

**THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS
INSTITUTE**

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT
BROOKLYN EMERGING LEADERS
ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL*

Report Date: January 6, 2022

Review Date: October 5, 2021

SUNY Charter Schools Institute
H. Carl McCall SUNY Building
353 Broadway
Albany, NY 12246

518.445.4250
www.newyorkcharters.org



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

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CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND

BROOKLYN EMERGING LEADERS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

125 Stuyvesant Avenue, Brooklyn, New York | Grades: 9-12 | Community School District 16

The State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) approved the original charter for Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy Charter School (“BELA”) on June 13, 2016. The charter opened in fall 2017 serving 85 female students in 9th grade.



MISSION

To empower each young woman to be the best version of herself. Through a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, service learning initiatives, and a commitment to cultivating a spirit of ownership within each young woman, BELA students will attend and graduate from college.

CURRENT CHARTER

Serves: 9th – 12th

Chartered Enrollment:
314

Charter Expiration:
July 31, 2022

PROPOSED FUTURE CHARTER

Serves: 9th – 12th

Chartered Enrollment:
300

Charter Expiration:
July 31, 2027

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Sisterhood;



Scholarship;



Strength; and,



Service.



CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND



NOTEWORTHY

In accordance with the design originally set forth in its new charter application, BELA established broad and effective social, emotional, and mental health supports for its students and families during its initial charter term. Of particular note, the social work team acquired a five year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, an agency within the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The grant funds an initiative to support students' mental resilience. BELA's staff coordinates with social workers at Whitelaw Reid Academy of Arts and Business and Brooklyn Academy of Global Finance, the two New York

City Department of Education ("NYCDOE") schools co-located with BELA to extend the grant funded support services to all students at the campus.

SUMMARY OF COVID-19 RESPONSE

BELA made the quick transition to a fully remote program in March 2020 following the statewide facility closure at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The charter began its 2020-21 year remotely and continued in that setting until March 2021. As infection rates decreased and vaccination rates increased, the charter gradually moved to a hybrid program. Throughout the year, the charter's social workers were instrumental in supporting students during the COVID-19 pandemic when the charter saw an increase in students experiencing trauma, especially five students who were hospitalized and two who lost parents to COVID-19. Notwithstanding these significant challenges to the BELA community in its initial charter term, BELA supported its students to high academic achievement. The charter's first four year cohort boasts a 96% graduation rate with all graduates being accepted into college. Under its International Baccalaureate ("IB") For All program, every senior took at least one IB course with six graduates completing the rigorous requirements to receive the full IB diploma.

RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

FULL-TERM RENEWAL

Full-Term Renewal *The Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) recommends that the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy Charter School for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in 9th – 12th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal with a projected total enrollment of 300 students. The Institute makes this recommendation based on Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy Charter School meeting the criteria for charter renewal set forth in the Policies for the Renewal of Not-for-Profit Charter School Education Corporations and Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the “SUNY Renewal Policies”).¹*

To earn an **Initial Full-Term Renewal**, a charter must either:



have compiled a strong and compelling record of meeting or coming close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals, and have in place at the time of the renewal review an educational program that, as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks,² is generally effective; or,



have made progress toward meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals and have in place at the time of the renewal review an education program that, as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, is particularly strong and effective.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

In addition to making a recommendation based on a determination of whether the charter has met the SUNY Trustees’ specific renewal criteria, the Institute makes the following findings required by the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the “Act”):

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

1. SUNY Renewal Policies (p. 12) are available on the [Institute’s website](#).

2. The Qualitative Education Benchmarks are a subset of the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks (“SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”) which are available on the [Institute’s website](#).

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During its initial five year charter term, BELA is an academic success having met its key Accountability Plan goals. The table below demonstrates the key findings for the SUNY Trustees and highlights the successes of the charter.

FINDINGS & INFORMATION

Is the charter an academic success?

BELA is an academic success having met its key academic goals for high school graduation and college preparation. In its initial charter term, the charter graduated 96% of its first four year cohort. Among those graduates, all were accepted to and enrolled in college during the fall following graduation.

Is the charter an effective, viable organization?

BELA is an effective, viable organization. The charter's academic leadership, student life team, college success team, and operations staff members support the charter's full realization of its mission in its first charter term. The board effectively governs the charter and oversees day to day operations while thoughtfully reflecting on its performance and areas for continuous improvement.

Is the charter fiscally sound?

BELA is fiscally sound based on the fiscal evidence collected through the renewal review. Until the most recent school year, BELA has struggled with enrollment hovering just under the charter agreement threshold. However, the education corporation has improved its fiscal position over time, met its fiscal benchmarks throughout the charter term, and presents a reasonable and appropriate fiscal plan for the next charter term.

If the SUNY Trustees renew the education corporation's authority to operate the charter, are its plans for the charter reasonable, feasible, and achievable?

The charter's plans to continue operating and developing its high school program through a subsequent charter term, if renewed, are reasonable, feasible, and achievable.

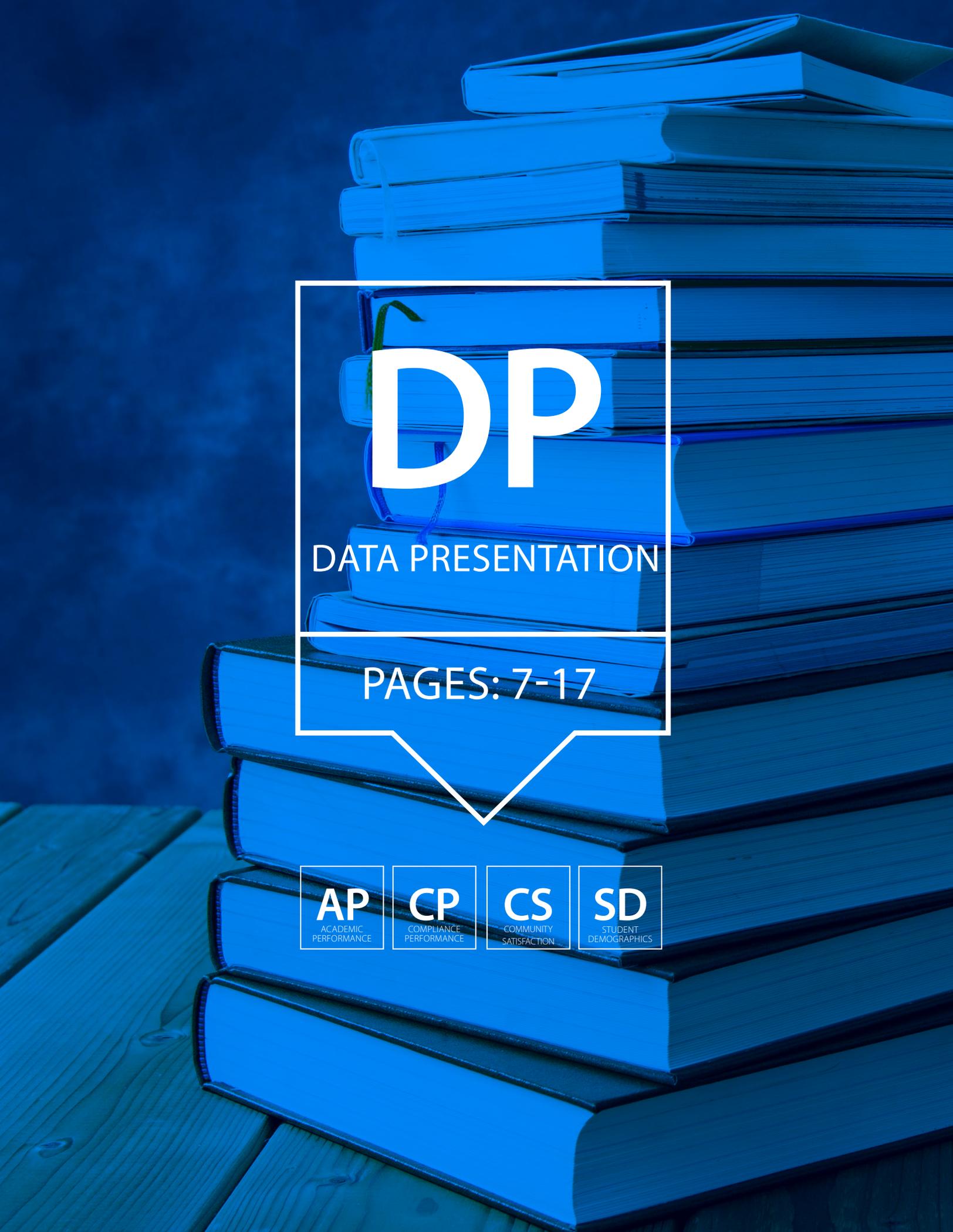
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BELA's program supports its students through high school and beyond with a team dedicated to ensuring the academic success, emotional well being, and social health of each student. The charter's college support team guides students and families through every stage of the college selection and enrollment process. This starts with students' exposure to and expression of interest in programs that likely offer a good fit. During the COVID-19 shutdown, BELA arranged for student interest sessions and admissions interviews with prospective colleges online. This year, the college support team is bringing those opportunities to BELA students within the walls of the school. Last year, every BELA graduate was accepted into college due in large part to the BELA's rigorous coursework: the charter's accredited IB program is the only program of its kind available to students in New York City Community School District ("CSD") 16. As an additional gesture of the charter's commitment to the success of its students after graduation, BELA provides a laptop computer to each student for use during their time at the charter and to keep following graduation for personal use in college.

BELA staffs four social workers, one dedicated to each grade level, who support students and families with a variety of social, emotional, and mental health needs including productive problem solving routines. The social workers also connect students to an external network of mental hygiene and physical health service providers as needed. Parents identify the charter's social workers as a valuable resource for general parenting advice and problem solving. In combination with the academic program, the college success team and social workers hold high expectations for academic achievement and personal mastery of co-academic life skills that prepares students for life beyond high school.

Based on the Institute's review of the charter's performance as posted over the charter term; a review of the Application for Charter Renewal submitted by the education corporation; a review of academic, organizational, governance, and financial documentation; and, a renewal review of the charter's academic program, the Institute finds that the charter meets the required criteria for renewal.

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees grant Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy Charter School an initial Full Term Renewal of five years.



DP

DATA PRESENTATION

PAGES: 7-17

AP

ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE

CP

COMPLIANCE
PERFORMANCE

CS

COMMUNITY
SATISFACTION

SD

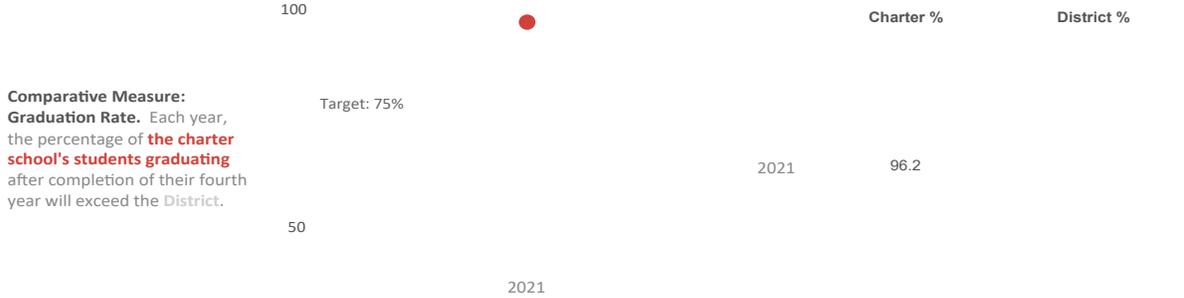
STUDENT
DEMOGRAPHICS



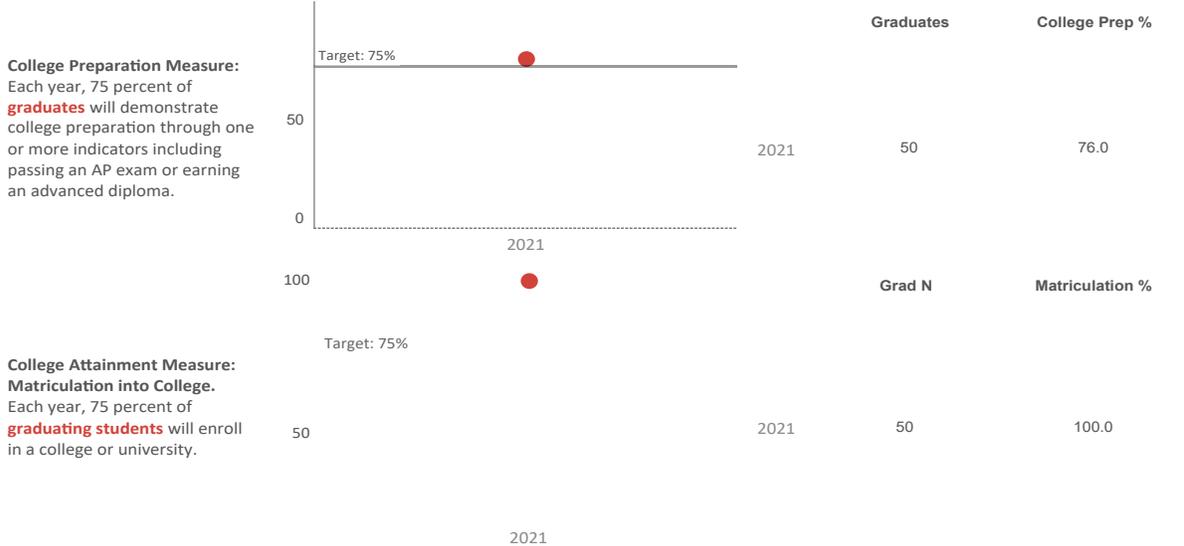
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

BROOKLYN EMERGING LEADERS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE



COLLEGE PREPARATION AND ATTAINMENT



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS

Comparative and Absolute Measure: District Comparison. Each year, the charter school's **ELA Accountability Performance Index** and the **math PI** will exceed the district's PI and the state's MIP.

NA

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE



HAS THE CHARTER MET OR COME CLOSE TO MEETING ITS ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS?

During its initial charter term, BELA met its key Accountability Plan goals in high school graduation, college preparation, English language arts (“ELA”), and mathematics. In 2020-21, the charter school produced outcomes for its first four year Graduation Cohort and exceeded the absolute and comparative targets. The charter also met or came close to meeting its science, social studies, and NCLB/ESSA goals over the term.

BELA met its graduation goal over the term. In 2020-21, the first year in which the charter school enrolled a graduating class, BELA posted a 96% graduation rate for its 2017 Graduation Cohort exceeding the absolute target of 75% by 21 percentage points. While 2020-21 district comparison data are not yet available, the charter surpassed the most recently available graduation data for CSD 16 by 36 percentage points. The charter’s first and second year cohorts consistently posted high rates of credit accumulation over the charter term, a key leading indicator that has a high correlation with graduation rates. Notably, in 2020-21, 100% of the charter’s first and second year cohorts earned enough credits to be promoted the next grade.

BELA met its college preparation goal over the term. In 2020-21, the charter school’s graduates demonstrated college preparation by attaining the college and career readiness benchmark on the SAT exam, earning an IB diploma, and meeting the college ready standard on The City University of New York’s (“CUNY’s”) intake placement test. Notably, over half the students who attempted to earn the IB diploma achieved the distinction and, more generally, 76% of graduates demonstrated college preparation using at least one of these methods. One hundred percent of the charter’s first graduating class matriculated into a two or four year college program in the fall of 2021 exceeding the target of 75%.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

ASSESSMENT

BELA uses a variety of assessments to gather data and improve instructional effectiveness. The charter administers both standardized assessments (such as Regents exams and IB assessments) and internal interim assessments (“IAs”) based on curricular units and aligned to New York State standards. BELA administers teacher created IAs on a six week cycle and expects students to complete the five Regents exams required for high school graduation by the end of 10th grade. Teachers analyze IA data to identify what content requires reteaching and how: as content embedded in subsequent units, during small group instruction, or by mandatory office hours for targeted intervention. Since 2020-21, the charter also implements project based learning assessments in Regents courses. As a fully accredited IB program, IAs for 11th and 12th grades align to the IB assessments.

CURRICULUM

BELA has an internally developed curriculum that supports teachers in their instructional planning. The charter’s layered framework sets high expectations for students and teachers. The teacher created curricular resource, referred to as the BELA blueprint, provides the scope and sequence for all BELA courses. The curriculum for 9th and 10th grades is aligned to New York State Standards to prepare students for the Regents exams that are required for a Regents Diploma. For the 11th and 12th grades, though all students are required to take at least one IB course, students follow either the IB Diploma pathway (minimally taking six IB courses) or the science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (“STEAM”) pathway. Upon reaching full 9th – 12th grade configuration, BELA adjusted the lower grades’ curricular materials to more closely align with IB requirements to better prepare students transitioning between the Regents-centered curriculum to the IB and STEAM pathways.

PEDAGOGY

Quality instruction is generally evident throughout many lessons at BELA. Teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives. As an IB charter school, instructional leaders support teachers to use an inquiry based approach, Socratic seminars, and active questioning. Classrooms at BELA are technology rich with technological tools seamlessly supporting instruction and learning during lessons. However, some lessons would benefit from a more consistent focus on high order questioning and effective checks for understanding. In most lessons, time management and pacing allow students to work independently, in whole group, and in ‘turn and talk’ pairings. BELA uses a restorative justice framework, which is grounded as a ‘ladder of support’ rather than a ‘ladder of consequences’ with students and teachers co-creating classroom expectations and norms. The charter’s consistent focus on positive culture enables teachers to employ a variety of management techniques, shared vocabulary, and engagement practices to keep students consistently engaged in learning and on track for graduation.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

BELA's instructional leadership holds high expectations for teacher performance that is evident in the charter's lesson design, instructional rigor, and exemplary results on college preparatory indicators and college going success. Staff members at each level of the organization set clear goals at the start of the year and monitor progress with supervisors throughout. For instance, the head of school sets and monitors goals for that position along with the board; the deans of the upper and lower grade programs set goals and monitor progress to meeting them with the head of school; and, teachers set and monitor progress to meeting goals with the deans of academics. The charter's thoughtful approach to teacher coaching effectively improves teacher competencies. Deans of the upper and lower grade programs observe lessons during the beginning of the year and provide informal feedback to teachers aligned to the charter's "strong start" rubric. The data from the strong start rubrics and observations throughout the start of the year form the basis for deans and teachers to set goals for the year based on a modified version of Danielson's Framework for Teaching. With the goals in place, the deans conduct several cycles of intensive coaching throughout the rest of the year. Deans of academics and the dean of student support provide coaching to the charter's co-teaching pairs to maximize the effectiveness of each adult in the classroom and ensure purposeful roles during lessons. The charter's academic deans also provide professional development to the teaching staff throughout the year. At times, teachers lead professional development sessions to address learning needs identified through observations and assessment data. BELA has in place a clear teacher evaluation process with specific criteria for success.

AT RISK PROGRAM

BELA effectively supports and closely monitors the academic success of students with disabilities, English language learners ("ELLs"), and students generally at risk of academic failure. The charter is focused on closing performance gaps between general education students and at-risk subgroups and holds teachers of all students to high expectations for achievement and learning growth. Every student at BELA successfully completes one IB class before graduating regardless of at-risk status. In supporting students with disabilities, the charter's dean of student support oversees co-teachers and co-teaching pairs. BELA's special education teachers thoughtfully monitor student progress toward meeting individualized education program ("IEP") goals and adjust programming if necessary. Special education teachers rely on the technology to tailor and personalize learning supports to meet individual student needs. Outside of classroom instruction, students with additional learning needs meet with teachers during regular office hours. During this time, teachers use data from interim and other assessments to identify concepts for additional work and re-teaching.

As with students with disabilities, the charter's approach to supporting ELLs relies on strong collaboration between general classroom teachers and co-teachers. The dean of student support meets with ELLs individually to assess language acquisition needs and works with co-teachers to ensure appropriate supports are in place. This year, the charter lacks typical data about ELLs' language proficiency because the state exams to measure those data were cancelled during the COVID-19 pandemic closure. The charter is using its IAs to determine the needs of ELLs and ensure support is in place to meet them.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

BELA has a clear organizational structure and sufficient staff members to carry out its mission. The charter’s instructional leadership, its student life team (“SLT”), and its college success team have clear and distinct responsibilities but integrate with each other to holistically support the success of every BELA student. The SLT develops a positive culture among students and adults at the charter. Culture setting relies on acknowledgment and acceptance of every individual in the charter and implores each person’s responsibility to continuously maintain positive attitudes and relationships. In cases when student behavior risks personal safety or otherwise when necessary, the teachers and the SLT employ appropriate consequences. BELA’s dean of advancement establishes and coordinates various community partnerships to ensure the charter meets the community development part of its mission. The head of school coordinates the activities of these various departments with clear and consistent oversight and support from the board. Although enrollment has dipped below the charter’s collar of 80% of the chartered enrollment during most years of the charter term, conservative budgeting practices enabled the charter to maintain its core functions without budgetary cuts. Overall, the charter thoughtfully monitors its operations and the effectiveness of its academic, social, and college preparatory programs and makes adjustments when necessary.

BOARD OVERSIGHT & GOVERNANCE

BELA’s board draws on a variety of relevant skills and experience to effectively govern the charter, oversee its operations and program, and meet the charter’s Accountability Plan goals. At the end of its initial charter term, the board is focused on developing new monitoring tools to ensure the charter’s sustainability throughout subsequent charter terms including an expanded academic dashboard that contains specific achievement data about IAs and IB program results. The board also has clear financial goals and operational priorities, along with milestones and monitoring procedures, to ensure the charter’s financial viability into the future. In service of meeting those goals, the board effectively supports the charter’s dean of advancement in managing student recruitment and marketing. During this first charter term, the board established clear processes and expectations for its self-evaluation and the evaluation of the head of school. BELA’s board aligns its goals with those of the head of school in order to use a common data set to monitor the performance of the board, the head of school, and the progress of the charter overall. In the next charter term, if granted, the board plans to recruit members with specific experience that will enhance its knowledge base including a member with experience in IB programs. The board is also working to reconnect with the charter community as it emerges and recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Functionally, BELA’s board ensures its effective governance of the charter by implementing, maintaining, and abiding by adequate and appropriate policies, systems, and processes. Meeting minutes demonstrate the board’s regular reviews and, when necessary, updates of by-laws and charter policies. The board submits minutes to the Institute that demonstrate the board’s compliance with the Open Meetings Law and clearly reflect charter business. The board demonstrates a clear understanding of its role in holding the charter leadership accountable for academic results and fiscal soundness. The board’s committee structure and processes enable it to receive regular monthly reports from the academic, governance, finance, and external affairs committees containing detailed information regarding the academics, finances, and larger needs of stakeholders. The board manages conflicts of interest in a transparent manner in accordance with applicable laws.

COMPLIANCE REPORTING



HAS THE CHARTER SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLIED WITH APPLICABLE LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS, AND PROVISIONS OF ITS CHARTER?

The education corporation substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations, and provisions of its charter. During the current charter term, the education corporation demonstrates a clear record of compliance with the terms of its charter including the timely submission of required reporting to the Institute.

BROOKLYN EMERGING LEADERS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

By-laws	The education corporation's by-laws require a minor adjustment to the Executive Committee formation per New York Education Law §226. The Institute will work with the board to update the by-laws accordingly.
Complaints	The Institute did not receive any formal complaints regarding this charter during the charter term.
Compliance	The Institute issued no violation letters during the charter term.

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION

To report on parent satisfaction with the charter’s program, the Institute used satisfaction survey data, information gathered from a focus group of parents representing a cross section of students, and data regarding persistence in enrollment.

PARENT SATISFACTION: SURVEY RESULTS

RESPONSE RATE 90%	OVERALL SATISFACTION 95%	TRUST 97%	EFFECTIVE CHARTER LEADERSHIP 92%	STRONG FAMILY COMMUNITY TIES 95%
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Parent Survey Data

The Institute compiled data from the charter’s 2020-21 family satisfaction survey. In 2020-21, 90% of families who received the survey responded. Parents express deep satisfaction with the charter, its program, and its staff.

Parent Focus Group

The Institute asks all charters 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 charter for multiple years, parents of students new to the charter, parents of students receiving general education services, parents of students with special needs, and parents of ELLs. Parents and alumnae are satisfied with the charter’s deep commitment to sending every graduate to college ready to succeed. Parents also appreciate the partnership the charter forges with them during regular parent nights and consistent contact with individual teachers.

Public Comments

In accordance with the Act, the Institute notified the district in which the charter school is located regarding the Application for Charter Renewal. The full text of any written comments received from the district appears below, which also includes a summary of any public comments.

The NYCDOE held its required hearing on BELA’s renewal application on October 18, 2021 by videoconference. Four people spoke in favor of the application. The head of school and co-founder spoke to the charter’s mission to ensure students graduate from college. The head of school highlighted the charter’s focus on academics as well as building on its core values of sisterhood, scholarship, strength, and service. During the charter term, the IB program approved the charter as an IB school and 55% of students received the IB diploma and 100% received IB credit saving students financial dollars upon transitioning to college. The charter leader also touched upon the ethnic studies and social emotional programs providing social workers at each grade level and a power group course which provide weekly small group therapy. The dean of advancement and co-founder spoke

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION

to the charter's 96% graduation and college acceptance rate with 75% of students being first generation college students. Speakers also highlighted the charter's requirement for 100 hours of community service and 100% student participation in summer engagement giving back to the local community. The charter provides summer programming, which includes mentorship and study abroad opportunities. A student spoke to the positive, small environment where she is a better version of herself. No one spoke in opposition.

Persistence in Enrollment An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2020-21, 85% of BELA students returned from the previous year. Student persistence data from previous years of the charter term is available in student demographics section of the report.

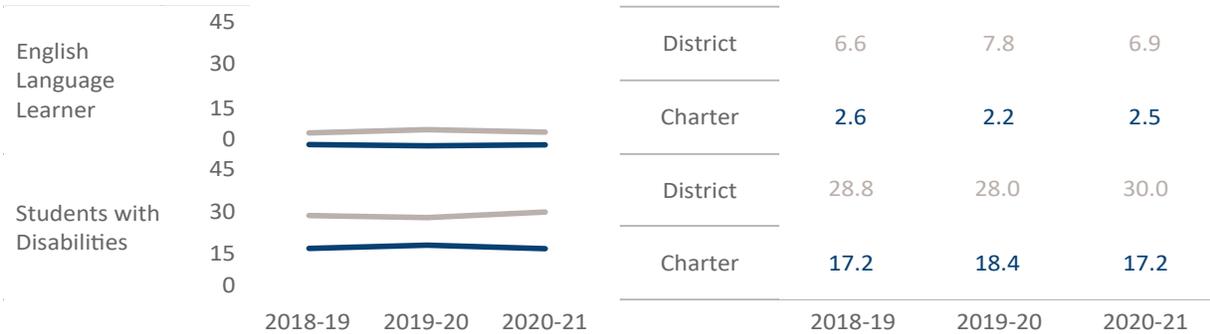
The Institute derived the statistical information on persistence in enrollment from its database. No comparative data from the NYCDOE or the New York State Education Department ("NYSED") is available to the Institute to provide either district or statewide context.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

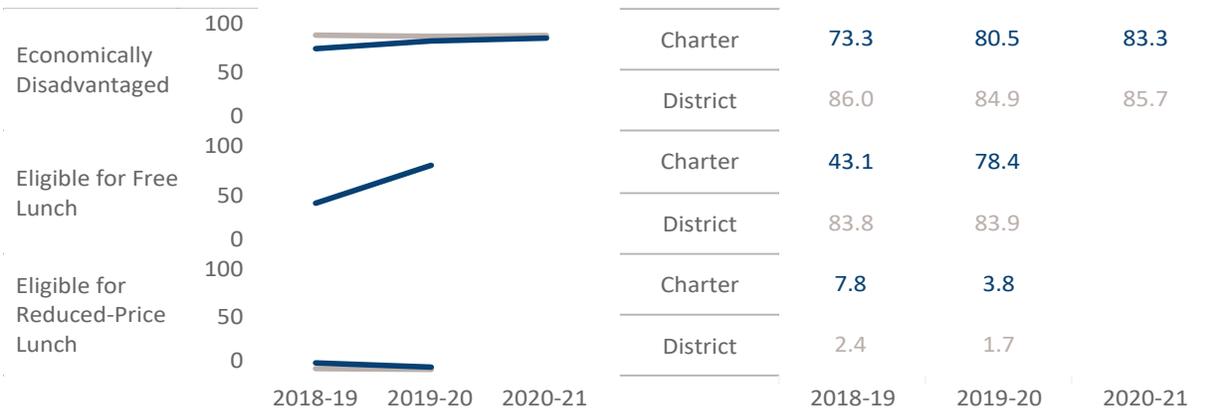
Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy Charter School

Brooklyn CSD 16

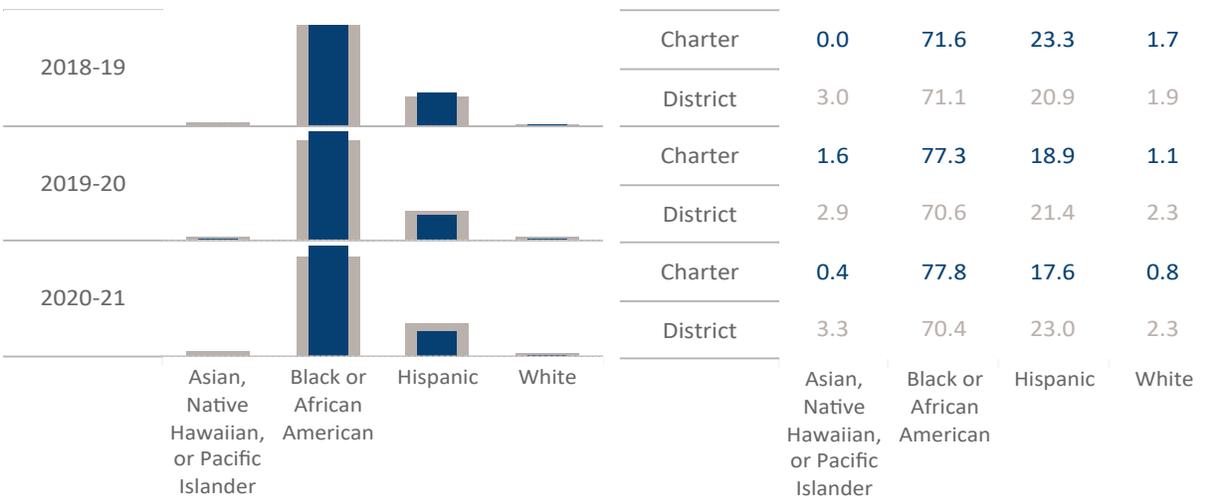
Student Demographics: Special Populations



Student Demographics: Free/Reduced Lunch



Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity



* Data reported in these charts reflect BEDS day enrollment counts as reported by the NYSED except for the charter's 2020-21 ELL enrollment which reflects data reported by the education corporation and validated by the Institute.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy Charter School



Brooklyn CSD 16

	ISS Rate	OSS Rate
2019	1.7	4.3
2020	1.1	4.3
2021	0.4	1.3

Data suitable for comparison are not available. The percentage rate shown here is calculated using the method employed by 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

2018-19	81.0
2019-20	83.6
2020-21	85.4

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

	2019	2020	2021
	0	0	0

Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2020-21

		Target	Charter School
enrollment	economically disadvantaged	79.4	82.9
	English language learners	3.1	2.5
	students with disabilities	20.8	17.1
retention	economically disadvantaged	86.2	88.6
	English language learners	86.0	85.7
	students with disabilities	82.2	91.2

* Data reported in these charts reflect information reported by the education corporation and validated by the Institute.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION TARGETS

As required by Education Law § 2851(4)(e), a charter 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, ELLs, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch program. The Institute examines each charter's progress toward meeting or coming close to meeting its targets over the charter term as well as the efforts it has and will put in place to meet or continue to meet those targets. Note that BELA's efforts are stellar given that it only recruits female students, and the Institute uses targets developed for coed charters.

BELA's efforts to enroll and retain students with disabilities, ELLs, and economically disadvantaged students are effective. The charter's dean of advancement leads all recruitment efforts with oversight and support from the board. Although the charter's proportional enrollment of students with disabilities is slightly below its target by three percentage points, the charter meets its other targets. Importantly, the charter's retention of students in all three at risk subgroups exceeds its targets during the charter term. BELA conducts the following recruitment efforts:

- holding one-on-one meetings with middle school guidance counselors and community meetings in CSD 16 to share information about the charter's high school program;
- meeting with Brooklyn-based administrators for the Administration for Children's Services to share information about BELA;
- making available in Spanish all printed informational materials about the charter;
- identifying students with acute learning needs in literacy and supporting them to achieving academically on grade level;
- providing close, personalized mentorship for students along with social and emotional supports for students and families designed to meet the specific needs of economically disadvantaged families; and,
- maintaining an inclusive environment where all students have opportunities to achieve at high levels and have access to IB coursework.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

IS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION FISCALLY SOUND?

BELA is fiscally sound based on the Institute’s review of the fiscal evidence collected through the renewal review. The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard presents color-coded tables and charts indicating that the education corporation has demonstrated fiscal soundness over the majority of the charter term.⁴



DOES THE CHARTER OPERATE PURSUANT TO A FISCAL PLAN IN WHICH IT CREATES REALISTIC BUDGETS THAT IT MONITORS AND ADJUSTS WHEN APPROPRIATE?

BELA 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:

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
The charter has clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures.	+
Board members, charter leaders, and staff members contribute to the budget process, as appropriate.	+
The education corporation frequently compares its long-range fiscal plan for the charter to actual progress and adjusts it to meet changing conditions.	+
The charter routinely analyzes budget variances; the board addresses material variances and makes necessary revisions.	+
Actual expenses are equal to, or less than, actual revenue with no material exceptions.	+

4. 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 charter.

“+” : This indicator is generally present.

“-” : This indicator is generally not present.

“P” : The education corporation is progressing toward this indicator being present.

“N/A” : This indicator is not applicable.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

DOES THE CHARTER MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE INTERNAL CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES?

The charter maintains appropriate internal controls and procedures. The following elements are generally present:

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
The charter has a history of sound fiscal policies, procedures and practices, and maintains appropriate internal controls.	+
The charter's most recent audit report was free of any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal controls.	+
The charter reviews and updates the BELA Financial Policies and Procedures manual on a regular basis.	AUGUST 2021

DOES THE CHARTER COMPLY WITH FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

BELA complies with financial reporting requirements by providing the SUNY Trustees and NYSED with required financial reports that are on time, complete, and follow generally accepted accounting principles. The following reports are generally filed in a timely, accurate, and complete manner:

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
Annual financial statement audit reports, including federal Single Audit report, if applicable.	+
Annual budgets.	+
Un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses, and enrollment.	+
Bi-monthly enrollment reports to the sending districts and if applicable, to NYSED including proper documentation regarding the level of special education services provided to students.	+
Grant expenditure reports.	+

FISCAL ANALYSIS

DOES THE CHARTER MAINTAIN ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO ENSURE STABLE OPERATIONS?

BELA maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. Critical financial needs of the charter are not dependent on variable income (grants, donations and fundraising). The following elements are generally present:

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
The charter maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly.	+
The charter maintains adequate liquid reserves to fund expenses in the event of income loss (generally 30 days).	+
The charter prepares and monitors cash flow projections.	+
If the charter includes philanthropy in its budget, it monitors progress toward its development goals on a periodic basis.	+
If necessary, the charter pursues district state aid intercepts with NYSED to ensure adequate per pupil funding.	N/A
The charter accumulates unrestricted net assets that are equal to or exceed two percent of the charter's operating budget for the upcoming year.	+
The charter is in compliance with all loan covenants.	N/A

BELA has reported net operating surpluses in each year of the charter's initial term accumulating \$1.6 million in net assets as of June 30, 2021. The charter is a fiscally strong entity with 4.3 months of cash on hand to pay liabilities due shortly. BELA has funded and maintained \$75,000 in a separate escrow account in case of dissolution as required by the SUNY charter agreement.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

BROOKLYN EMERGING LEADERS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

CHARTER INFORMATION

BALANCE SHEET

Opened 2017-18

Assets

Current Assets

	2016 17	2017 18	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21
Cash and Cash Equivalents - GRAPH 1	-	160,724	169,858	1,042,494	1,522,514
Grants and Contracts Receivable	-	6,723	115,287	128,297	175,511
Accounts Receivable	-	35,913	-	-	-
Prepaid Expenses	-	3,000	-	3,000	9,024
Contributions and Other Receivables	-	-	-	-	-
Total Current Assets - GRAPH 1	-	206,360	285,145	1,173,791	1,707,049
Property, Building and Equipment, net	-	140,871	203,872	152,803	91,929
Other Assets	-	25,000	50,015	75,041	75,048
Total Assets - GRAPH 1	-	372,231	539,032	1,401,635	1,874,026

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	-	46,641	274,900	152,250	250,576
Accrued Payroll and Benefits	-	76,899	-	-	-
Deferred Revenue	-	-	-	37,952	-
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	-	-	-	-	-
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Current Liabilities - GRAPH 1	-	123,540	274,900	190,202	250,576
Deferred Rent/Lease Liability	-	-	-	-	-
All other L-T debt and notes payable, net current maturities	-	-	-	394,522	-
Total Liabilities - GRAPH 1	-	123,540	274,900	584,724	250,576

Net Assets

Without Donor Restrictions	-	248,691	214,117	716,911	1,523,450
With Donor Restrictions	-	-	50,015	100,000	100,000
Total Net Assets	-	248,691	264,132	816,911	1,623,450
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	-	372,231	539,032	1,401,635	1,874,026

ACTIVITIES

Operating Revenue

Resident Student Enrollment	-	887,948	1,786,847	2,918,014	3,824,343
Students with Disabilities	-	153,055	228,829	309,165	355,785
Grants and Contracts					
State and local	-	249,040	-	-	252,312
Federal - Title and IDEA	-	69,366	574,059	-	-
Federal - Other	-	488,744	-	294,348	394,522
Other	-	22,692	-	-	-
NYC DoE Rental Assistance	-	-	-	-	-
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program	-	52,445	-	-	-
Total Operating Revenue	-	1,923,290	2,589,735	3,521,527	4,826,962

Expenses

Regular Education	-	1,404,790	1,853,961	2,226,125	3,249,115
SPED	-	457,262	434,883	374,895	244,752
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Program Services	-	1,862,052	2,288,844	2,601,020	3,493,867
Management and General	-	587,305	434,894	552,417	711,436
Fundraising	-	21,313	22,111	17,606	19,930
Total Expenses - GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4	-	2,470,670	2,745,849	3,171,043	4,225,233
Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations	-	(547,380)	(156,114)	350,484	601,729

Support and Other Revenue

Contributions	-	793,397	168,686	178,833	196,954
Fundraising	-	17	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Income	-	2,657	2,869	23,462	7,856
Net assets released from restriction	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support and Other Revenue	-	796,071	171,555	202,295	204,810

Total Unrestricted Revenue

Total Unrestricted Revenue	-	2,719,361	2,761,290	3,623,822	5,031,772
Total Temporally Restricted Revenue	-	-	-	100,000	-
Total Revenue - GRAPHS 2 & 3	-	2,719,361	2,761,290	3,723,822	5,031,772

Change in Net Assets

Net Assets - Beginning of Year - GRAPH 2	-	248,691	15,441	552,779	806,539
Prior Year Adjustment(s)	-	-	248,691	264,132	816,911
Net Assets - End of Year - GRAPH 2	-	248,691	264,132	816,911	1,623,450

FISCAL ANALYSIS

BROOKLYN EMERGING LEADERS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

CHARTER INFORMATION - (Continued)

Functional Expense Breakdown

	2016 17	2017 18	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21
Personnel Service	-	678,678	646,929	1,307,452	861,558
Administrative Staff Personnel	-	691,986	1,045,436	545,244	1,790,317
Instructional Personnel	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Instructional Personnel	-	-	-	-	-
Personnel Services (Combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Salaries and Staff	-	1,370,664	1,692,365	1,852,696	2,651,875
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes	-	255,159	322,006	385,999	494,627
Retirement	-	15,961	32,457	-	36,073
Management Company Fees	-	-	-	-	-
Building and Land Rent / Lease / Facility Financing	-	6,750	-	-	18,435
Staff Development	-	56,898	42,498	27,607	73,437
Professional Fees, Consultant & Purchased Services	-	207,581	215,267	301,598	354,533
Marketing / Recruitment	-	50,343	18,839	28,274	40,929
Student Supplies, Materials & Services	-	126,014	120,344	120,501	121,567
Depreciation	-	41,597	67,999	95,244	71,946
Other	-	339,702	234,074	359,124	361,811
Total Expenses	-	2,470,670	2,745,849	3,171,043	4,225,233

CHARTER ANALYSIS

ENROLLMENT

	2016 17	2017 18	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21
Original Chartered Enrollment	-	100	200	290	371
Final Chartered Enrollment (includes any revisions)	-	85	170	246	314
Actual Enrollment - GRAPH 4	-	61	116	183	237
Chartered Grades	-	9	9-10	9-11	9-11
Final Chartered Grades (includes any revisions)	-	-	-	-	-

Primary School District: NYC CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

Per Pupil Funding (Weighted Avg of All Districts)	2016 17	2017 18	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21
	-	-	14,527	15,307	16,150
Increase over prior year	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	5.1%	5.2%

PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

Revenue	2016 17	2017 18	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21
Operating	-	31,529	22,325	19,243	20,367
Other Revenue and Support	-	13,050	1,479	1,105	864
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	44,580	23,804	20,349	21,231
Expenses	2016 17	2017 18	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21
Program Services	-	30,525	19,731	14,213	14,742
Management and General, Fundraising	-	9,977	3,940	3,115	3,086
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	40,503	23,671	17,328	17,828
% of Program Services	0.0%	75.4%	83.4%	82.0%	82.7%
% of Management and Other	0.0%	24.6%	16.6%	18.0%	17.3%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses - GRAPH 5	0.0%	10.1%	0.6%	17.4%	19.1%
% of Revenue Expended on Facilities	#DIV/0!	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%

Student to Faculty Ratio

	2016 17	2017 18	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21
	-	6.1	8.3	9.6	9.1

Faculty to Admin Ratio

	2016 17	2017 18	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21
	-	1.7	2.0	2.7	3.3

Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - GRAPH 6

Score	2016 17	2017 18	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21
0.0	2.0	1.5	2.8	3.0	
Fiscally Strong 1.5 - 3.0 / Fiscally Adequate 1.0 - 1.4 / Fiscally Needs Monitoring < 1.0	N/A	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong

Working Capital - GRAPH 7

	2016 17	2017 18	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21
Net Working Capital	0	82,820	10,245	983,589	1,456,473
As % of Unrestricted Revenue	0.0%	3.0%	0.4%	27.1%	28.9%
Working Capital (Current) Ratio Score	0.0	1.7	1.0	6.2	6.8
Risk (Low ≥ 3.0 / Medium 1.4 - 2.9 / High < 1.4)	N/A	MEDIUM	HIGH	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent ≥ 3.0 / Good 1.4 - 2.9 / Poor < 1.4)	N/A	Good	Poor	Excellent	Excellent

Quick (Acid Test) Ratio

	2016 17	2017 18	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21
Score	0.0	1.6	1.0	6.2	6.8
Risk (Low ≥ 2.5 / Medium 1.0 - 2.4 / High < 1.0)	N/A	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent ≥ 2.5 / Good 1.0 - 2.4 / Poor < 1.0)	N/A	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent

Debt to Asset Ratio - GRAPH 7

	2016 17	2017 18	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21
Score	0.0	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.1
Risk (Low < 0.50 / Medium 0.51 - .95 / High > 1.0)	N/A	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent < 0.50 / Good 0.51 - .95 / Poor > 1.0)	N/A	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent

Months of Cash - GRAPH 8

	2016 17	2017 18	2018 19	2019 20	2020 21
Score	0.0	0.8	0.7	3.9	4.3
Risk (Low > 3 mo. / Medium 1 - 3 mo. / High < 1 mo.)	N/A	HIGH	HIGH	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent > 3 mo. / Good 1 - 3 mo. / Poor < 1 mo.)	N/A	Poor	Poor	Excellent	Excellent

FUTURE PLANS



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

BELA is an academic success as demonstrated by its inaugural graduating class's high graduation and college acceptance and matriculation rate. The charter presents plans for the future that are reasonable, feasible, and achievable.

BROOKLYN EMERGING LEADERS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

Plans for the Charter'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. During a subsequent charter term, if renewed, BELA will continue to implement its college preparatory educational program for students in 9th – 12th grade.

Plans for Board Oversight & Governance. Notwithstanding plans to expand its knowledge base and experiential skill set through new membership, the board will continue its same oversight functions in a subsequent charter term, if granted. The board intends to expand its membership to include expertise in finance, law, and high school academics, preferably someone with experience in IB programs.

Fiscal & Facility Plans. Based on evidence collected through the renewal review, including a review of the five year financial plan, BELA presents a reasonable and appropriate fiscal plan for the next charter term including charter budgets that are feasible and achievable. While BELA struggled with slightly low enrollment until the last year of the charter term, it budgets conservatively and has improved its fiscal measures over time. The charter intends to reduce enrollment slightly, which will hopefully keep it within the collar provided by the charter agreement in the next charter term.

BELA plans to remain in its current NYCDOE facility during the next charter term. The charter plans to make improvements to the facility that will benefit the program and the two other schools in the facility. These improvements include adding air conditioning to the gym and library, increasing security, and improving signage. These improvements will be funded through federal grant allocations.

	CURRENT	END OF NEXT CHARTER TERM
Enrollment	314	300
Grade Span	9-12	9-12
Teaching Staff	24	24
Days of Instruction	185	185

BELA

Ax

APPENDICES

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BROOKLYN EMERGING LEADERS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CHAIR	TRUSTEES
Diane Nathaniel	Dr. Andre McKenzie
VICE CHAIR	Stacy Haislip
Brenda Canty	Iymanni Aytes
TREASURER	Alma Mendis
Michael Lackwood	Deborah Hall
	Mellanie Garner
	Jonathan Dill
	Christina Socias

CHARTER LEADERS

HEAD OF SCHOOL
<i>Nicia Fullwood (2017-18 to Present)</i>

CHARTER CHARACTERISTICS

CHARTER YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2017-18	85	61	72%	9
2018-19	170	116	68%	9-10
2019-20	246	183	74%	9-11
2020-21	314	237	75%	9-12
2021-22	314	260	83%	9-12



TIMELINE OF CHARTER RENEWAL



CHARTER VISIT HISTORY

SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
2017-18	First Year Visit	February 28, 2018
2021-22	Initial Renewal	October 5, 2021

CONDUCT OF THE RENEWAL REVIEW

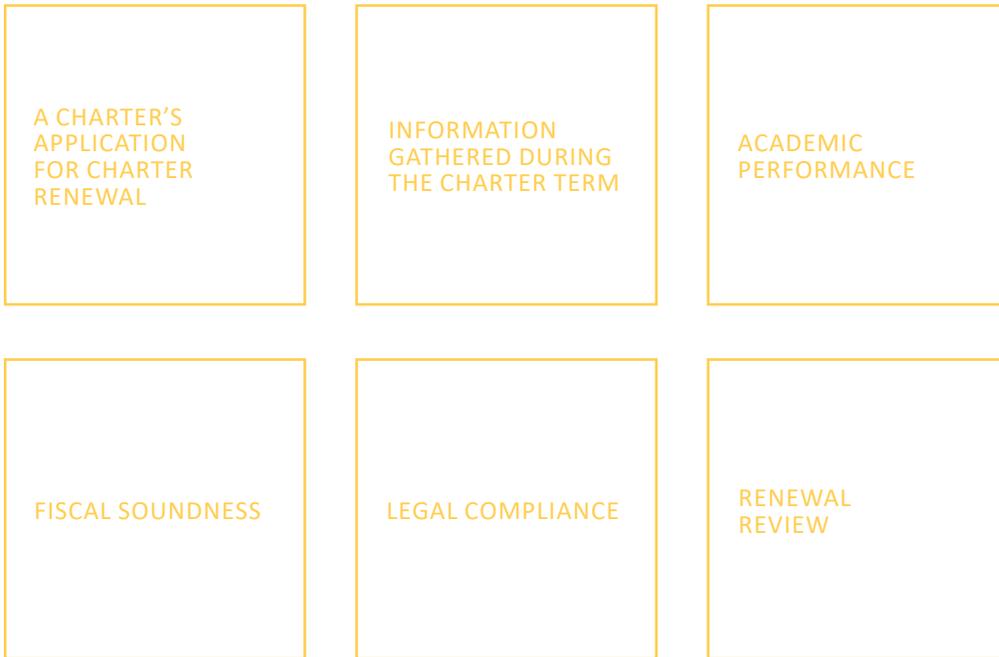
DATE(S) OF REVIEW	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
October 5, 2021	Jeff Wasbes	Executive Deputy Director for Accountability
	Sonia Park	External Consultant

The sections below contain general information about the SUNY Trustees’ and Institute’s approach to renewal.

REPORT FORMAT

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

THE INSTITUTE MAKES ALL RENEWAL RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON



Most importantly, the Institute analyzes the charter’s record of academic performance and the extent to which it has met its academic Accountability Plan goals.

1. Revised September 4, 2013 and available on the [Institute’s website](#).

REPORT FORMAT

This renewal recommendation report compiles evidence using the *State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks* (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”),² which specify in detail what a successful charter 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 charter has made an adequate case for renewal.

RENEWAL QUESTIONS



IS THE CHARTER AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

IS THE CHARTER AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

IS THE CHARTER FISCALLY SOUND?

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

This report contains appendices that provide additional statistical and organizationally related information including a statistical charter overview, copies of any school district comments on the Application for Charter Renewal, and the SUNY Fiscal Dashboard information for the charter. If applicable, the appendices also include additional information about the education corporation, its charters and student achievement of those charters.



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](#).

2. Version 5.0, May 2012, are available on the [Institute’s website](#).



IS THE CHARTER AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS? THE INFORMATION BELOW HIGHLIGHTS THE INSTITUTE'S AND SUNY TRUSTEES' APPROACH TO ACCOUNTABILITY PLANS FOR EACH SUNY AUTHORIZED CHARTER.

At the beginning of the Accountability Period,³ the charter developed and adopted an Accountability Plan that set academic goals for performance in the key subjects of ELA and mathematics, as well as science and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA"). High school Accountability Plans also include goals for High School Graduation, College Preparation, and Social Studies. 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 all required Accountability Plan measures to determine goal attainment. The Act requires charters be held "accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results"⁴ and states the educational programs at a charter school must "meet or exceed the student performance standards adopted by the board of regents"⁵ for other public schools. SUNY's required accountability measures rest on performance as measured by statewide assessments. Historically, SUNY's required measures include measures that present charters':

ABSOLUTE PERFORMANCE, I.E., WHAT PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORE AT A CERTAIN PROFICIENCY ON STATE EXAMS?

COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE, I.E., HOW DID THE CHARTER DO AS COMPARED TO SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT AND SCHOOLS THAT SERVE SIMILAR POPULATIONS OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS?

GROWTH PERFORMANCE, I.E., HOW MUCH DID THE CHARTER GROW STUDENT PERFORMANCE AS COMPARED TO THE GROWTH OF SIMILARLY SITUATED STUDENTS?

Absolute, comparative, and growth achievement provide a basis for triangulating charter performance within each academic goal area. Furthermore, every SUNY authorized charter school may propose additional, mission aligned goals and measures of success when crafting its Accountability Plan. The final Accountability Plan adopted by the education corporation's board and approved by the Institute is included in the charter and frames the analysis of the charter's student achievement results.

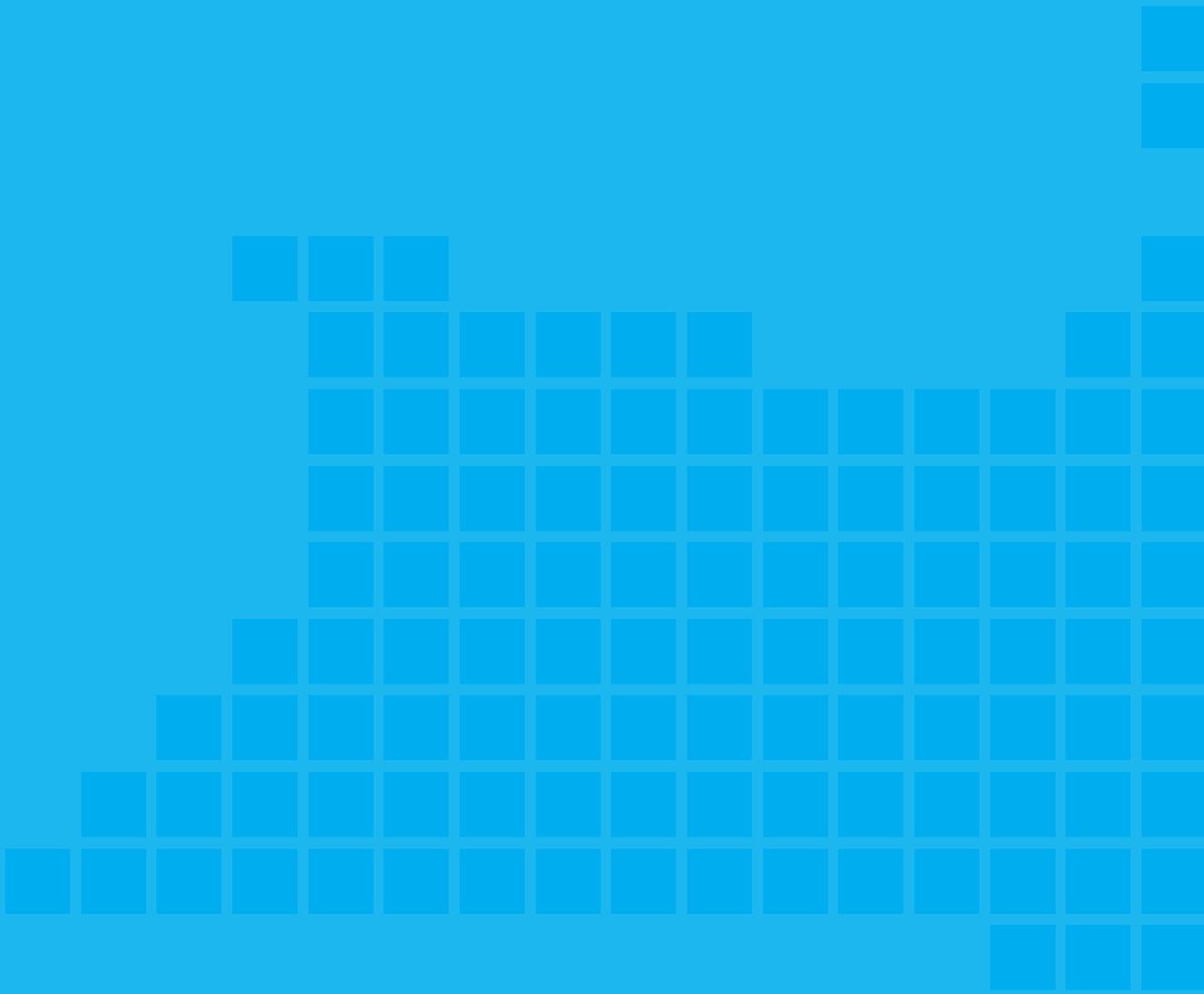
The Institute consistently emphasizes comparative and growth performance over absolute measures in its analysis of goal attainment. Nevertheless, the Institute analyzes every measure included in a charter's Accountability Plan to determine its level of academic success, including the extent to which each charter has established and maintained a record of high performance and demonstrated progress toward meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals throughout the charter term. Whether or not a charter includes additional measures in its Accountability Plan, the Institute considers all available evidence of charter performance at the time of renewal.

3. Because the SUNY Trustees make a renewal decision before student achievement results for the final year of a charter term become available, the Accountability Period ends with the school year prior to the final year of the charter term. For a charter in a subsequent charter term, the Accountability Period covers the final year of the previous charter term and ends with the school year prior to the final year of the current charter term. In this renewal report, the Institute uses "charter term" and "Accountability Period" interchangeably.

4. Education Law § 2850(2)(f).

5. Education Law § 2854(1)(d).

State assessment data in ELA, mathematics, and science in 3rd – 8th grade form the basis of data required to analyze the required accountability measures for elementary and middle educational programs. These data were not available in 2019-20 following the state’s cancellation of all state exams during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although schools participated in state assessments in ELA and mathematics in 2020-21, the participation rates that year were inconsistent. The resulting data are not sufficiently reliable or credible for cogent analyses of charter academic performance. In response, the Institute provided all SUNY authorized charter schools a framework for the analysis of norm-referenced and internally developed exam data. To every extent possible, the Institute attempted to maintain a consistent framework of examining absolute, comparative, and growth performance. During 2019-20 and 2020-21, charters reported data on a variety of norm-referenced and internally developed assessments to demonstrate student academic success. This renewal report contemplates charter performance during the pandemic through the lenses of absolute and growth performance on norm-referenced and internally developed ELA, mathematics, and science assessments along with high school completion and college readiness data.



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York