

#### Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - GRAPH 6

Score	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Average
Fiscally Strong 1.5 - 3.0 / Fiscally Adequate 1.0 - 1.4 / Fiscally Needs Monitoring < 1.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.8	3.0	3.0
	Fiscally Strong					

#### Working Capital - GRAPH 7

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Average
Net Working Capital	1,479,998	2,364,098	2,807,371	2,703,503	2,874,627	2,445,919
As % of Unrestricted Revenue	28.2%	37.4%	39.0%	31.9%	29.9%	33.3%
Working Capital (Current) Ratio Score	5.5	4.4	4.8	4.0	4.6	4.6
Risk (Low ≥ 3.0 / Medium 1.4 - 2.9 / High < 1.4)	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent ≥ 3.0 / Good 1.4 - 2.9 / Poor < 1.4)	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

#### Quick (Acid Test) Ratio

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Average
Score	5.2	3.7	4.6	3.9	4.5	4.4
Risk (Low ≥ 2.5 / Medium 1.0 - 2.4 / High < 1.0)	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent ≥ 2.5 / Good 1.0 - 2.4 / Poor < 1.0)	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

#### Debt to Asset Ratio - GRAPH 7

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Average
Score	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.5	0.3
Risk (Low < 0.50 / Medium 0.51 - .95 / High > 1.0)	LOW	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW
Rating (Excellent < 0.50 / Good 0.51 - .95 / Poor > 1.0)	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent

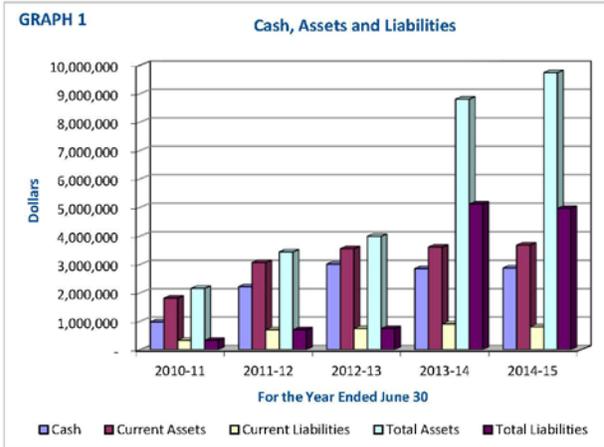
#### Months of Cash - GRAPH 8

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Average
Score	2.6	5.1	5.4	4.3	4.0	4.3
Risk (Low > 3 mo. / Medium 1 - 3 mo. / High < 1 mo.)	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent > 3 mo. / Good 1 - 3 mo. / Poor < 1 mo.)	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

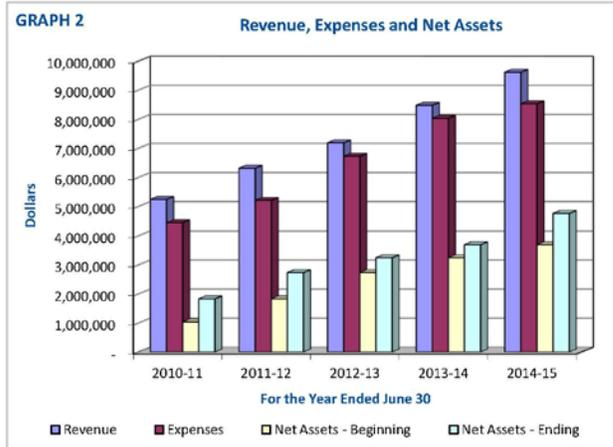
# APPENDIX D: SCHOOL FISCAL DASHBOARD



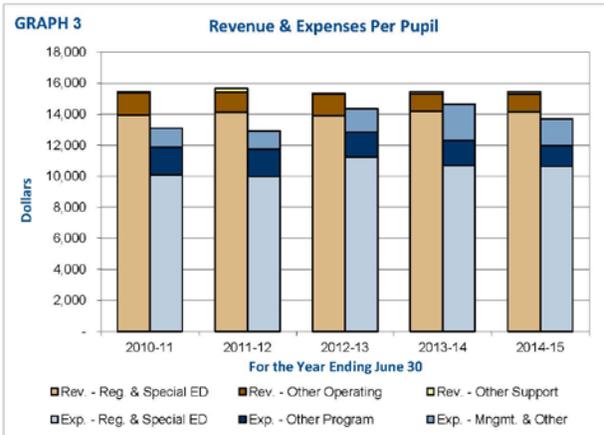
## Albany Community Charter School



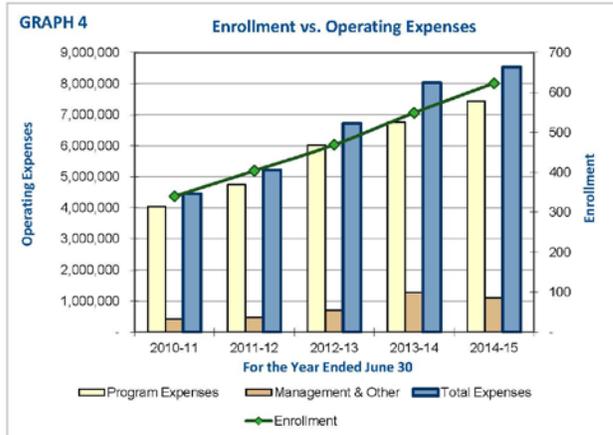
This chart illustrates the relationship between assets and liabilities and to what extent cash reserves makes up current assets. Ideally for each subset, subsets 2 thru 4, (i.e. current assets vs. current liabilities), the column on the left is taller than the immediate column on the right; and, generally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



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



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



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

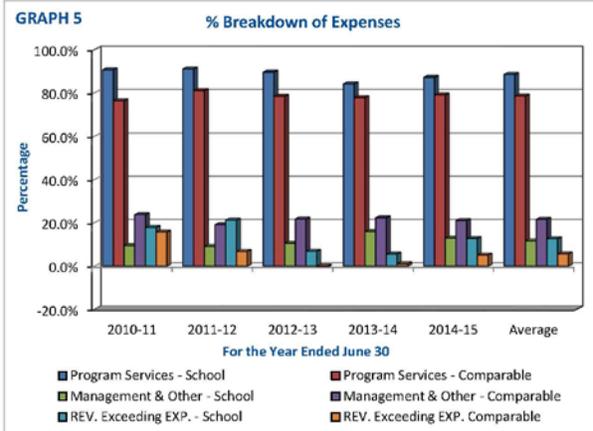
# APPENDIX D: SCHOOL FISCAL DASHBOARD



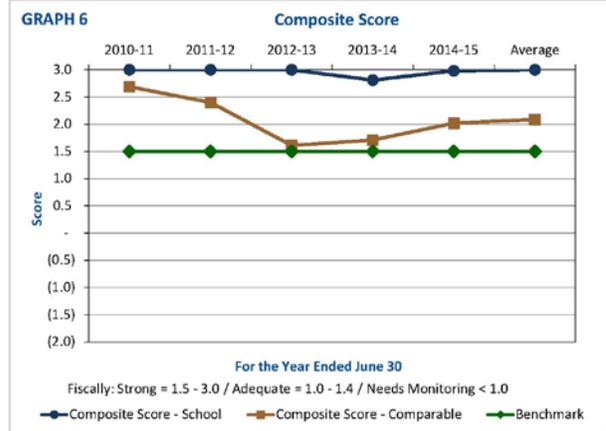
## Albany Community Charter School

Comparable School, Region or Network: Capital District & Hudson Valley Schools

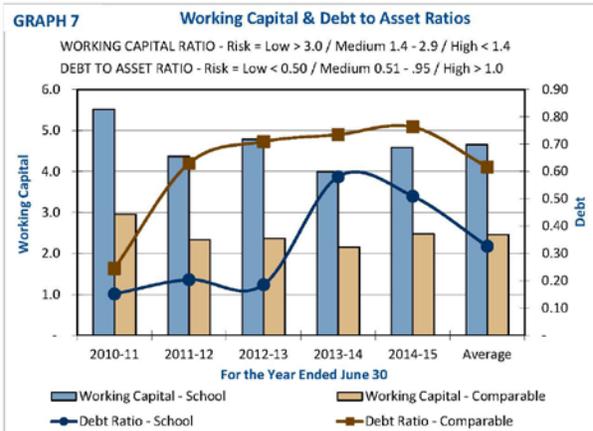
\* Average = Average - 5 Yrs. OR Charter Term



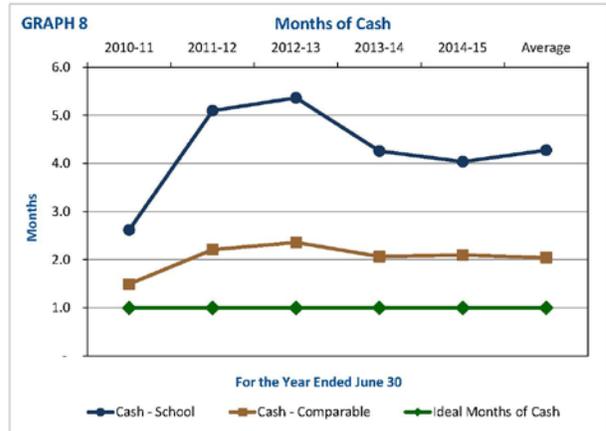
This chart illustrates the percentage expense breakdown between program services and management & others as well as the percentage of revenues exceeding expenses. Ideally the percentage expense for program services will far exceed that of the management & other expense. The percentage of revenues exceeding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



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



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



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