



**THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS
INSTITUTE**

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT
FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER
SCHOOL*

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Review Date: November 2 – 3, 2022

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The State University of New York

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CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL

610 Lake Street, Elmira | Grades: K-6 | Elmira City School District

The State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) approved the original charter for Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School (“Finn Academy”) on June 4, 2014. The charter opened in fall 2015, serving 180 students in Kindergarten – 3rd grade.

“ MISSION

At Finn Academy, a Kindergarten through 6th charter school, we promote an inclusive, rigorous, and nurturing environment to best prepare our children for their future and to cultivate a community of scholars, leaders, and friends.

CURRENT CHARTER

Serves: Kindergarten – 6th
Chartered Enrollment:
399
Charter Expiration:
July 31, 2023

PROPOSED FUTURE CHARTER

Serves: Kindergarten – 6th
Chartered Enrollment:
399
Charter Expiration:
July 31, 2028

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Experiential learning activities that connect classroom lessons with real life situations;



Community connections through planned partnerships and field studies;



College and career readiness for all scholars;



Social emotional and physical wellness including twice daily crew advisory sessions and schoolwide dance and fitness instruction; and,



Systematic professional development and support for teachers strategically aligned to schoolwide goals.



CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND



NOTEWORTHY

Although access was limited in recent years due to the pandemic, experiential learning opportunities that connect classroom lessons with real life situations and community field studies have always been core elements of the Finn Academy program. At the start of the 2022-23 school year, instructional leaders again prioritized these learning opportunities. The charter’s experiential learning coordinator worked with teachers to create connections to multiple expedition units for each grade level, wherein students explore a theme with an emphasis on cultural competency from different perspectives and across content areas. At the time of the renewal visit, all

students had already participated in at least one community field study centered on science and social studies themes and engaged in hands-on projects to expand understanding of the expedition unit topic. For example, in a 1st grade tools expedition, which used food and utensils as a central theme, students examined maps noting the utensils most commonly used and predominant foods in areas across the globe, participated in a workshop on the proper use of chopsticks, and sampled Chinese food provided by a restaurant operated by two students’ family members.

RESPONSE TO INTERRUPTED INSTRUCTION CAUSED BY COVID-19

Finn Academy utilizes a variety of strategies to support students and families to minimize disruptions to scholars’ learning both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the initial statewide facility closures, the school prioritized offering in-person instruction five days per week while also providing a remote learning option. During the 2020-21 school year, over 70% of Finn Academy scholars engaged in full time in-person instruction, in contrast to the Elmira City School District, which only offered hybrid instruction during that period. Enhancements to the charter’s assessment and data analysis systems over the current charter term ensure that teachers and instructional leaders use multiple data sources to drive classroom instruction, including NWEA MAP (“MAP”) for English language arts (“ELA”), fluency, and mathematics; Go Math! formative assessments; mock New York State exams; and, classroom checks for understanding throughout the lesson. These data are collected in an accessible spreadsheet and populated with scores from the prior year so teachers can easily examine trends in student growth over time and across subject areas. Daily skill labs allow teachers to accelerate learning by differentiating instruction for small groups of students based on misconceptions and skill gaps identified during whole class lessons or recent assessment data. During these labs, students work closely with interventionists and classroom teachers to address specific standards in which students require additional support. Using data from ongoing academic progress monitoring, the charter also invites students struggling academically to participate in a high dose tutoring program through a partnership with Elmira College. Classroom teachers and interventionists provide tutors with tailored materials for students based on identified needs to ensure that tutors are equipped to deliver high quality, aligned curricula.

RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

FULL-TERM RENEWAL

Full-Term Renewal. *The Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) recommends the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten – 6th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal, with a projected total enrollment of 399 students. The Institute makes this recommendation based on Finn Academy: An Elmira 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 a **Subsequent Full-Term Renewal**, a charter must demonstrate that it has met or come close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals.

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.²

1. SUNY Renewal Policies (p. 14) are available on the [Institute’s website](#).

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During its three year charter term, Finn Academy is an academic success having come close to meeting its key Accountability Plan goals. The information below demonstrates the key findings for the SUNY Trustees and highlights the successes of the charter.

FINDINGS & INFORMATION

Is the charter an academic success?

Finn Academy is an academic success. The charter implements an effective academic program that enabled it to come close to meeting both its ELA and mathematics Accountability Plan goals and meet its science goal in the current charter term. Finn Academy demonstrates success in the following ways:

- The charter posted strong achievement in ELA and mathematics during the only year with credible state exam results in the current three year charter term. In 2021-22, Finn outperformed the district by 15 percentage points in ELA and 13 percentage points in mathematics.
- Finn Academy’s ELA state exam proficiency rate for students with disabilities exceeded that of students with disabilities in the district of comparison by 20 percentage points. During the previous charter term, the Institute noted that the performance of students with disabilities at the charter on state assessments was an area of concern. Since the last renewal, Finn has achieved a 25 percentage point increase in the performance of Finn Academy students with disabilities on the state ELA exam.
- Finn Academy has made substantial improvements to its programming for English language learners (“ELLs”), students with disabilities, and students struggling academically over the current charter term. With the addition of several positions, including a full time ELL coordinator and two new mathematics and literacy interventionists, as well as an expanded and restructured instructional leadership team, the charter is well equipped to support teachers in meeting the needs of all students.

Is the charter an effective, viable organization?

Finn Academy is an effective, viable organization. During the current charter term, the charter’s board decided to maintain the Kindergarten — 6th grade configuration to focus on strengthening the charter’s academics, rather than adding additional grade levels as it had previously planned. By both qualitative and quantitative metrics, the charter is successful in implementing the intended improvements to the educational program. The new organizational leadership structure, which consists of a school leader and chief operations officer (“COO”), establishes clear lines of accountability and communication to better support the delivery of the academic program. The charter continues to remain faithful to its mission while adding new leadership positions and strengthening existing roles.

Is the charter fiscally sound?

Finn Academy is fiscally sound based on the fiscal evidence collected through renewal review. The education corporation has met or come close to meeting its fiscal benchmarks throughout the charter term, and presents a reasonable and appropriate fiscal plan for the next charter term.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Given that Finn Academy is an academic success supported by an effective, financially sustainable organization, the charter's plans for the future are reasonable, feasible, and achievable.

Finn Academy remains faithful to its mission and implements the key design elements included in its charter. The school modified its leadership structure to establish distinct lines of accountability and added significant instructional leadership capacity to support teachers in meeting students' educational needs. Experiential learning is a core component of the school's academic program, and all scholars engage in multiple interdisciplinary expeditions throughout the school year.

The educational program in place at the time of the renewal visit is strong and thoughtfully designed to meet the needs of all students. School leaders implement an organizational structure that establishes a culture of high expectations for staff member performance and student achievement.

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 Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School a Subsequent Full-Term Renewal of five years.



DP

DATA PRESENTATION

PAGES: 7-18

AP

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ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL

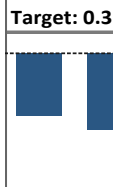
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

District Comparison. The percentage of students at **the charter** performing at or above proficiency in ELA compared to the district.



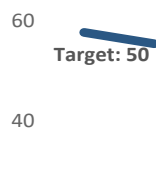
Test Year	Comp Grades	District %	Charter %
2018	3-5	20	37
2019	3-6	20	40
2020	N/A	N/A	N/A
2021	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022	3-6	24	39

Effect Size. The chart shows charter's effect size above its predicted level of performance in **ELA** according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.



Test Year	Test Grades	Effect Size
2018	3-5	-0.93
2019	3-6	-1.12
2020	N/A	N/A
2021	N/A	N/A
2022	3-6	-0.43

Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile. The charter's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above target of 50 in **ELA**.



Test Year	Charter Mean Growth
2018	57.6
2019	55.3
2020	N/A
2021	N/A
2022	N/A

MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

District Comparison. The percentage of students at **the charter** performing at or above proficiency in mathematics compared to the district.



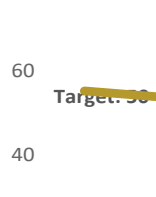
Test Year	Comp Grades	District %	Charter %
2018	3-5	26	28
2019	3-6	24	30
2020	N/A	N/A	N/A
2021	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022	3-6	17	30

Effect Size. The chart shows charter's effect size above its predicted level of performance in **mathematics** according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.



Test Year	Test Grades	Effect Size
2018	3-5	-1.74
2019	3-6	-1.37
2020	N/A	N/A
2021	N/A	N/A
2022	3-6	-0.65

Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile. The charter's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above target of 50 in **mathematics**.

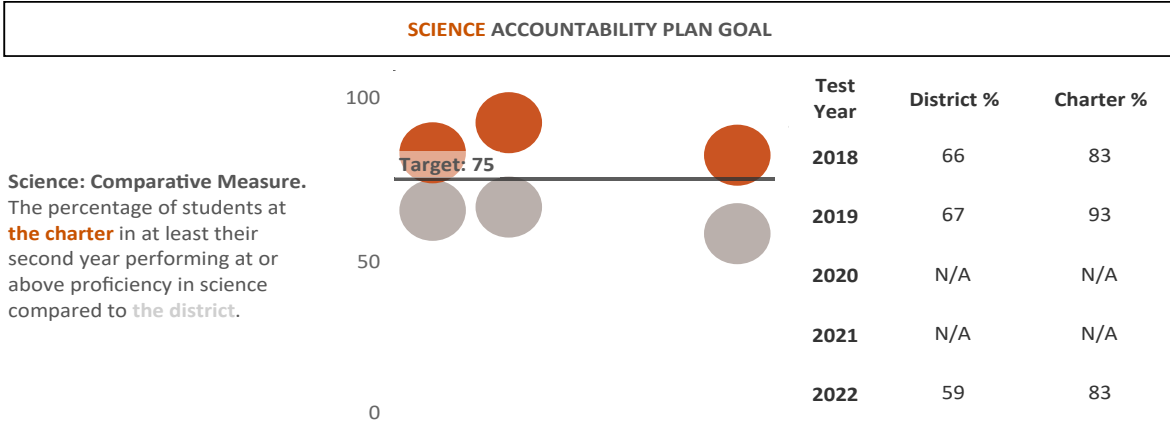


Test Year	Charter Mean Growth
2018	55.3
2019	53.9
2020	N/A
2021	N/A
2022	N/A



ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL



SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE*

	2018	2019	2022
Students with Disabilities Enrollment	38	42	12
Tested on State Exam	22	25	12
Charter Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	0.0	0.0	25.0
District Percent Proficient	4.0	3.2	5.1
ELL Enrollment	0	1	3
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam	0	1	3
Charter Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress	NA	s	s

* The academic outcome data about the performance of students receiving special education services and English language learners ("ELLs") above is not tied to separate goals in the charter school's formal Accountability Plan. The NYSESLAT, the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, is a standardized state exam. "Making Progress" is defined as moving up at least one level of proficiency. Student scores fall into five categories/proficiency levels: Entering; Emerging; Transitioning; Expanding; and, Commanding. In order to comply with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act regulations on reporting education outcome data, the Institute does not report assessment results for groups containing five or fewer students and indicates this with an "s".

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE



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

Finn Academy came close to meeting its key academic Accountability Plan goals in ELA and mathematics over its three year subsequent Accountability Period. The current Accountability Period began in 2019-20 and concluded in 2021-22, and as such the charter has posted valid and reliable state exam data for one year of this period. In 2021-22, the charter continued to outperform the district as it had in the prior charter term and increased its comparative effect size achievement in both subjects. Finn Academy also met its science goal and Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”) goal over the term.

Finn Academy came close to meeting its ELA and mathematics goals during its second charter term. In 2021-22, the charter’s students enrolled in at least their second year posted proficiency rates of 39% and 30% in ELA and mathematics, respectively. The charter outperformed the district by 15 percentage points in ELA and 13 percentage points in mathematics. Although the charter continued to post effect sizes that fell under the target of 0.3 as it had in the prior term, Finn Academy increased its performance on this measure in both subjects from 2018-19. This level of achievement indicates that the charter improved its performance compared to schools across the state enrolling similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students.

Given the absence of reliable and credible performance data from the state’s ELA and mathematics assessments for 3rd – 8th grade students in 2019-20 and 2020-21, the Institute worked with charters and testing experts to develop a set of performance measures for use with internal and nationally normed assessments. The Institute continues to analyze each charter’s internal assessments to evaluate the charter’s academic attainment in lieu of reliable state exam data in 2020-21 and to contextualize the baseline state exam data from 2021-22. During the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years, the charter demonstrated academic success against key academic Accountability Plan goals using the nationally normed MAP assessment. Notably in 2021-22, the charter posted median growth percentiles that exceeded the targets for all tested students and for students with low initial achievement in both subjects. Finn Academy also came close to meeting the absolute target with its students enrolled in at least their second year posting rates of achieving the New York State proficiency equivalent of 57% in ELA and 59% in mathematics.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

ASSESSMENT

Over the charter term, Finn Academy established an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning. The charter administers the MAP assessment in reading, mathematics, science, and fluency and the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (“F&P”) three times per year. Instructional leaders provide professional development to teachers on how to access and engage with student performance data. The charter also conducts mock ELA and mathematics assessments with released test items twice annually to prepare students for the New York State exam and measure progress toward meeting proficiency targets. Teachers administer prescribed unit assessments from the charter’s curricular programs to gather ongoing formative data as well. Instructional leaders developed a data meeting protocol tool and train teachers, coaches, and support staff in its use and application. Grade level teams hold data meetings at least once per month to review student progress and identify areas where students require additional support. Teachers and interventionists analyze data to determine the concepts or standards students have not yet mastered and differentiate instruction both during lessons and during daily skill labs to support students with accelerating learning. Leaders maintain a spreadsheet for each grade level that collects information on MAP reading, mathematics, and fluency benchmark scores; mock state assessment performance; phonics data; attainment on class measures in ELA and mathematics; and, state exam results, which teachers refer to regularly in order to monitor student trends and make data informed interventions. As part of the coaching plans, each teacher has a MAP growth goal for their student cohort, and instructional support coaches provide teachers with ongoing development on how to analyze data to drive instruction.

CURRICULUM

Finn Academy’s curriculum supports teachers in planning high quality instruction aligned to grade level standards. In Kindergarten — 6th grade, teachers use Go Math! and the FOSS science curriculum, each of which include comprehensive guides to inform teacher planning and content delivery as well as prepared student facing materials. The charter uses EL Education curriculum for ELA instruction in Kindergarten — 3rd grade, and transitioned to Reading Reconsidered for ELA in 4th — 6th grade after recognizing a need to teach more explicit literacy skills using real texts. Teachers collaborate with the experiential learning coordinator to design several expedition units for each grade level that incorporate social studies and science themes, hands-on projects, expert guest speakers, and field studies in the community. These units, which are strategically planned to align grade level standards with experiential learning opportunities, require that students apply reading, writing, speaking, and mathematics skills to real life situations. Prior to the start of the school year, grade level lead teachers create a planner for the year that serves as a cross-curricular pacing guide for all teachers in each grade. Combined with the high quality commercial curricular materials, this framework ensures teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. Teachers submit lesson plans weekly to the Planbook platform, which allows coaches to provide feedback and intervention teachers to add supplemental activities and modified plans for small group instruction. While the charter established effective systems for horizontal content alignment and collaboration at each grade level, leaders have an opportunity to improve vertical alignment to ensure students are developing necessary grade level skills as they persist through Finn Academy’s educational program.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

PEDAGOGY

High quality instruction is evident throughout most Finn Academy classrooms. Teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear, standards aligned objectives. Across grade and content levels, teachers employ effective strategies to increase engagement by encouraging student to student communication and collaboration. Teachers group students based on ongoing data analysis and design activities that promote student discussion and collective problem solving. In many classrooms, an interventionist, co-teacher, or classroom aide is present to support small group instruction and attend to individualized student needs. While teachers incorporate hands-on, experiential learning opportunities during instruction, there is a sustained focus on academic achievement. Teachers frequently cold call or use randomized spinners to invite students up to the smartboard to model the thinking process as they work through a mathematics or science problem. The charter establishes a supportive academic culture wherein students feel safe making mistakes and asking for assistance from peers, and teachers leverage this dynamic by using data to pair students of different skill levels to work cooperatively on challenging content. Teachers manage classrooms effectively, and students understand the school's values and norms because expectations for behavior are consistent throughout the charter. Teachers have set routines, timers, and call and response techniques to maximize learning time and facilitate efficient transitions. The charter is continuing to enhance academic rigor and develop teachers' ability to present students with higher order thinking opportunities, and has significantly improved the quality and frequency of checks for understanding since the last renewal visit.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Finn Academy's leadership team establishes an environment of high expectations for student achievement and staff performance; teachers consistently identify scholar engagement, rigorous instruction, and experiential learning as schoolwide priorities. In the current charter term, charter leaders and board trustees opted to eliminate the chief academic officer ("CAO") position and instead restructure the instructional leadership team to include an academic director and director of school culture who report to the school leader and supervise three instructional support teachers and four interventionists. The instructional leadership team provides coaching, plans professional development activities, and oversees implementation of the charter's curricula and data systems. Finn Academy's instructional leadership provides a sustained, systemic, and effective tiered coaching and supervision system that improves teachers' ability to meet students' academic needs. Teachers are classified as tier 1, 2, or 3, based on relative strengths and experience, with tier 1 receiving the highest level of support. Informal observations, coaching meetings, and lesson plan feedback occur twice per month for tier 1 teachers, once per month for tier 2 teachers, and every six to eight weeks for tier 3 teachers. These multi-leveled supports allow teachers to seek guidance from multiple leaders and ensure consistent focus on instructional quality. Weekly grade team meetings provide opportunities for horizontal alignment as teachers plan curriculum and instruction within grade levels; at the time of the renewal visit, no opportunities for vertical alignment were evident. The charter's comprehensive professional development activities interrelate with classroom practice and develop the skills and competencies of all teachers in alignment with identified instructional priorities. In addition to summer pre-service training and weekly professional development, Finn Academy encourages teachers to take advantage of external development opportunities. Leaders use the Danielson Framework to evaluate teachers either once or twice each year depending on coaching tier.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

AT RISK PROGRAM

Finn Academy invests considerable resources to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities, ELLs, and students struggling academically. A key strength of the school's intervention programs is the robust staffing structure dedicated to supporting at-risk students. The special education coordinator supervises four special education teachers who provide mandated academic supports; the Response to Intervention ("RTI") coordinator oversees one mathematics and two literacy interventionists who provide push-in and pull-out services; and the full time ELL coordinator provides English language acquisition supports for Finn Academy's ELL students. Interventionists work closely with classroom teachers including in weekly planning meetings with grade teams during which specialists model adaptations, accommodations, and general strategies for meeting students' needs. Consistent collaborative planning enables general education teachers to utilize effective strategies to support at-risk students within the general education program. Notably, the charter's specialists collaborate with general education teachers to ensure at-risk students can fully access and participate in Finn Academy's experiential learning opportunities.

The charter uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students, monitoring progress in intervention programs, and escalating interventions when necessary. Students whose performance on schoolwide screeners or curriculum-based assessments indicate the need for additional support enter the RTI process; the school's RTI team makes referrals to the district Committee on Special Education for students who do not make adequate progress after two six week cycles. Finn Academy uses the Home Language Identification Survey in conjunction with the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners ("NYSITELL") to determine the necessity and degree of English language acquisition supports. Teachers are aware of students' progress toward meeting Individualized Education Program ("IEP") goals, achieving English language proficiency, or mastering skills in RTI. Having improved processes and procedures, the school is now focused on maximizing the effectiveness of its intervention programs to bolster student performance across programs.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The charter's organization supports the effective delivery of the Finn Academy educational program, and the charter remains faithful to its mission while implementing its key design elements with fidelity. Following the departure of the CAO early in the charter term, the board and two remaining school leaders conducted research and engaged external consultants in order to determine a new long term leadership structure that would improve communication and academic achievement throughout the charter. The thoughtful adaptation of the leadership structure creates distinct lines of accountability that allow the school leader to focus on teaching and learning while the COO leads a highly functional operations team that supports effective delivery of the academic program. The charter consistently applies its reinforcement driven student discipline system throughout the school, and all classrooms display behavior charts that include positive and negative consequences. Leaders have employed a number of strategies to strengthen staff member retention, which was more than 90% in the last year of the charter term. Importantly, leaders solicited feedback from staff members on causes of previous attrition, then used the information gained to guide efforts that included improving coaching supports and offering longevity incentives. The charter remains in discussion with the local school

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

district regarding afternoon transportation, which represents a significant portion of its operating budget. Despite that financial challenge, Finn Academy is able to allocate sufficient resources to the achievement of its goals, and teachers report having the materials necessary to support student achievement. At the time of the renewal visit, the school served 374 students, representing a steady increase in enrollment over the three years of the charter term. The board and school leaders continue to implement additional outreach efforts consistent with the charter's monitoring of its progress toward meeting established enrollment and retention targets.

BOARD OVERSIGHT & GOVERNANCE

Finn Academy's board works effectively to achieve the school's Accountability Plan goals and maintain fidelity to its mission and key design elements. Leveraging a variety of skills and areas of expertise, the board has put in place structures and procedures with which to govern the school and ensure Finn Academy's future as an academically successful, financially healthy, and legally compliant organization. A dashboard containing specific academic, organizational, and financial data including RTI and enrollment metrics serves as the cornerstone of monthly reports regarding the educational program; board members request and receive additional information as necessary to maintain rigorous oversight. The board effectively utilizes three standing committees to fulfill its responsibilities: academic, governance, and finance. Consistent with its efforts to recruit, retain, and support key personnel, the board engaged a national educational services consulting firm to provide extensive leadership planning and coaching services for the school leader and COO, but it has not yet updated its leadership evaluation rubrics to reflect roles and responsibilities in the new two leader structure. Though it has previously evaluated its own performance, the board did not do so in the most recent school year; it focused instead on cementing the school's new leadership structure and succession planning. The board continually considers its composition and recently added trustees with experience in secondary education and media relations. The board has identified the addition of a trustee with financial or human resources expertise as a goal.

COMPLIANCE REPORTING



HAS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION 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.

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL

Admissions	The admissions policy must clarify the students of employees preference is limited to 15% of the student population in accords with the Act.
Annual Reports	The charter submitted its annual reports to the Institute and the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) on time but has not posted the most recent reports to its website. The Institute will ensure the charter posts its most recent annual report prior to the start of the next charter term.
Discipline Policy	The charter’s discipline policy must clarify the alternative instruction to be provided students with disabilities who have been suspended. The Institute will work with the charter to update its policy documents.
FOIL	The charter has an appropriate Freedom of Information Law (“FOIL”) policy and subject matter list clearly posted to its website. The subject matter list needs to be updated to include a link the New York State Committee on Open Government.
Teacher Certification	<p>The Act allows charters to hire up to 15 uncertified lead teachers contingent upon those teachers meeting certain requirements including: two years of Teach for America experience; three years of teaching experience; status as a higher education professor; exceptional experience in a subject; or, teaching science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) or career and technical education courses.</p> <p>At the time of the visit, the charter was within the allowable limit and the 13 uncertified lead teachers met the appropriate qualifications under the Act. The charter tracks progress for uncertified teachers to identify the best certification pathway and monitors each teacher’s progress toward certification. The charter partners with Elmira College to host student teachers and to offer current staff members course credits.</p>

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	OVERALL SATISFACTION	EMOTIONAL SAFETY	ENGAGEMENT - RELATIONSHIPS	INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT
52%	96%	99%	97%	97%

Parent Survey Data

The Institute compiled data from Finn Academy’s annual family survey data from the 2021-22 school year. In 2021-22, 52% of families who received the survey responded. In each of the categories surveyed, participant satisfaction was at or above 90%, with most categories posting satisfaction rates above 95%.

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. The 17 family members in attendance expressed a high level of satisfaction regarding the academic program, school culture, and communication. Families described specific examples of their child’s participation in the experiential learning program, positive relationships between students and staff members, and varied methods of communication. Parents shared that they would like to see more options for after school sports and clubs especially in the upper grades. Parents also expressed a strong desire for Finn Academy to expand in future years to include upper grades.

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. A summary of written comments received from the district appears below, which also includes a summary of any public comments.

As of the date of this report, the Institute has not received district comments in response to the renewal application.

Persistence in Enrollment

An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2021-22, 87% of Finn Academy 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 NYSED is available to the Institute to provide either district or statewide context.

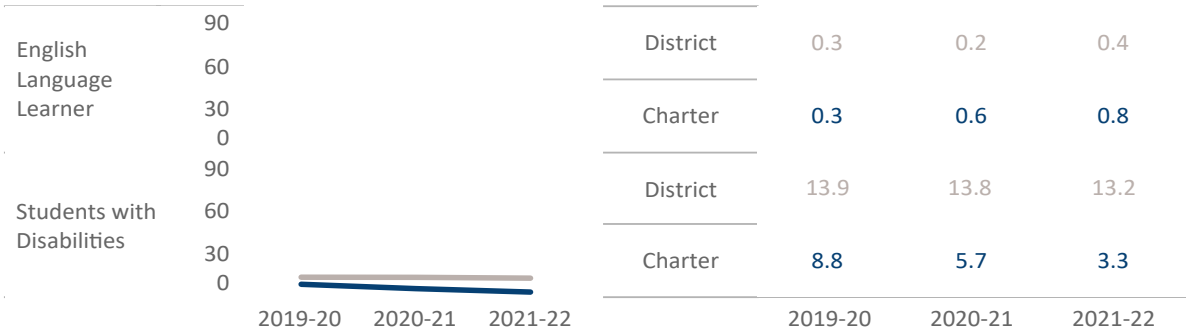


STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

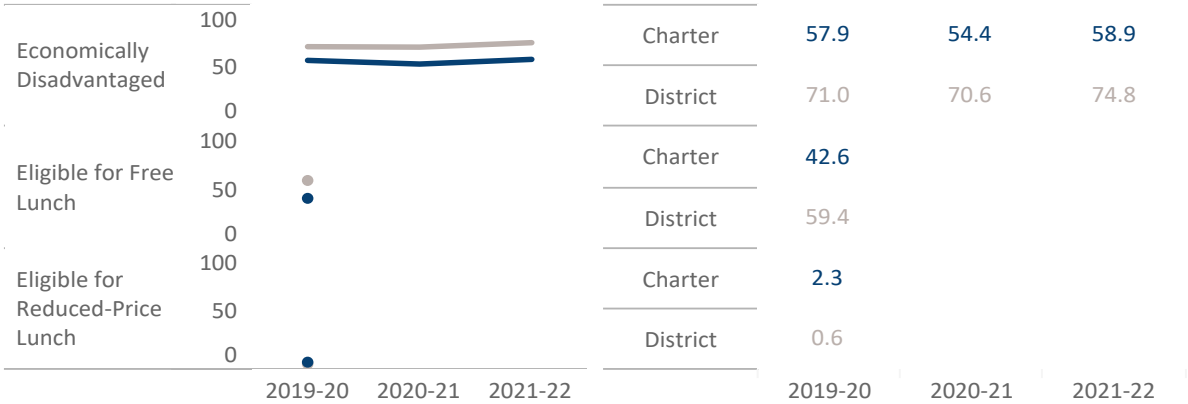
Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School

Elmira City School District

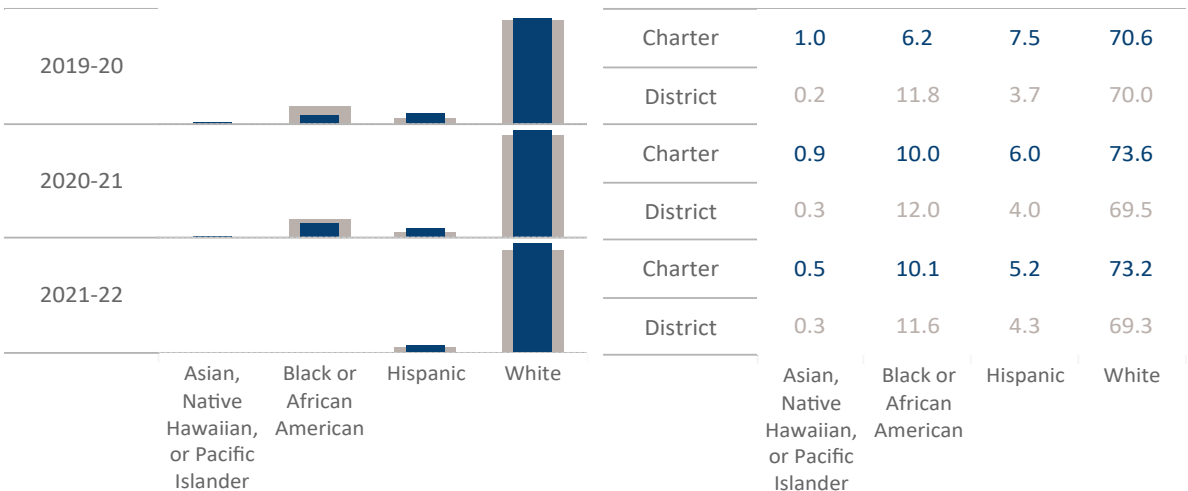
Student Demographics: Special Populations



Student Demographics: Free/Reduced Lunch



Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

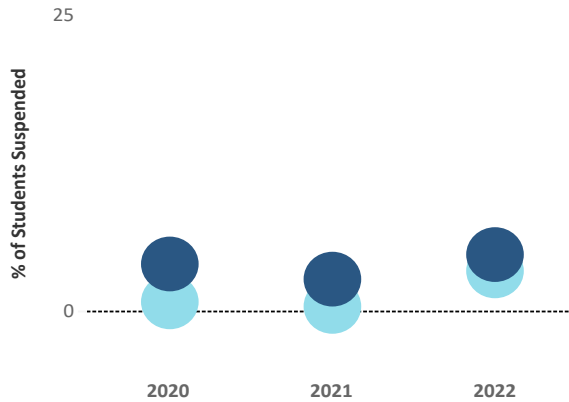


* Data reported in these charts reflect BEDS day enrollment counts as reported by the NYSED except for the charter's 2020-21 ELL enrollment which reflects data reported by the education corporation and validated by the Institute.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School

Elmira City School District



	ISS Rate	OSS Rate
2020	1.0	4.1
2021	0.6	2.9
2022	3.6	4.9

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

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

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2020	2021	2022
Persistence in Enrollment	83.0	85.0	86.8	0	0	0

Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2021-22

		Target	Charter
enrollment	economically disadvantaged	66.3	47.1
	English language learners	0.3	1.1
	students with disabilities	11.0	12.3
retention	economically disadvantaged	95.1	96.6
	English language learners	85.9	100.0
	students with disabilities	94.0	82.1

* 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 (“FRPL”) 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.

Finn Academy makes good faith efforts to meet its enrollment and retention targets. In the current charter term, the school exceeded its enrollment targets for ELLs and students with disabilities. Although it fell short of its enrollment target for students who are eligible applicants for the FRPL program, enrollment of economically disadvantaged students has increased by over 20 percentage points from the previous charter term. The school met two of its three retention targets overall. The charter plans to conduct the following recruitment efforts to meet its targets:

- Hosting virtual information sessions to support families with the completion of FRPL forms and following up by phone or email as needed;
- Conducting enrollment sessions in neighborhoods where families are struggling economically;
- Partnering with local organizations and agencies to conduct outreach to families that are economically disadvantaged, including Economic Opportunity Program (EOP), YWCA, the Transformation Center, Department of Social Services, A’don Allen Head Start Center, Southside Community Center, and Parent Resource Centers;
- Translating Finn Academy’s application and other key promotional materials into Spanish, the most common home language of ELLs in Elmira;
- Adding information about Finn Academy’s services to support ELLs to key marketing and recruitment materials (e.g., enrollment session slides);
- Encouraging current ELL families to refer new families to enroll at Finn Academy based on their positive experiences at the school;
- Featuring special education services prominently in key promotional materials;
- Developing a recruitment tracker that compiles recruitment information into one place including the list of each organization or agency the school has worked with, enrollment session dates, locations, attendance, and resulting enrollment;
- Conducting a brief survey for families of students with disabilities to collect information about needs, strengths, and areas of improvement based on their experience with the school; and,
- Engaging in personalized conversations with families who have expressed interest in leaving the school to address or correct concerns.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

IS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION FISCALLY SOUND?

Finn Academy is fiscally sound based on the Institute’s analysis 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.³



DOES THE EDUCATION CORPORATION OPERATE PURSUANT TO A FISCAL PLAN WITH REALISTIC BUDGETS THAT IT MONITORS AND ADJUSTS WHEN APPROPRIATE?

The education corporation 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 education corporation has clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures.	+
Board members, charter management, 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 education corporation routinely analyzes budget variances for the charter; the board addresses material variances and makes necessary revisions.	+
Actual expenses are equal to, or less than, actual revenue with no material exceptions.	+

3. 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.

“+” : 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 EDUCATION CORPORATION MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE INTERNAL CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES?

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

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
The education corporation has a history of sound fiscal policies, procedures, and practices, and appropriate internal controls.	+
The most recent audit report was free of any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal controls.	+
The education corporation reviews and updates its Financial Policies and Procedures Manual ("FPPM"), which covers the charter, on a regular basis. The most recent review of the FPPM is found in the next column. The Institute recommends, as a best practice, that the education corporation review and update its FPPM on an annual basis.	JULY 2022

DOES THE EDUCATION CORPORATION COMPLY WITH FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

The education corporation 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 EDUCATION CORPORATION MAINTAIN ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO ENSURE STABLE OPERATIONS?

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

The education corporation reported operating surpluses over the current charter term. The fiscal dashboard for June 30, 2022 reflects fiscal strength with approximately \$1.7 million in net assets and 2.3 months of cash on hand to pay liabilities due shortly. Finn Academy has funded and maintained the required \$75,000 in a separate dissolution account as per the charter agreement.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL

CHARTER INFORMATION

BALANCE SHEET

Opened 2015-16

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

Deferred Rent/Lease Liability
All other L-T debt and notes payable, net current maturities

Total Liabilities - GRAPH 1

Net Assets

Without Donor Restrictions
With Donor Restrictions

Total Net Assets

Total Liabilities and Net Assets

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Cash and Cash Equivalents - GRAPH 1	429,621	673,140	1,585,674	1,240,828	1,117,318
Grants and Contracts Receivable	397,271	208,139	-	-	-
Accounts Receivable	-	-	263,555	331,229	422,105
Prepaid Expenses	120,162	81,223	76,151	74,954	48,872
Contributions and Other Receivables	-	-	-	-	-
Total Current Assets - GRAPH 1	947,054	962,502	1,925,380	1,647,011	1,588,295
Property, Building and Equipment, net	461,660	674,246	820,455	793,780	748,446
Other Assets	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
Total Assets - GRAPH 1	1,483,714	1,711,748	2,820,835	2,515,791	2,411,741

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	253,757	128,132	512,178	586,785	689,913
Accrued Payroll and Benefits	7,844	-	-	-	-
Deferred Revenue	1,650	-	1,271	-	-
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	-	4,243	4,593	3,270	-
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable	200,000	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Current Liabilities - GRAPH 1	463,251	132,375	518,042	590,055	689,913
Deferred Rent/Lease Liability	-	-	-	-	-
All other L-T debt and notes payable, net current maturities	-	7,863	657,430	-	-
Total Liabilities - GRAPH 1	463,251	140,238	1,175,472	590,055	689,913

Without Donor Restrictions	1,020,463	1,496,510	1,645,363	1,925,736	1,717,818
With Donor Restrictions	-	75,000	-	-	4,010
Total Net Assets	1,020,463	1,571,510	1,645,363	1,925,736	1,721,828
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	1,483,714	1,711,748	2,820,835	2,515,791	2,411,741

ACTIVITIES

Operating Revenue

Resident Student Enrollment
Students with Disabilities

Grants and Contracts

State and local
Federal - Title and IDEA
Federal - Other
Other
NYC DoE Rental Assistance
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program

Total Operating Revenue

Resident Student Enrollment	3,595,533	4,362,520	4,757,960	4,136,901	4,516,548
Students with Disabilities	178,564	237,090	249,195	198,182	282,460
Grants and Contracts	134,650	119,612	-	-	32,548
State and local	157,974	92,040	-	396,410	97,720
Federal - Title and IDEA	-	-	-	-	318,270
Federal - Other	-	-	314,380	654,160	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
NYC DoE Rental Assistance	-	89,847	-	-	245,829
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program	-	-	-	-	-
Total Operating Revenue	4,066,721	4,901,109	5,321,535	5,385,653	5,493,375

Expenses

Regular Education
SPED
Other

Total Program Services

Management and General
Fundraising

Total Expenses - GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4

Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations

Regular Education	2,190,304	2,688,107	3,357,938	3,247,154	3,621,797
SPED	215,321	342,991	423,599	364,429	312,700
Other	408,446	526,238	507,418	595,987	850,145
Total Program Services	2,814,071	3,557,336	4,288,955	4,207,570	4,784,642
Management and General	772,798	854,325	975,417	920,614	945,150
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses - GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4	3,586,869	4,411,661	5,264,372	5,128,184	5,729,792
Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations	479,852	489,448	57,163	257,469	(236,417)

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

Contributions	36,718	21,498	-	-	4,010
Fundraising	6,861	22,036	16,690	22,904	21,334
Miscellaneous Income	19,487	18,065	-	-	7,165
Net assets released from restriction	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support and Other Revenue	63,066	61,599	16,690	22,904	32,509
Total Unrestricted Revenue	4,129,787	4,962,708	5,338,225	5,408,557	5,521,874
Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue	-	-	-	-	4,010
Total Revenue - GRAPHS 2 & 3	4,129,787	4,962,708	5,338,225	5,408,557	5,525,884
Change in Net Assets	542,918	551,047	73,853	280,373	(203,908)
Net Assets - Beginning of Year - GRAPH 2	477,545	1,020,463	1,571,510	1,645,363	1,925,736
Prior Year Adjustment(s)	-	-	-	-	-
Net Assets - End of Year - GRAPH 2	1,020,463	1,571,510	1,645,363	1,925,736	1,721,828

FISCAL ANALYSIS

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL

CHARTER INFORMATION - (Continued)

Functional Expense Breakdown

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Personnel Service					
Administrative Staff Personnel	474,509	457,211	417,291	422,751	495,629
Instructional Personnel	1,387,995	1,901,130	2,322,537	2,212,289	2,402,114
Non-Instructional Personnel	62,475	87,512	230,372	234,488	191,688
Personnel Services (Combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Salaries and Staff	1,924,979	2,445,853	2,970,200	2,869,528	3,089,431
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes	406,392	496,458	489,025	476,994	461,181
Retirement	2,179	-	216,175	229,356	224,371
Management Company Fees	-	-	-	-	-
Building and Land Rent / Lease / Facility Financing	240,000	242,380	240,000	188,000	188,108
Staff Development	34,654	35,477	94,663	15,911	52,960
Professional Fees, Consultant & Purchased Services	106,480	139,515	169,672	148,298	190,404
Marketing / Recruitment	26,904	18,850	22,433	7,857	21,721
Student Supplies, Materials & Services	339,640	388,963	332,602	368,921	518,500
Depreciation	55,504	82,434	114,387	122,206	154,061
Other	450,137	561,731	615,215	701,113	829,055
Total Expenses	3,586,869	4,411,661	5,264,372	5,128,184	5,729,792

CHARTER ANALYSIS

ENROLLMENT

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Original Chartered Enrollment	290	344	396	398	398
Final Chartered Enrollment (includes any revisions)	290	344	396	398	398
Actual Enrollment - GRAPH 4	299	356	382	342	359
Chartered Grades	K-5	K-6	K-7	K-6	K-6
Final Chartered Grades (includes any revisions)	-	-	-	-	-

Primary School District: ELMIRA CITY SD

Per Pupil Funding (Weighted Avg of All Districts)	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Increase over prior year	11,961	12,203	12,626	12,601	12,636
	3.9%	2.0%	3.3%	-0.2%	0.3%

PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

Revenue	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Operating	13,595	13,784	13,941	15,726	15,285
Other Revenue and Support	211	173	44	67	90
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	13,806	13,957	13,984	15,793	15,375

Expenses

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Program Services	9,408	10,004	11,236	12,286	13,313
Management and General, Fundraising	2,584	2,403	2,555	2,688	2,630
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	11,991	12,407	13,791	14,974	15,943
% of Program Services	78.5%	80.6%	81.5%	82.0%	83.5%
% of Management and Other	21.5%	19.4%	18.5%	18.0%	16.5%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses - GRAPH 5	15.1%	12.5%	1.4%	5.5%	-3.6%
% of Revenue Expended on Facilities	5.9%	4.9%	4.5%	3.5%	3.4%

Student to Faculty Ratio

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Student to Faculty Ratio	8.1	7.1	7.6	6.8	6.9

Faculty to Admin Ratio

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Faculty to Admin Ratio	4.1	5.6	8.3	8.3	6.6

Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - GRAPH 6

Score	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Score	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.7	1.9
Fiscally Strong 1.5 - 3.0 / Fiscally Adequate 1.0 - 1.4 / Fiscally Needs Monitoring < 1.0	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong

Working Capital - GRAPH 7

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Net Working Capital	483,803	830,127	1,407,338	1,056,956	898,382
As % of Unrestricted Revenue	11.7%	16.7%	26.4%	19.5%	16.3%
Working Capital (Current) Ratio Score	2.0	7.3	3.7	2.8	2.3
Risk (Low ≥ 3.0 / Medium 1.4 - 2.9 / High < 1.4)	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Rating (Excellent ≥ 3.0 / Good 1.4 - 2.9 / Poor < 1.4)	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good

Quick (Acid Test) Ratio

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Score	1.8	6.7	3.6	2.7	2.2
Risk (Low ≥ 2.5 / Medium 1.0 - 2.4 / High < 1.0)	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM
Rating (Excellent ≥ 2.5 / Good 1.0 - 2.4 / Poor < 1.0)	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good

Debt to Asset Ratio - GRAPH 7

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Score	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.3
Risk (Low < 0.50 / Medium 0.51 - .95 / High > 1.0)	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent < 0.50 / Good 0.51 - .95 / Poor > 1.0)	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

Months of Cash - GRAPH 8

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Score	1.4	1.8	3.6	2.9	2.3
Risk (Low > 3 mo. / Medium 1 - 3 mo. / High < 1 mo.)	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Rating (Excellent > 3 mo. / Good 1 - 3 mo. / Poor < 1 mo.)	Good	Good	Excellent	Good	Good

FUTURE PLANS



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

Finn Academy is an academic success supported by an effective organization, and so the charter's plans for the future are reasonable, feasible, and achievable. These plans are likely to propel high levels of success in the next charter term.

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA 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. Finn Academy plans to implement the same successful core elements of its educational program with an enhanced focus on social emotional learning in the next charter term. The school intends to make some pandemic related adaptations permanent features of its instructional programming.

Plans for Board Oversight & Governance. Current board members express interest in continuing to serve Finn Academy in the future. The board intends to do additional succession planning aligned to the school's new leadership structure.

Fiscal & Facility Plans. Based on evidence collected through the renewal review, including a review of the five year financial plan, Finn Academy presents a reasonable and appropriate fiscal plan for the next charter term including school budgets that are feasible and achievable.

Finn Academy plans to remain in the current facility space through a next charter term as it provides ample program space and amenities for the long term.

	CURRENT	END OF NEXT CHARTER TERM
Enrollment	399	399
Grade Span	K-6	K-6
Teaching Staff	41	38
Days of Instruction	184	184

Finn Academy

AX

APPENDICES

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FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CHAIR	TRUSTEES
Alice Renee Sutton	Maya Patel
VICE CHAIR	Katie Stowell
Kathryn E. Coletta	James Pfiffer
TREASURER	
Kevin Brimmer	
SECRETARY	
Holly Strickland	

CHARTER LEADERS

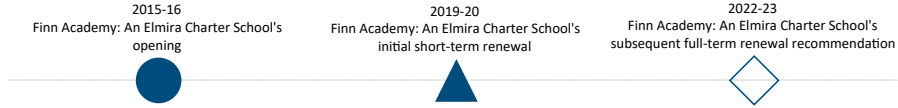
- PRINCIPAL**
- Aimee Ciarlo, School Leader (2022-23 to Present)*
- Martina Baker, COO (2017-18 to Present)*
- Jeremy Wheeler, Chief Academic Officer (October 2018 to 2020-21)*
- Katelin Fletcher, Dean of Academics (2017-18)*
- Aimee Ciarlo, Dean of Scholars (2017-18 to 2021-22)*
- Aimee Ciarlo, Interim Head of School (January 2017 - June 2017)*
- Margaret Thurber, Head of School (2014-15 to January 2017)*

CHARTER CHARACTERISTICS

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2018-19	344	356	103%	K-6
2019-20	396	382	96%	K-7
2020-21	398	342	86%	K-6
2021-22	398	359	90%	K-6
2022-23	399	374	94%	K-6



TIMELINE OF CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL



CHARTER SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY

SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
2015-16	First Year Visit	April 21, 2016
2016-17	Evaluation Visit	April 5-6, 2017
2019-20	Initial Renewal Visit	October 17-18, 2019
2021-22	Leadership Conversation	May 25, 2022
2022-23	Subsequent Renewal Visit	November 2-3, 2022

CONDUCT OF THE RENEWAL REVIEW

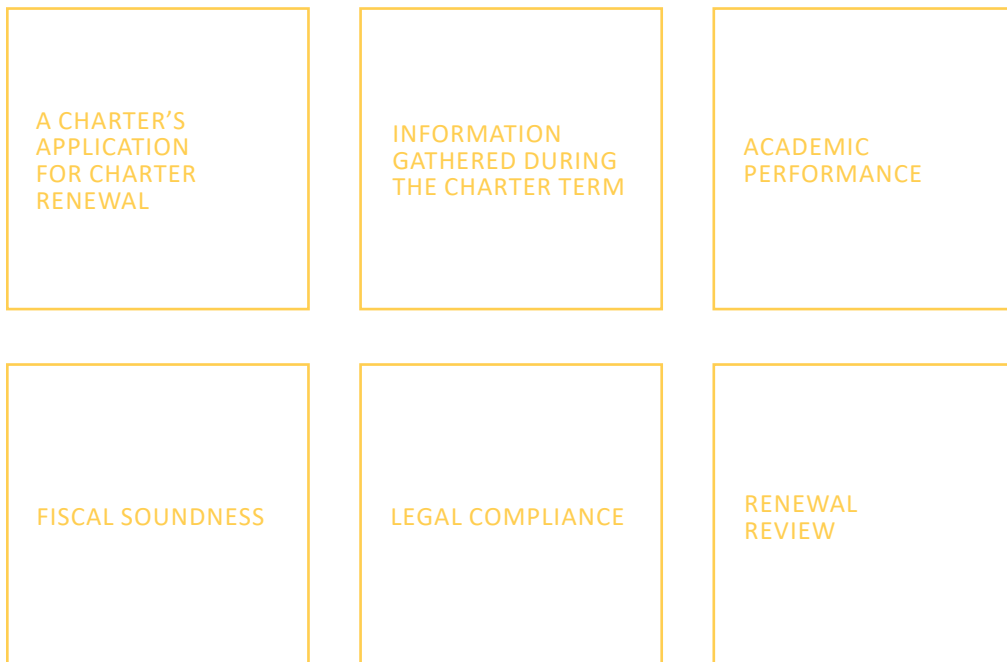
DATE(S) OF REVIEW	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
November 2-3, 2022	Katy Clayton	School Evaluation Analyst
	Mike Lesczinski	Director of Communications
	Katie Maron	External Consultant
	Natasha Howard	External Consultant

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](#).

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 CHARTER, ARE THE EDUCATION CORPORATION’S 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 schools':

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 schools. 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 is 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.



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