



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSAL TO AUTHORIZE
ZETA CHARTER SCHOOLS - NEW YORK CITY
TO OPERATE THE PROPOSED
ZETA CHARTER SCHOOL - NEW YORK CITY 5; ZETA CHARTER
SCHOOL - NEW YORK CITY 6; ZETA CHARTER SCHOOL - NEW
YORK CITY 7; AND, ZETA CHARTER SCHOOL - NEW YORK CITY 8

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The board of trustees of Zeta Charter Schools- New York City (“Zeta Schools - NYC” or the “education corporation”), a not-for-profit charter school education corporation authorized by the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) to operate four schools, Zeta Charter School - Inwood (“Zeta Inwood”), Zeta Charter School - South Bronx (“Zeta South Bronx”), Zeta Charter School - Bronx Mount Eden (“Zeta Mount Eden”), and Zeta Charter School - Bronx Tremont Park (“Zeta Tremont Park”), seeks the authority to operate four additional charter schools to be located in private facilities, with two of the proposed schools to be located in New York City Community School District (“CSD”) 24, one proposed school to be located in CSD 25, and one proposed school to be located in CSD 28. The education corporation submitted the proposals for authority to operate Zeta Charter School - New York City 5, 6, 7, and 8 (“Zeta 5- 8”) to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) on February 8, 2024, in response to the Institute’s [2024 Request for Proposals \(the “RFP”\)](#) released on behalf of the SUNY Trustees on December 6, 2023. The Institute makes copies of applications [available on its website](#).

Each of the four proposed schools will open in August 2025 with 180 students in Kindergarten – 1st grades, and will add students in elementary grades each year, ultimately serving 529 students in Kindergarten – 5th grades during its first charter term. Zeta 5- 8 will fill all seats that become available due to attrition in Kindergarten – 3rd grades and will fill seats in 4th and 5th grades based on attrition and demand. The school will replicate the highly effective instructional program implemented at the existing schools operated by the education corporation. As applicable, information regarding the renewal history, academic performance, and student discipline for the existing schools is presented in Appendix B below.

Zeta Schools- NYC will contract with the charter management organization (“CMO”) Zeta Charter Schools, Inc. (“Zeta;” the “CMO;” or, the “network”), a Delaware-based Internal Revenue Code § 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which will provide administrative and management services to Zeta Schools - NYC in exchange for a management fee. Among other services, Zeta provides Zeta Schools - NYC with curriculum design and professional learning services, as well as administrative functions such as financial and legal support.

After a thorough review process consistent with the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (the “Act”), the Institute finds that the proposals for Zeta Schools - NYC’s authority to operate Zeta 5- 8 rigorously demonstrate the criteria detailed in the Institute’s 2024 RFP, which align with the Act.

Based on the proposals, as amended by the applicant, and the foregoing:

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the proposals to grant Zeta Schools- NYC the authority to operate Zeta Charter School- New York City 5, Zeta Charter School- New York City 6, Zeta Charter School- New York City 7, and Zeta Charter School- New York City 8.

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FINDINGS

Based on the comprehensive review of the proposals and interviews of the applicant and the education corporation board of trustees, the Institute makes the following findings.

1. The charter schools described in the proposals meet the requirements of the Act and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations as reflected in (among other things):
 - the inclusion of appropriate policies and procedures for the provision of services and programs for students with disabilities and English language learners (“ELLs”);
 - the required policies for addressing the issues related to student discipline, personnel matters, and health services;
 - an admissions policy that complies with the Act and federal law;
 - the inclusion of the by-laws for the operation of the education corporation’s board of trustees; and,
 - the inclusion of an analysis of the projected fiscal and programmatic impact of the schools on surrounding public and private schools.
2. The applicant has demonstrated the ability to operate the schools in an educationally and fiscally sound manner as reflected in (among other things):
 - the provision of an educational program that meets or exceeds the state performance standards;
 - a culture of self-evaluation and accountability at both the administrative and board level;
 - the student achievement goals articulated by the applicant;
 - appropriate rosters of educational personnel;
 - a sound mission statement;
 - a comprehensive assessment plan;
 - sound start-up, first-year, and five-year budget plans;
 - a plan to acquire comprehensive general liability insurance to include any vehicles, employees, and property;
 - evidence of adequate community support for, and interest in, the charter school sufficient to allow the school to reach anticipated enrollment;
 - descriptions of programmatic and independent fiscal audits, with fiscal audits occurring at least annually;
 - school calendar and school day schedule that provide at least as much instruction time during the school year as required of other public schools; and,
 - methods and strategies for serving students with disabilities in compliance with federal laws and regulations.
3. Granting the proposals is likely to: a) have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter schools; b) improve student learning and achievement; and, c) materially further the purposes of the Act. This finding is supported by (among other things):
 - a robust and proven academic program with excellent student outcomes;
 - comprehensive special population programming that supports a broad range of students including students with disabilities, English language learners as well as gifted and talented students;
 - a rigorous assessment system;

- demonstrated commitment to student culture, utilizing many effective practices for the education of the whole child such as using restorative practices and mindfulness;
 - a board with a wealth of experience, knowledge, and commitment to the students of Zeta as well as demonstrated ability to oversee startup and replication of effective schools; and,
 - an effective personnel model with clear lines of responsibility, and opportunities for professional development and growth.
4. The proposed charter schools would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, of students with disabilities, ELLs, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch (“FRPL”) program as required by Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(i).
 5. The applicant has conducted public outreach for the schools, in conformity with a thorough and meaningful public review process prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, to solicit community input regarding the proposed charter schools and to address comments received from the impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students in conformity with Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(ii).
 6. The Institute has determined that the proposals rigorously demonstrates the criteria and best satisfy the objectives contained within the RFP, and, therefore, are “qualified applications” within the meaning of Education Law § 2852(9-a)(d) that should be submitted to the New York State Board of Regents (the “Board of Regents”) for approval.

The Institute developed the RFP “in a manner that facilitate[d] a thoughtful review of charter school applications, consider[ed] the demand for charter schools by the community, and s[ought] to locate charter schools in a region or regions where there may be a lack of alternatives and access to charter schools would provide new alternatives within the local public education system that would offer the greatest educational benefit to students,” in accordance with Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b). The Institute also posted the draft RFP for public comment and responded to same.

The Institute conducted a rigorous evaluation of the proposals under consideration including academic and fiscal soundness, and legal reviews. In addition, the Institute engaged independent consultants to evaluate the proposals based on the criteria set forth in the RFP. Pursuant to its protocols, the Institute conducted an interview with the founding team, including the applicant, the proposed board of trustees, and key Zeta leadership. Trustee Joseph Belluck, Chairman of the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee, also met with the founding team.

Amendments to the Act in 2015 restricted the total number of charter schools the SUNY Trustees and the Board of Regents may approve to open in New York City. Currently, nine charters remain available to be granted in New York City by the SUNY Trustees or the Board of Regents.

BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION

Zeta Schools - NYC currently operates four highly effective schools in the Bronx and Manhattan. Zeta Inwood opened its doors in August 2018 and currently serves 658 students in Kindergarten – 6th grades with authorization to serve 1,340 students in Kindergarten – 10th grades by the end of the charter term. It operates in private space in CSD 6. Zeta South Bronx opened its doors in August 2018 and currently serves 688 students in Kindergarten – 6th grades with authorization to serve 1,249 students in Kindergarten – 10th grades by the end of the charter term. It operates in private space in CSD 12. Zeta Mount Eden opened in August 2020 and currently serves 510 students in Kindergarten – 3rd grades with authorization to serve 658 students in Kindergarten – 4th grades during the 2024-25 school year, the final year of its first charter term. Zeta Mount Eden operates in private space in CSD 9. Zeta Tremont Park opened in August 2020 and currently serves 540 students in Kindergarten – 3rd grades with authorization to serve 718 students in Kindergarten – 4th grades during the 2024-25 school year, the final year of its first charter term. Zeta Tremont Park operates in private space in CSD 12. Zeta Schools- NYC also contracts with the New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”) to provide a universal pre-kindergarten (“pre-K”) program at each of its four schools.

Zeta Schools- NYC has demonstrated the capacity to achieve strong student outcomes, with overall combined proficiency rates across its schools of 76% on ELA and 87% in math on the 2022-23 state exams. In addition to strong academic results, the schools are committed to whole child education through social emotional learning, wellness, and rich specials programming in arts, music, taekwondo, chess, and other subjects.

Zeta Schools- NYC seeks to open four additional schools in Queens: two in CSD 24, and one each in CSDs 25 and 28, based on its existing track record of success and significant community need and demand given the limited number of schools of choice in the proposed CSDs. The four additional schools would provide a foundation for planned growth to eventually provide a full Kindergarten – 12th grade pathway for students and families in Queens by adding middle and high school programs, subject to SUNY approval. Opening the additional schools would also create economies of scale allowing the network to provide enhanced academic, administrative, and other supports to the schools.

MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

The Zeta 5- 8 mission states:

Zeta is on a mission to ensure that every child in America has access to the highest-quality, free education, from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade. Zeta offers a next-generation schooling model that delivers on rigorous academics and whole-child education, with a focus on social-emotional learning. At Zeta, we believe that every child can achieve grade-level mastery, no matter their starting point. We welcome and serve students from all walks of life, including economically disadvantaged students, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities/in-queue for services.

Zeta 5- 8 will implement the following key design elements:

- **Rigorous, Hands-On Academics:** Academics at Zeta 5-8 will be rigorous and hands-on in order to equip students with the critical thinking skill and habits needed to achieve their highest potential. The schools are also committed to cultivating supportive settings for special populations.
- **Mind, Body, Soul Cultivation:** Students at Zeta 5-8 will practice mindfulness and wellness in order to develop students socially and emotionally. The schools will implement a mindfulness curriculum and robust specialty programming, including Taekwondo, art, chess, music, dance, and sports.
- **Innovation Culture:** Zeta 5-8 will help students develop the skills and mindset to be creators and architects in an ever-evolving digital and modern world. The schools will have a Zeta Innovation Lab, where students engage in design thinking and hands-on experimentation.
- **Wow Through Family Service:** Zeta 5-8 will customer service principles in order to develop close family partnerships, and all schools will have an open door policy for families and a commitment to excellent and responsive communication.

CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE

Zeta 5- 8 will offer 188 days of instruction each year. The first day of instruction for the 2025-26 school year will be on or around August 18, 2025, and the last day will be on or around June 16, 2026. Subsequent school years will follow a similar calendar. The school day will begin each morning at 7:45 A.M. and end at 3:30 P.M. Zeta 5- 8 will provide students with more than 1,216 hours of instruction per year, which meets the requirements of 900 instructional hours for 1st – 6th grade mandated by Education Law § 2851(2)(n) and 8 NYCRR § 175.5.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The proposed schools intend to implement the same curricula in place at the four existing schools. Zeta’s rigorous core curriculum centers on daily writing, reading, mathematics, and science instruction, bolstered by rich extracurricular and social emotional programming to support student growth and well-being. The academic program, which combines proven existing curricula with internally developed materials, is designed to ensure students meet or exceed New York State Next Generation Learning Standards and provide them with the skills necessary for college and career readiness.

Through this academic program, Zeta Schools- NYC has already achieved strong student outcomes, with proficiency rates of 76% on ELA and 87% in math on the 2022-23 state exams.

English Language Arts (“ELA”) (Reading and Writing)

Zeta’s ELA curriculum aims to instill a love of reading and writing while developing strong foundational literacy skills and encompasses multiple components including phonics, close reading, guided reading, read aloud, book discussion, and writing. The literacy program incorporates several rigorous, standards based curricular such as Insights Humanities and Success for All (“SFA”), a research based phonics program that explicitly develops the reading skills of early elementary students. Students at Zeta Schools- NYC also engage in Sadlier Vocabulary and Grammar lessons to reinforce foundational skills and knowledge.

Mathematics

Zeta’s mathematics program draws on several research-based curricula that have demonstrated success with similar student populations to the ones the schools propose to serve. TERC Investigations employs a hands-on approach that guides students to develop their own algorithms by working with concrete representations of numbers, such as manipulatives and drawings. The schools supplement TERC Investigations with Contexts for Learning, Cognitively Guided Instruction (“CGI”), and Open Up Resources, curricular programs that present mathematical concepts in practical, problem-based scenarios to encourage higher order thinking. Together, these curricular components emphasize a conceptual understanding of numeracy and operations and provide students with opportunities to think creatively, develop problem solving strategies, and work cooperatively.

Science

Students at Zeta Schools- NYC receive science instruction five days per week starting in kindergarten. Zeta implements an internally developed science curriculum adapted from two external sources: Amplify Science and Rock by Rock. The science curriculum emphasizes a hands on, rigorous approach that incorporates numerous experiments and projects that encourage students to think like scientists and engineers. The science curriculum provides students with opportunities to engage in project-based work culminating in students creating artifacts, exhibits, or campaigns to demonstrate their learning.

At-Risk

Zeta schools employ a robust Response to Intervention (“RTI”) program to identify and support struggling students. Leaders and teachers review academic data approximately every eight weeks to identify students who may need additional support and monitor progress for students already receiving additional interventions. Struggling students may receive a variety of supports such as additional small-group instruction, individual tutoring, and action plans for positive behavioral support. Zeta Schools- NYC offer Integrated-Co Teaching (“ICT”) classes and Special Education Teacher Support Services (“SETSS”), as well as all related services to support students with identified disabilities. ELLs receive support through a research-based English language immersion program, as well as additional tutoring. Additionally, Zeta schools use Lexia English to support ELLs, an adaptive blended learning program which provides additional, targeted support in components including phonics, vocabulary, and grammar.

Z Lab

All Zeta schools have a “Z Lab,” a space where students engage in activities aimed at developing their science, engineering, design, and technology skills. Z Lab provides students the time, resources, and materials they need to learn in a rigorous way through design thinking and hands-on experimentation and play that crosses all disciplines, under the guidance and support of their primary homeroom teachers. In Z Lab, students are able to navigate materials and activities themselves including a floor to ceiling LEGO wall, wooden blocks, and play dough, as well as abundant materials like popsicle sticks, cardboard, and glue to engage in creative design work.

Health and Well Being

Health and well being classes at Zeta Schools - NYC support students in developing habits that support their physical and mental wellbeing, featuring lessons on topics such as healthy choices with regard to eating, the importance of physical activity, and regular practice of meditation and mindfulness.

Specialized Classes

In addition to a rich and rigorous academic curriculum, Zeta Schools- NYC offer a robust specials program that includes art, music, Taekwondo, chess, and sports. Individual schools may adjust specific specialized offerings based on availability of qualified instructors and student interests. Specialized classes take place during and after the school day.

Social-Emotional Learning

Zeta’s internally developed social-emotional learning (“SEL”) curriculum supports students in developing a strong mind, body, soul, and sense of connectedness. SEL content focuses on mindfulness, emotional awareness, relationship building, community, and integrity. SEL lessons are integrated throughout the school day and include regular class circle practices wherein teachers support students to practice breathing and mindfulness, identify emotions and connect them to their lives, and share gratitude with others.

EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Please see Appendix B for information about the existing schools’ academic performance.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE

Zeta Schools- NYC’s approach to school culture is rooted in three core values of community, excellence, and being purpose-driven, and in the organization’s vision that students will graduate demonstrating a strong mind, strong body, strong soul, strong connectedness, and commitment to a beautiful tomorrow. Leaders, teachers, and students commit to and reflect on the Zeta EPIC values of Excellence, Perseverance, Integrity, and Community through regular lessons and discussions, as well as through special recognition for adults and students who exude these values.

Through these values, Zeta Schools- NYC aims to create classroom communities where children are highly engaged, learn to their highest potential, and gain independence. To that end, leaders and teachers devote a significant portion of summer training to learning and practicing classroom management and culture skills such as building relationships, communicating clear expectations, and establishing consistent rules, rewards, and consequences. When conflicts arise, staff and students use restorative practice approaches to address issues while working to restore and repair relationships, often leveraging tools like mindfulness from SEL lessons. The network also works to implement the same practices with adults and staff to create a positive adult culture.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Zeta 5-8 will replicate the leadership structure in place at the education corporation’s existing schools. Each site will be led by a Principal who serves as the overall instructional leader and oversees an Operations Director, Assistant Principal, and Student Achievement Associate who provide leadership in operations, academics, and at-risk programming, respectively. As each school grows, additional Assistant Principals or Resident Assistant Principals are added to bolster instructional support while also developing an internal leadership pipeline, and additional operations staff are added to ensure effective management.

Each proposed school will receive support from the Zeta network, which provides services including curriculum and assessment development, professional learning for leaders and teachers, schooling management support for principals, operational support, technology and data management, financial management, and human resources.

GOVERNANCE

The bylaws of Zeta 5- 8 indicate that the education corporation board will consist of no fewer than 5 and no more than 25 voting members. The proposed members of the board of trustees are set forth below:

1. Keri Hoyt, Board Chair and Treasurer

Keri Hoyt is President of Noodle Partners, a start-up company that provides postsecondary online education programs. Prior to joining Noodle Partners, Ms. Hoyt served for seven years as Executive Vice President of Schooling and Chief Operating Officer of Success Academy Charter Schools. Ms. Hoyt serves as both the board chair and treasurer. Ms. Hoyt is a graduate of the University of New Hampshire and the University of Pennsylvania.

2. Shannon Kete, Vice-Chair

Shannon Kete is the Executive Director and Chief Revenue Officer at Learners Edge a collective of innovative education organizations. Prior to this role, Ms. Kete served as the Chief Operating Officer for The Lavinia Group. She has held the COO role at several other education organizations, including Civic Builders, Amplify, and Success Academies. Ms. Kete is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Harvard Business School.

3. Nicole Brisbane, Secretary

Nicole Brisbane is the founder of her own consulting practice, NB Impact Strategies, which is focused on public sector and nonprofit organizational improvement. She started her career as a middle school Intensive Reading teacher in 2005 and later joined Teach For America as Director of District and Community Partnerships in Miami, FL. Ms. Brisbane has also led Democrats for Education Reform New York (DFER) and its policy and advocacy affiliate organizations, Education Reform Now and Education Reform Now Advocacy. Ms. Brisbane is a graduate of Florida State University and Emory University School of Law.

4. Michele Caracappa, Trustee

Michele Caracappa is the Chief Program Officer at New Leaders, where she oversees design, development, and delivery of the organization's core programs. Prior to joining New Leaders in 2019, Ms. Caracappa was a founding team member at Success Academy Charter Schools in New York City, where she served in the roles of first grade teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, Principal Manager, and Chief Academic Officer. Ms. Caracappa is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and Pace University.

5. Ken McClure, Trustee

Ken McClure is the Senior Vice President- Capital Markets for Broadridge Financial Solutions Inc. Mr. McClure was formerly the Managing Principal and Co-Founder of Summit Financial Printing, LLC, which became the second largest SEC filing agent in less than five years. Mr. McClure is a graduate of Morehouse College.

FACILITIES

Zeta 5-8 plan to secure private facilities in the proposed CSDs. The existing four education corporation schools all operate in private space, and the founding team and network have experience identifying facilities, negotiating private lease agreements, and overseeing building and renovations as required. The founding team has relationships with several local development companies and real estate agents to assist in the selection of a facility, including several local development companies that have located and renovated facilities for other area charter schools in the past. The education corporation expects to engage in robust facility negotiations that will yield multiple suitable sites upon authorization. Additionally, the founding team will have support from the network and board in the facility acquisition process. If viable private facilities are unavailable, the schools will explore other facilities options such as co-located public space.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of Zeta 5- 8 on the district is summarized below.

Charter Year	A. Expected Number of Students	B. Basic Charter School Per Pupil Aid	C. Projected Per Pupil Revenue (AxB)	D. Other District Revenue (SPED, Food Service, Grants, etc.)	E. Total Project Funding from District to Charter School (C+D)	F. New York City School District Budget	G. Projected District Impact (E/F)
Year 1 (2025-26)	180	18,340	3,301,200	308,848	3,610,048	39,400,000,000	0.009%
Year 5 (2029-30)	529	18,340	9,701,860	910,526	10,612,386	39,400,000,000	0.027%

The Institute finds that the fiscal impact of the proposed school on the district, including charter, district, and nonpublic schools in the same geographical area will be minimal.

The Institute reviewed the school’s proposed startup and fiscal plans and supporting evidence for each year of the proposed charter term, as well as the network’s business plan and financial statements, and finds the budgets and fiscal plans are sound and sufficient startup funds will be available to the new charter school.

The Institute analyzed the existing education corporation and finds it fiscally strong as reflected in the fiscal dashboard included in Appendix C.

NOTIFICATION & PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Institute notified the district as well as public and nonpublic schools in the same geographic area of the proposed school about receipt of the proposals, and posted public notices on the Institute’s website for public review. The district scheduled a public hearing pertaining to the proposed school on May 23, 2024. The Institute carefully reviews and considers all district and public comments received prior to finalizing its recommendation. Any district comments and a summary of public comments is provided in Appendix A.

PREFERENCE SCORING

Education Law § 2852(9-a)(c) requires authorizers to establish a scoring rubric and grant priority to applications meeting both statutory and authorizer standards. The purpose of the preference criteria is to prioritize proposals in the event that the number of proposals meeting the SUNY Trustees' requirements exceeds the maximum number of charters to be issued. The RFP identified the minimum eligibility requirements and mandated preference criteria required by Education Law § 2852(9-a)(c), as described in greater detail below, as well as SUNY's additional criteria. The Zeta 5- 8 proposals met the eligibility requirements, as evidenced by the following:

- the proposals were sufficiently complete, i.e., they included a Transmittal and Summary form, Proposal Summary, and responses to all RFP requests as prescribed by the Institute;
- the proposals included a viable plan to meet the enrollment and retention targets established by the SUNY Trustees for students with disabilities, ELLs, and students who are eligible to participate in the FRPL program (as detailed in Request 5); and,
- the proposals provided evidence of public outreach that conforms to the Act and the process prescribed by the SUNY Trustees for the purpose of soliciting and incorporating community input regarding the proposed charter schools and their academic program (as detailed in Request 4).

As Zeta 5- 8's proposal submissions met the eligibility criteria, the Institute's evaluation continued with a full review of the proposals, an interview of the application team and proposed board of trustees, and requests for clarification and/or amendments to the proposal. The review process then continued with an evaluation of the proposals in relation to the nine Preference Criteria contained in the RFP for which proposals can earn credit as described in the RFP's Preference Scoring Guidance. The Preference Criteria, in addition to eligibility criteria and the overall high standards established by the SUNY Trustees, include the mandatory objectives set forth in Education Law §§ 2852(9-a)(c)(i)-(viii).

Pursuant to the RFP, in compliance with the requirements for new charter applications set forth in Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(i-ii), (g), the Institute recommends the SUNY Trustees approve the applications for four new charters as proposed.

- Zeta Charter School- New York City 5 earned a score of 35.50 preference points out of a maximum of 39.
- Zeta Charter School- New York City 6 earned a score of 35.50 preference points out of a maximum of 39.
- Zeta Charter School- New York City 7 earned a score of 35.75 preference points out of a maximum of 39.
- Zeta Charter School- New York City 8 earned a score of 35.75 preference points out of a maximum of 39.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its review and findings, the Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the proposals to grant Zeta Charter Schools- New York City the authority to operate Zeta Charter School- New York City 5, Zeta Charter School- New York City 6, Zeta Charter School- New York City 7, and Zeta Charter School- New York City 8 to open in August 2025 .

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE SUNY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THROUGH JULY 10, 2024

On or about March 7, 2024, in accordance with Education Law § 2857(1), the Institute notified the district as well as public and private schools in the same geographic area of the proposed school about receipt of the proposals to establish Zeta 5- 8. The notice reminded the district that the New York State Commissioner of Education's regulations require the school district to hold a public hearing within 30 days of the notice for each new charter application. Redacted copies of the Zeta 5- 8 proposals were also posted [on the Institute's website for public review](#).

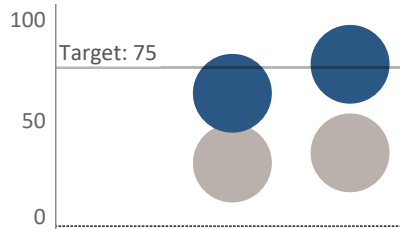
The New York City Department of Education held its required hearing on Zeta's four new charter school applications on May 23, 2024 by videoconference. A network leadership team member discussed the network's background and its desire to expand to Queens in CSDs 24, 25, and 28. She emphasized the school's mission to ensure every student has the right to the highest quality, free education from pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade. She detailed Zeta's innovative charter model, which will be used by the proposed schools, and includes world-class academics with a focus on social, emotional, and whole-child learning. The students have access to robust specialty programming, including taekwondo, art, chess, music, dance, and the Zeta Innovation Labs. The network leader shared how students' state test scores outperform the schools in their CSDs and schools across the city and state. In addition, the network leader emphasized Zeta's commitment to serving all students, including English language learners and students with special education needs. The Queens Community Board 12 Chairperson and the Education Chair spoke in opposition to the applications at this time due to the lack of transparency with charter schools and the lack of space in district schools due to lowering class sizes. Three CSD 28 community members spoke in opposition of the applications because of lack of interest in the district for any charter schools, lack of community engagement, diversion of resources from district schools, and concerns that Zeta has been accused of engaging in unethical practices related to the treatment of students with disabilities and cited a 2021 complaint filed by the Advocates for Children of New York to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. One CSD 29 community member spoke in opposition of the applications because of allegations that charter schools send students with disabilities back to district schools but retain the funding for those students.

The applicants provided evidence of support for the proposed school in the form of letters from a variety of individuals and organizations including United States Member of Congress Gregory Meeks; New York State Senator James Sanders; New York State Assembly Member Vivian E. Cook; New York State Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi; New York City Council Member James Gennaro; Phil Wong, former CEC 24 President; and approximately 200 letters of support from families of students who currently attend Zeta Schools- NYC. The Institute has received no direct comments in opposition to the application.

APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

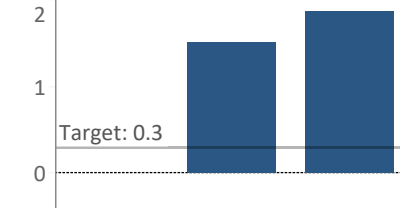
Zeta Charter Schools - New York City EDUCATION CORPORATION AGGREGATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS PERFORMANCE

Composite District Comparison.* The chart shows the percentage of students enrolled in at least their second year at **the education corporation's charters** performing at or above proficiency in comparison to that of students in the same tested grades in those charters' local districts.



Test Year	Districts %	Ed. Corp. %
2021	N/A	N/A
2022	30	63
2023	35	77

Effect Size. Charters are expected to exceed the predicted level of performance by an effect size of 0.3 or above. The chart shows a weighted average effect size for **all education corporation charters** administering state exams.



Test Year	Ed. Corp. Weighted Effect Size
2021	N/A
2022	1.51
2023	1.86

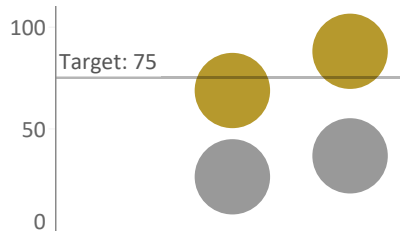
Mean Growth Percentile. The chart shows the unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 among **all education corporation charters**.



Test Year	Ed. Corp. Mean Growth Percentile
2021	N/A
2022	N/A
2023	58.8

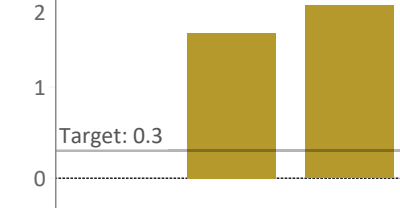
EDUCATION CORPORATION AGGREGATE MATHEMATICS PERFORMANCE

Composite District Comparison.* The chart shows the percentage of students enrolled in at least their second year at **the education corporation's charters** performing at or above proficiency in comparison to that of students in the same tested grades in those charters' local districts.



Test Year	Districts %	Ed. Corp. %
2021	N/A	N/A
2022	27	69
2023	37	88

Effect Size. Charters are expected to exceed the predicted level of performance by an effect size of 0.3 or above. The chart shows a weighted average effect size for **all education corporation charters** administering state exams.



Test Year	Ed. Corp. Weighted Effect Size
2021	N/A
2022	1.60
2023	1.92

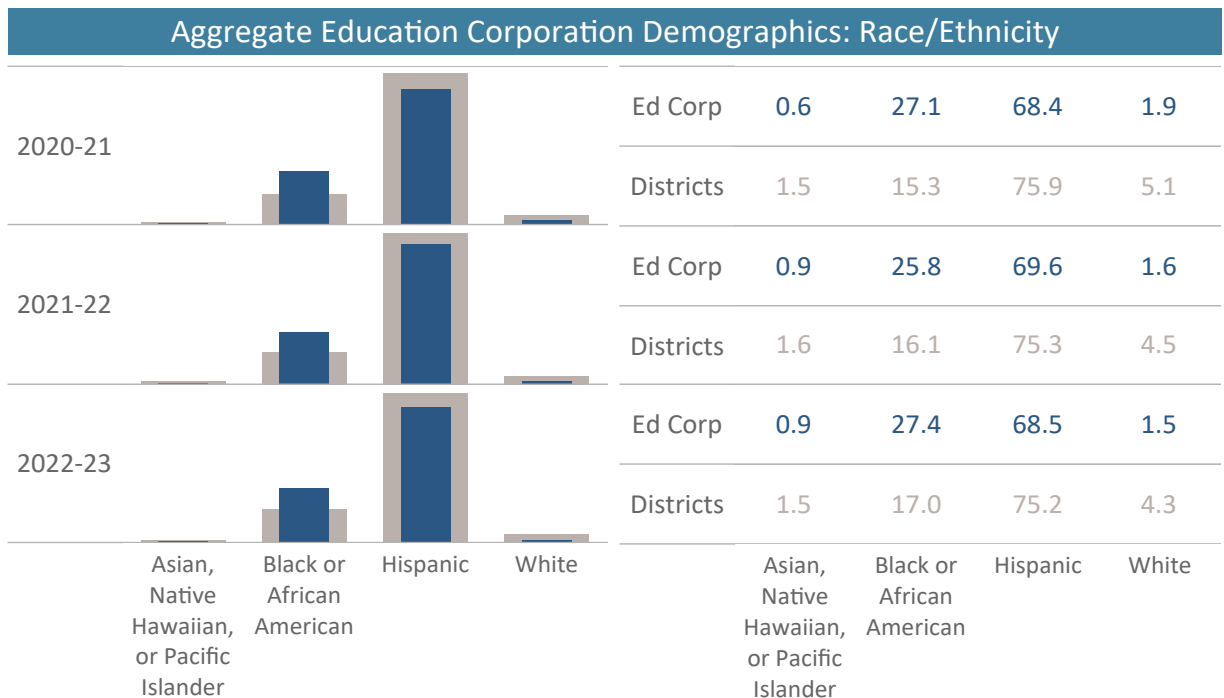
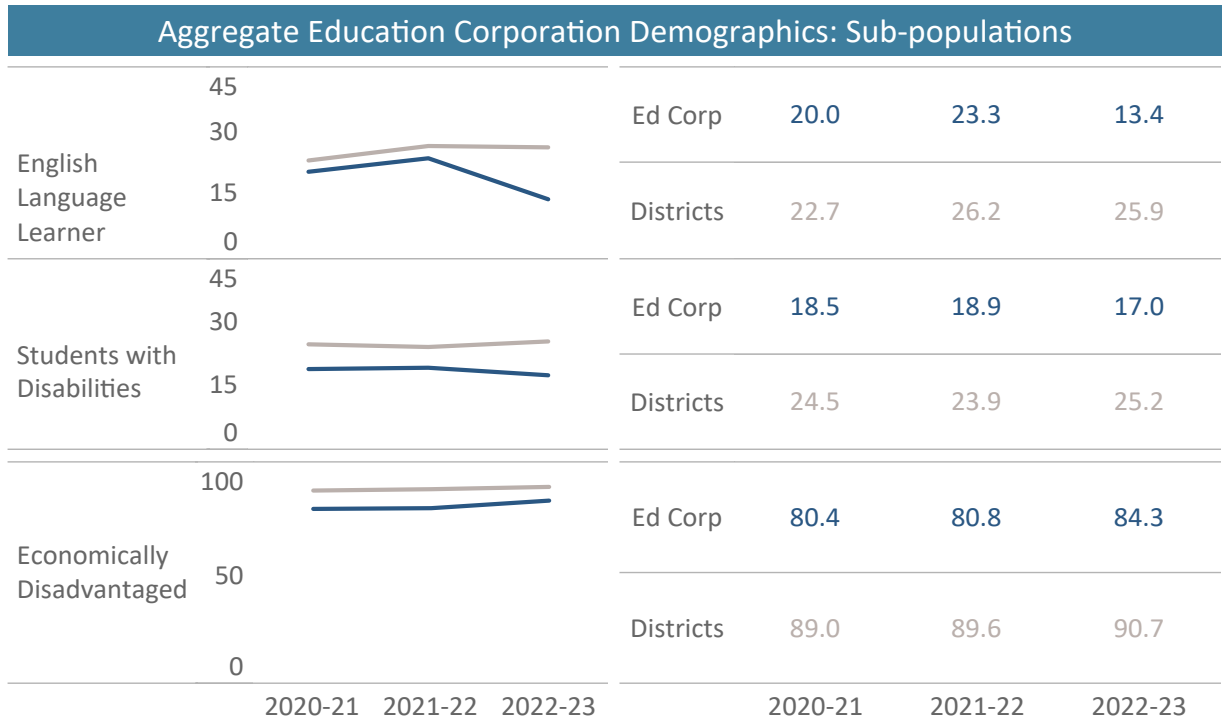
Mean Growth Percentile. The chart shows the unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 among **all education corporation charters**.



Test Year	Ed. Corp. Mean Growth Percentile
2021	N/A
2022	N/A
2023	61.1

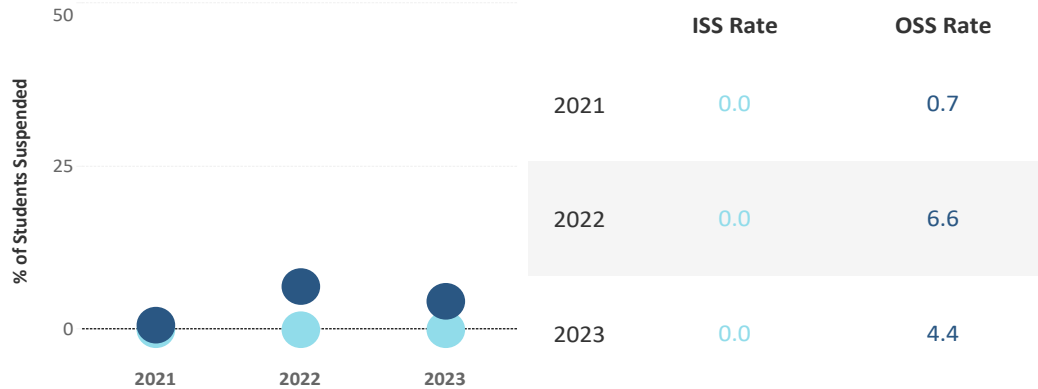
APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Zeta Charter Schools Aggregate Education Corporation Enrollment



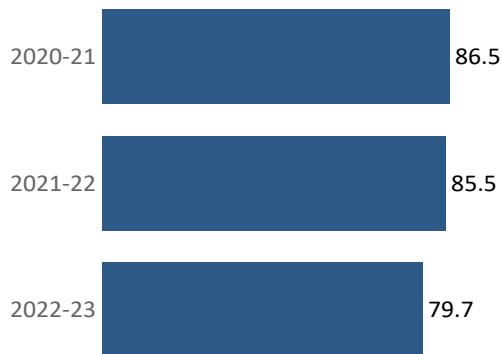
APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Zeta Charter Schools



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

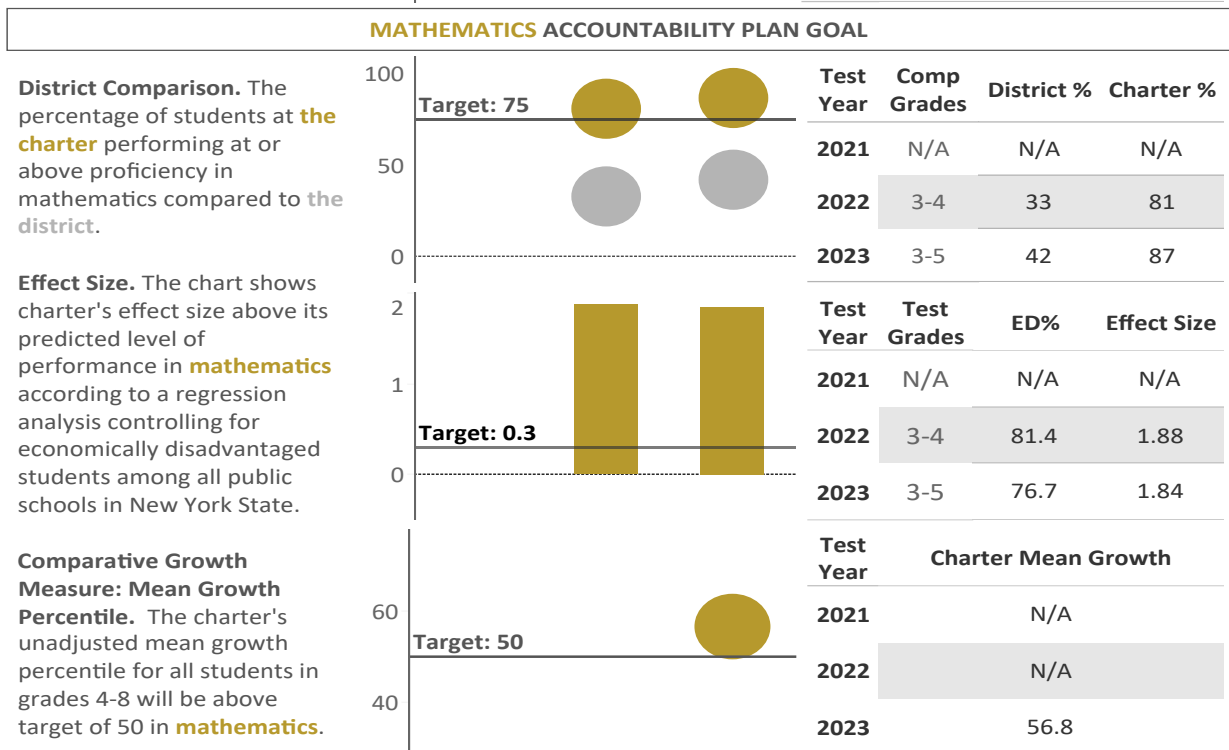
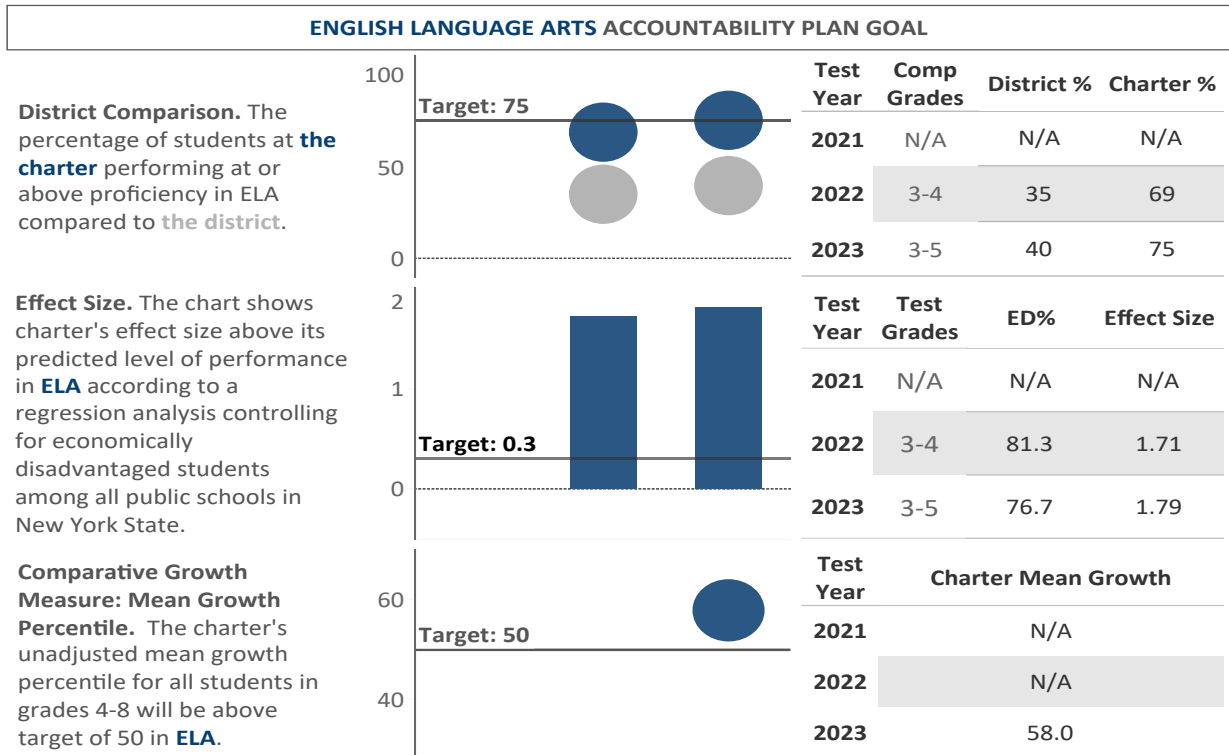
2021	2022	2023
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0	0	0
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APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Zeta Charter School - Inwood

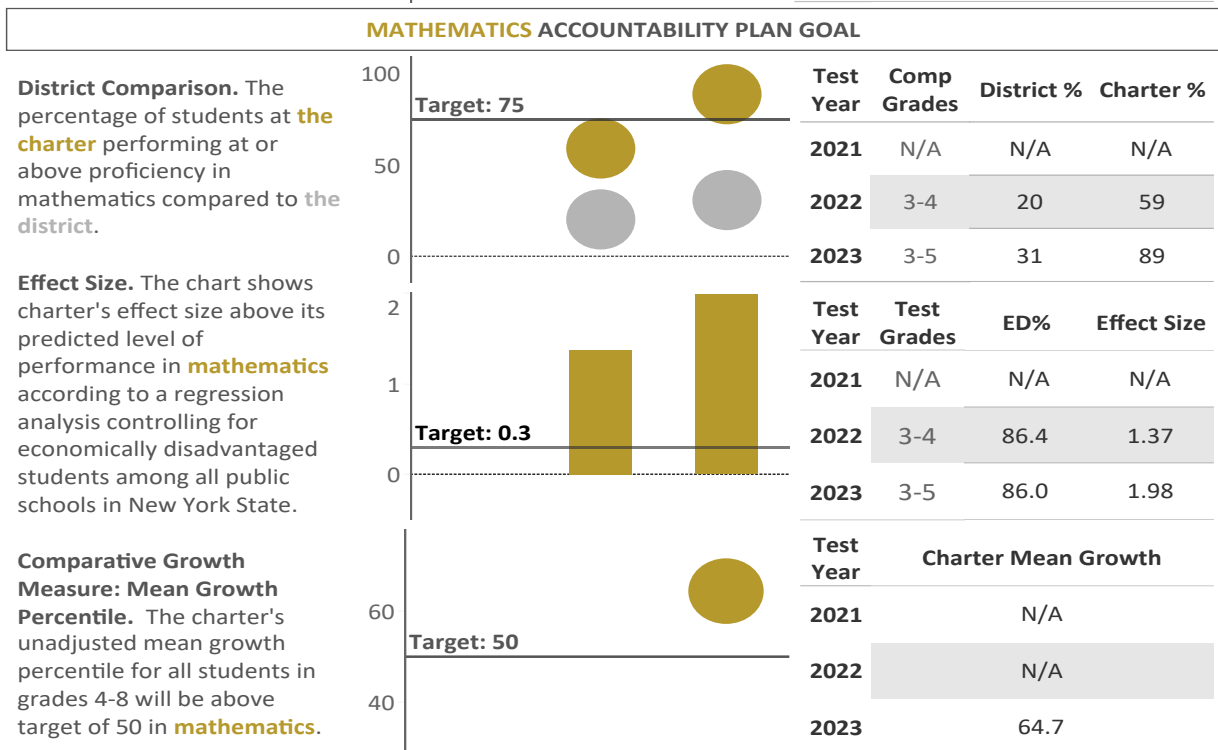
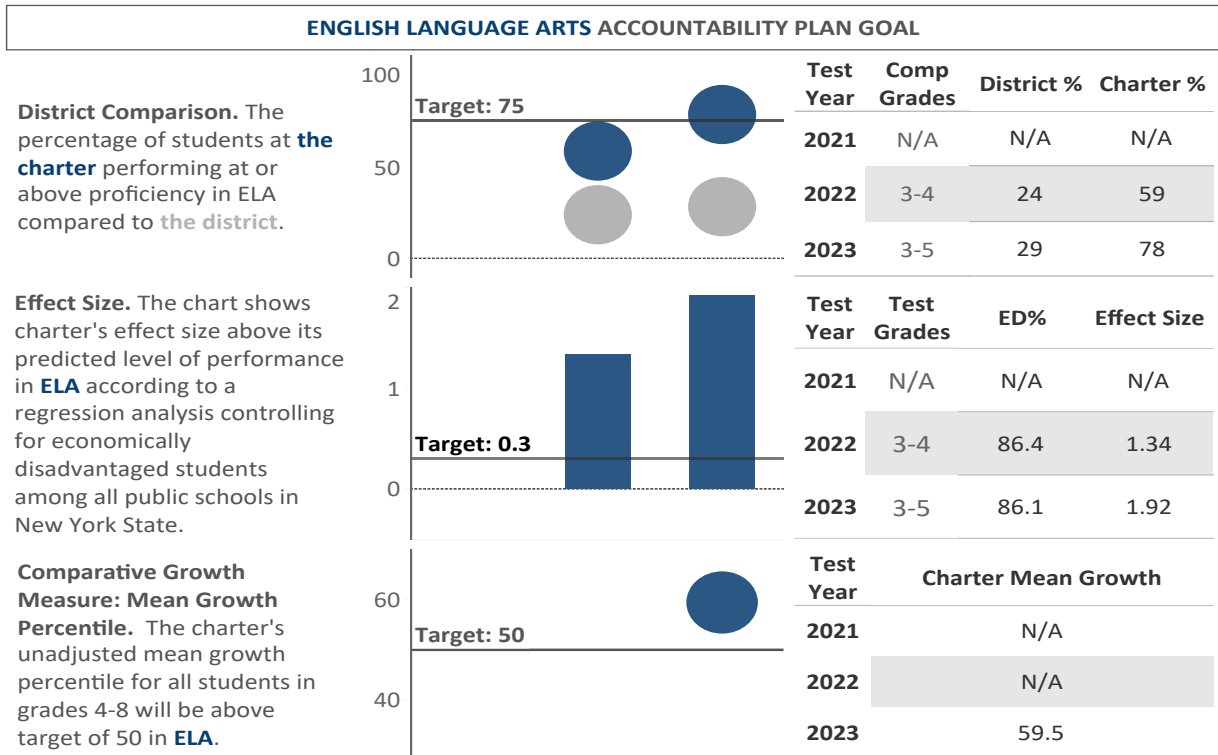
Manhattan CSD 6



APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Zeta Charter School - South Bronx

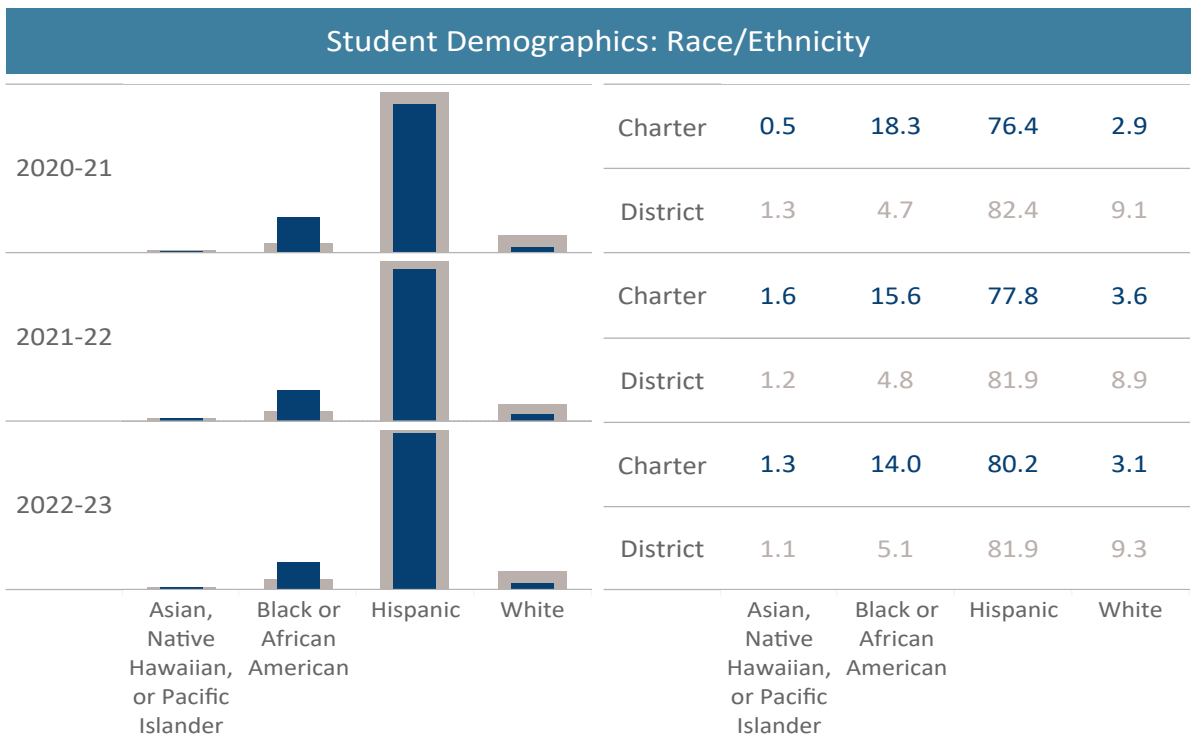
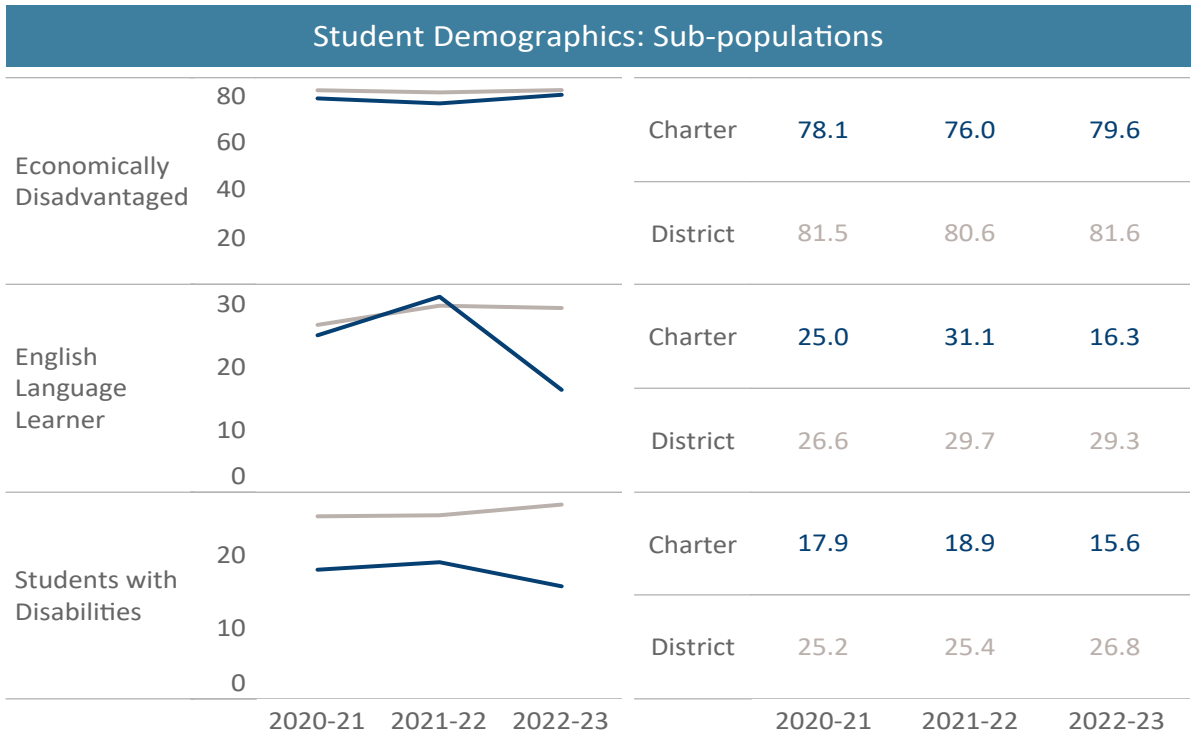
Bronx CSD 7



APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Zeta Charter School - Inwood

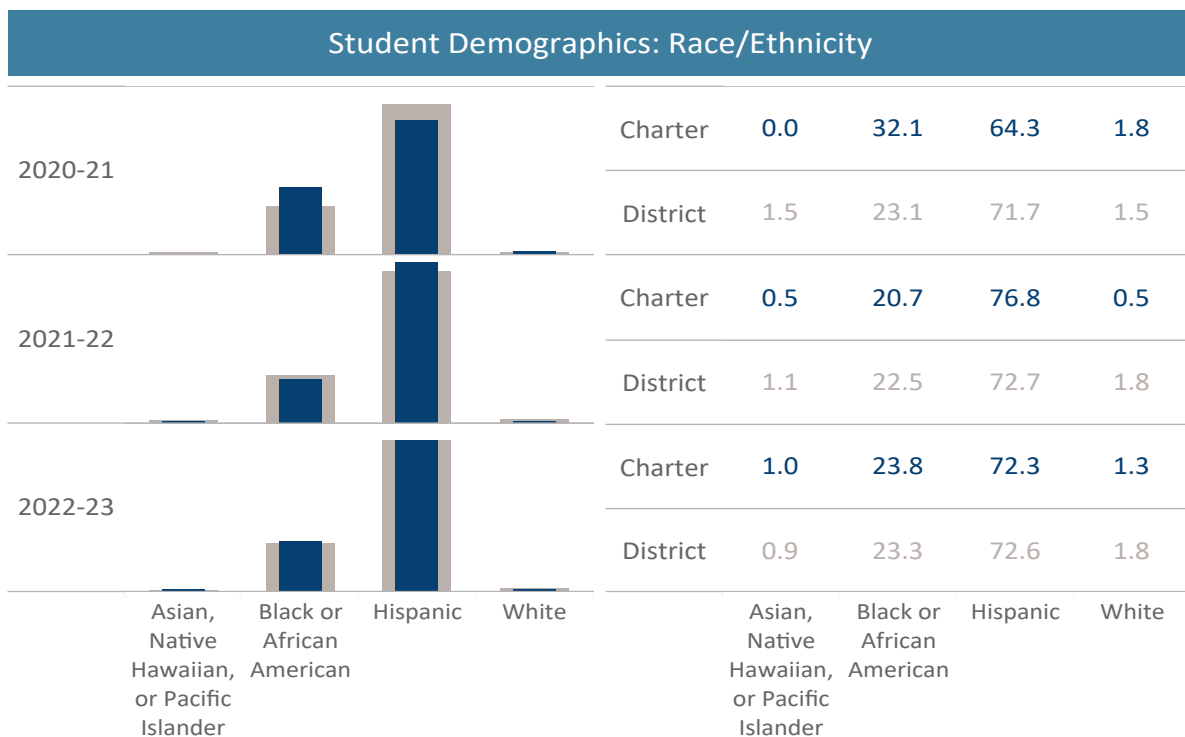
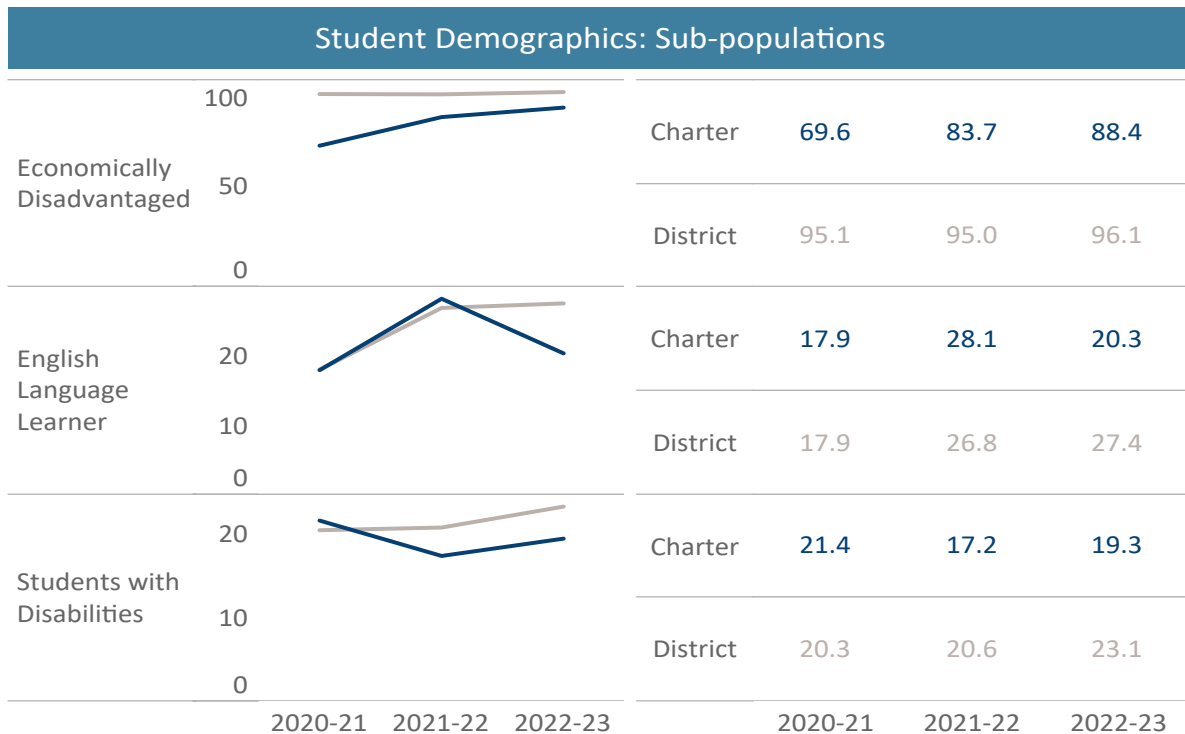
Manhattan CSD 6



APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Zeta Charter School - Mount Eden

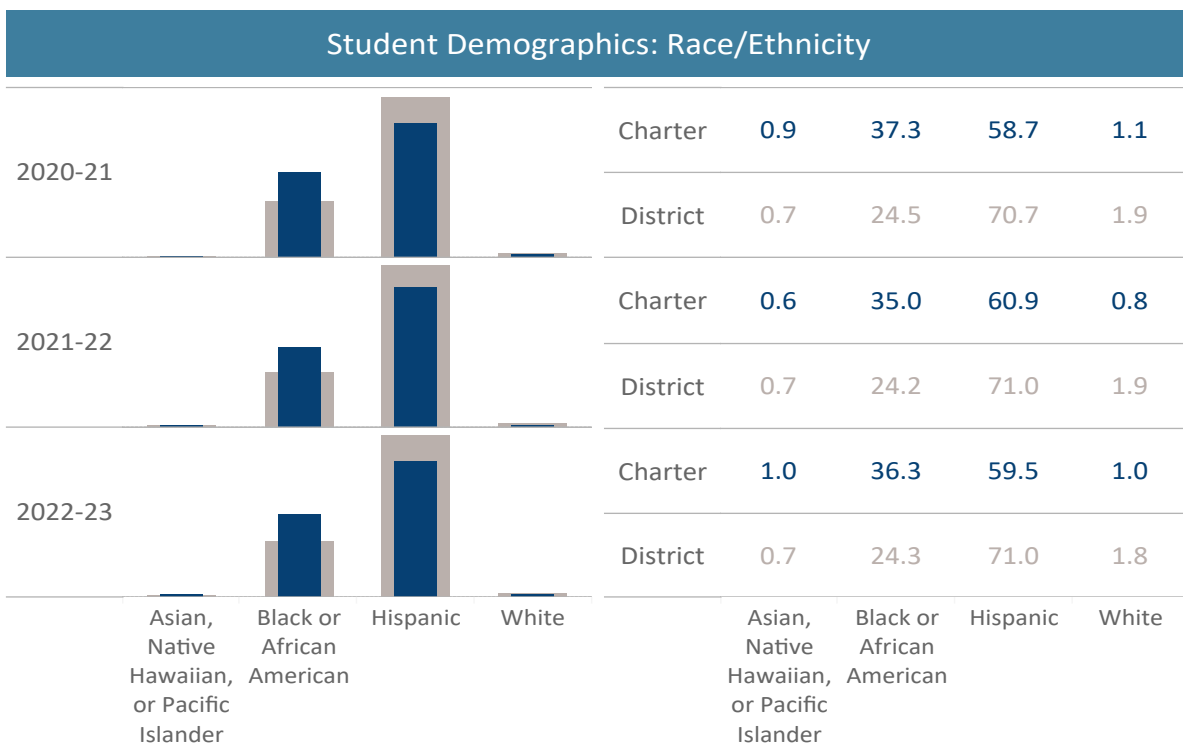
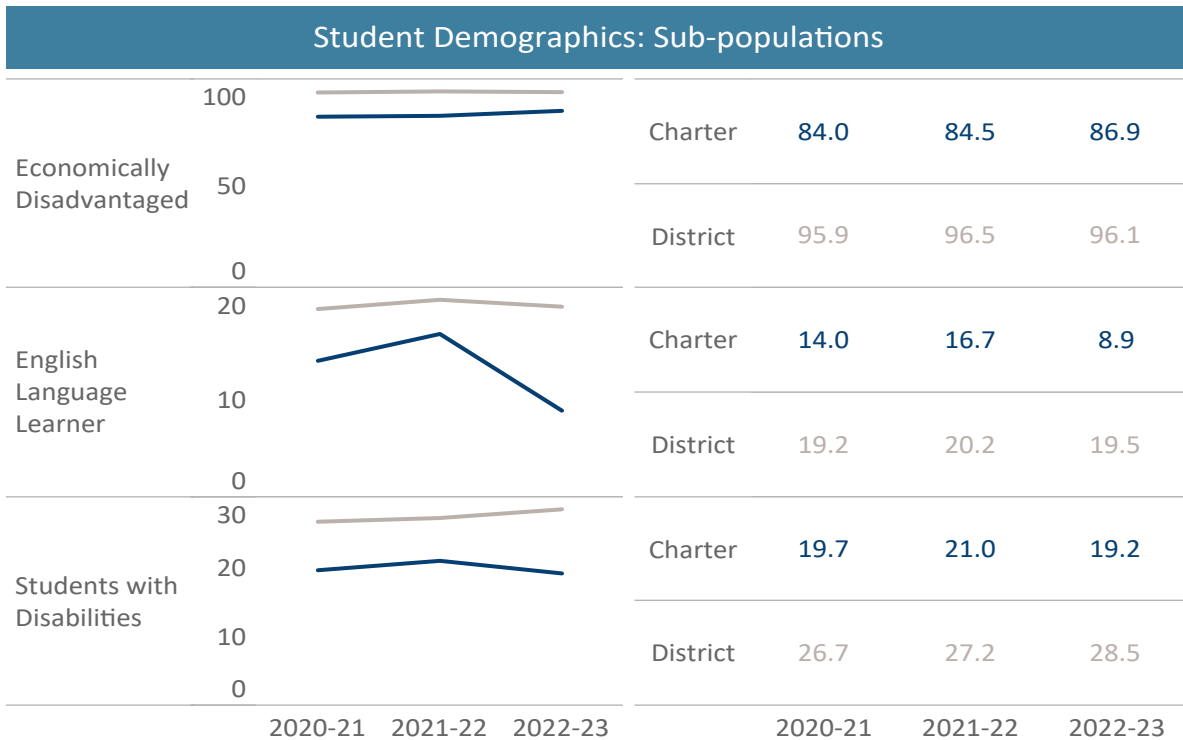
Bronx CSD 9



APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Zeta Charter School - South Bronx

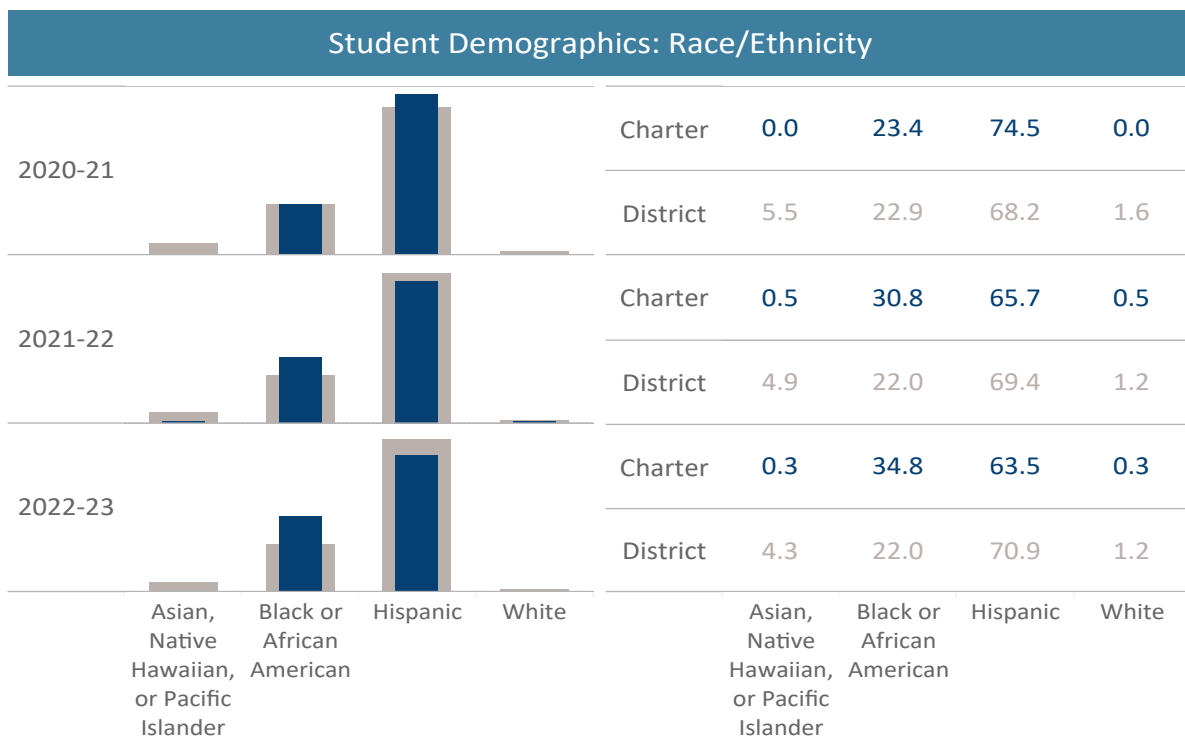
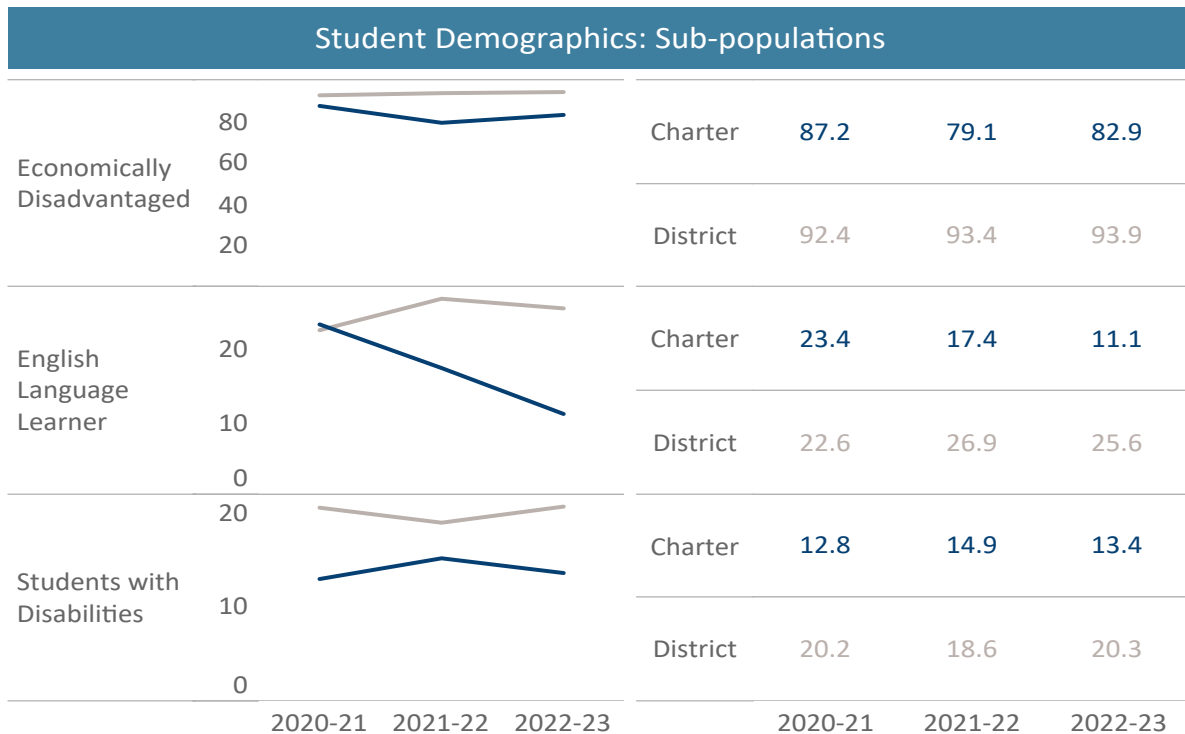
Bronx CSD 7



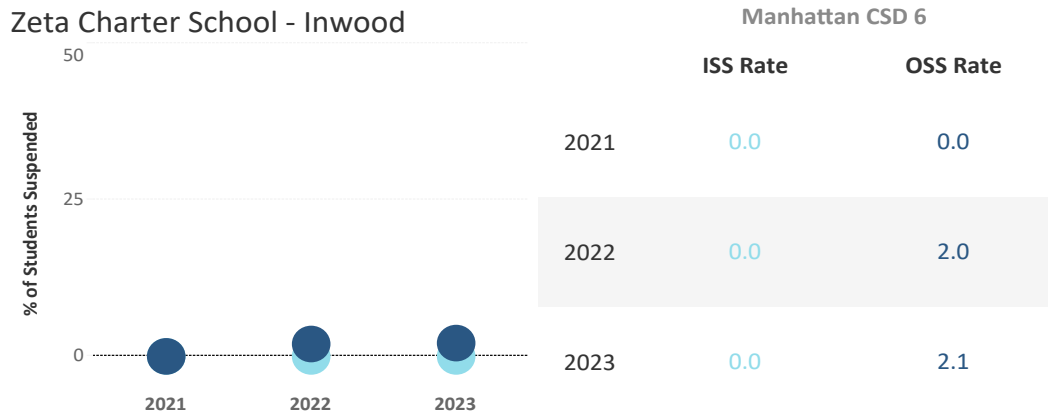
APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Zeta Charter School - Tremont Park

Bronx CSD 12

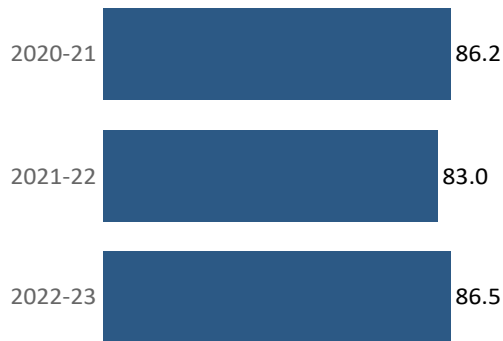


APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE



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.

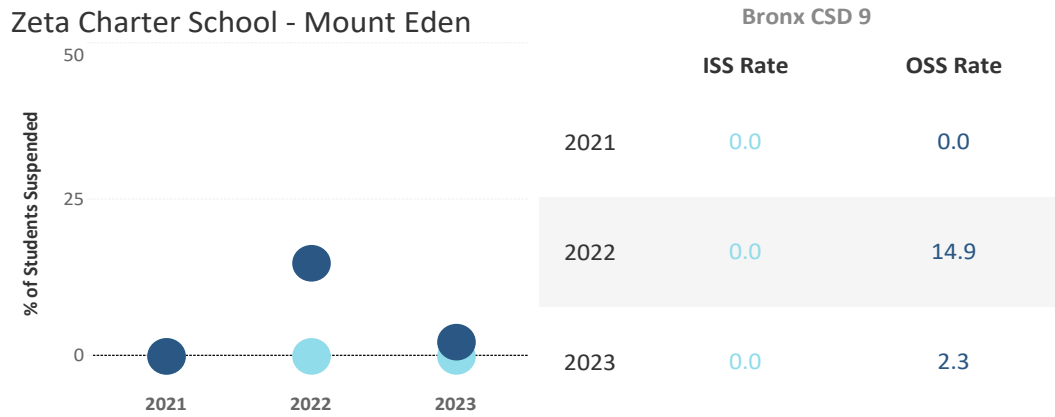
Persistence in Enrollment: The percentage of students eligible to return from previous year who did return



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

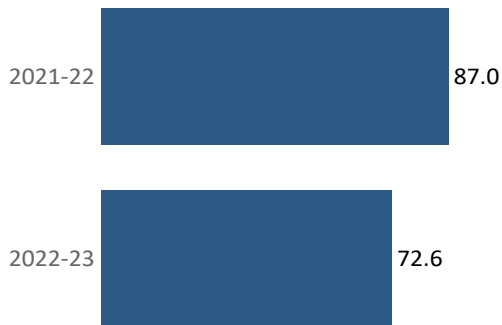
	2021	2022	2023
	0	0	0

APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE



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.

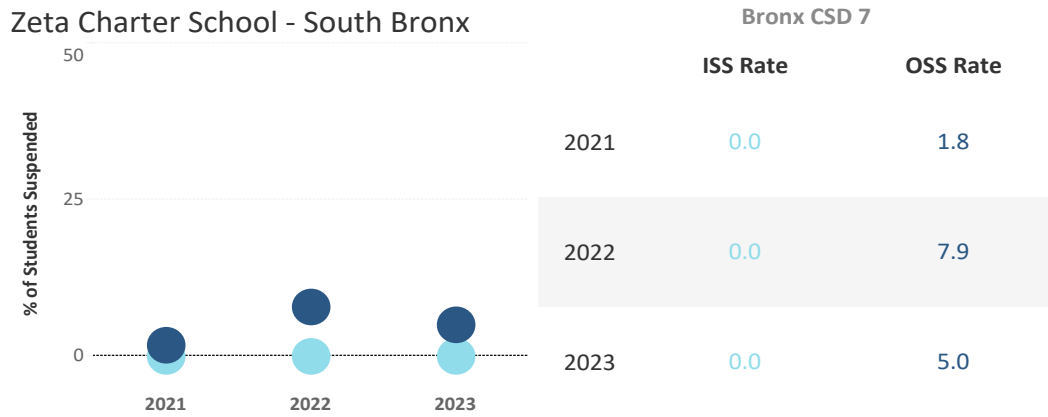
Persistence in Enrollment: The percentage of students eligible to return from previous year who did return



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

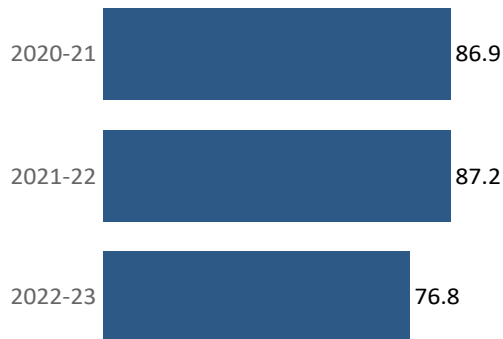
	2021	2022	2023
	0	0	0

APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE



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.

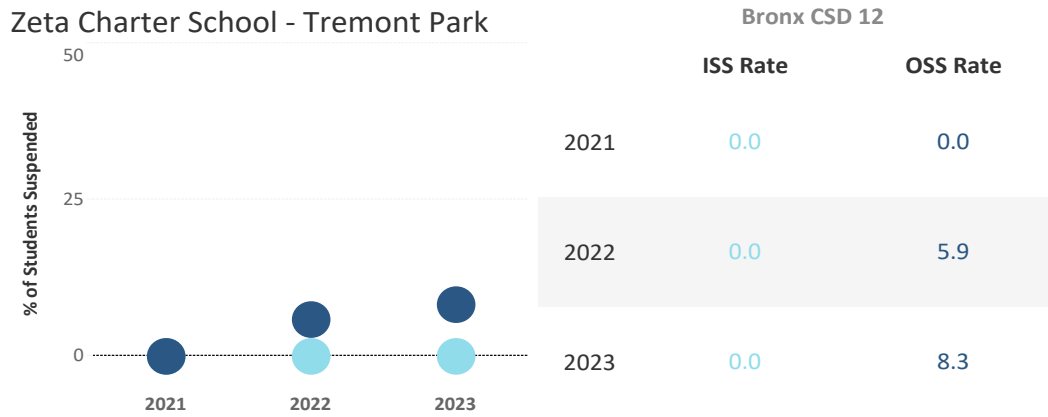
Persistence in Enrollment: The percentage of students eligible to return from previous year who did return



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

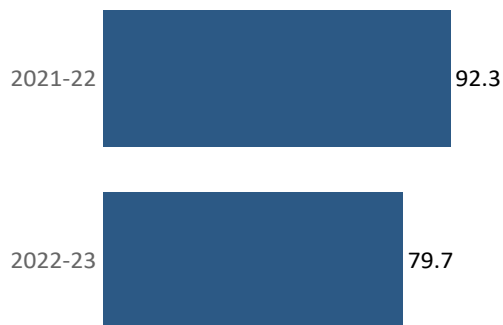
	2021	2022	2023
	0	0	0

APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE



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

Year	2021	2022	2023
Expulsions	0	0	0

APPENDIX C: FISCAL DASHBOARD

ZETA CHARTER SCHOOLS - NEW YORK CITY (COMBINED)

CHARTER INFORMATION

BALANCE SHEET

Assets

Current Assets

	MERGED 2018-19	MERGED 2019-20	MERGED 2020-21	MERGED 2021-22	MERGED 2022-23
Cash and Cash Equivalents - GRAPH 1	1,035,745	1,050,513	3,185,044	7,658,372	11,099,972
Grants and Contracts Receivable	858,043	1,120,913	2,973,128	2,733,753	2,499,313
Accounts Receivable	-	-	-	-	-
Prepaid Expenses	95,507	83,332	261,275	216,452	158,380
Contributions and Other Receivables	-	-	-	-	-
Total Current Assets - GRAPH 1	1,989,295	2,254,758	6,419,447	10,608,577	13,757,665
Property, Building and Equipment, net	373,204	541,859	1,674,403	17,247,851	2,243,274
Other Assets	100,061	200,121	200,200	300,277	212,987,643
Total Assets - GRAPH 1	2,462,560	2,996,738	8,294,050	28,156,705	228,988,582

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	131,863	289,660	466,938	1,206,956	1,344,823
Accrued Payroll and Benefits	186,293	250,338	457,586	930,227	1,069,041
Deferred Revenue	-	-	-	-	169,561
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	-	-	309,458	227,083	-
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Other	2,337,856	1,416,823	1,493,313	2,062,072	2,358,348
Total Current Liabilities - GRAPH 1	2,656,012	1,956,821	2,727,295	4,426,338	4,941,773
Deferred Rent/Lease Liability	378,190	58,259	331,219	29,839	-
All other L-T debt and notes payable, net current maturities	-	784,470	246,121	15,133,647	212,803,837
Total Liabilities - GRAPH 1	3,034,202	2,799,550	3,304,635	19,589,824	217,745,610

Net Assets

Without Donor Restrictions	(671,703)	197,188	4,989,415	8,566,881	11,242,972
With Donor Restrictions	100,061	-	-	-	-
Total Net Assets	(571,642)	197,188	4,989,415	8,566,881	11,242,972
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	2,462,560	2,996,738	8,294,050	28,156,705	228,988,582

ACTIVITIES

Operating Revenue

Resident Student Enrollment	5,021,965	7,564,311	14,078,466	21,544,421	30,858,177
Students with Disabilities	714,943	1,048,835	1,932,681	2,498,105	3,255,813
Grants and Contracts					
State and local	490,024	138,824	55,956	2,873,132	4,917,215
Federal - Title and IDEA	278,633	112,750	184,832	871,380	1,381,366
Federal - Other	1,422,136	522,991	3,417,591	5,571,708	2,260,674
Other	-	-	-	-	-
NYC DoE Rental Assistance	1,457,877	2,265,832	3,333,645	5,324,228	7,605,045
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program	166,754	162,629	204,748	495,366	1,473,409
Total Operating Revenue	9,552,332	11,816,172	23,207,919	39,178,340	51,751,699

Expenses

Regular Education	7,448,885	8,094,365	14,103,165	27,345,665	39,337,488
SPED	1,900,961	2,061,609	3,275,630	5,215,700	6,321,359
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Program Services	9,349,846	10,155,974	17,378,795	32,561,365	45,658,847
Management and General	1,084,088	1,185,873	1,816,891	3,182,505	3,720,282
Fundraising	44,010	55,636	58,362	-	-
Total Expenses - GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4	10,477,945	11,397,483	19,254,048	35,743,870	49,379,129
Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations	(925,613)	418,689	3,953,871	3,434,470	2,372,570

Support and Other Revenue

Contributions	341,205	343,902	3,428	29,427	58,495
Fundraising	-	10,000	27,518	-	-
Miscellaneous Income	12,766	10,173	807,410	113,569	245,026
Net assets released from restriction	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support and Other Revenue	353,971	364,075	838,356	142,996	303,521

Total Unrestricted Revenue	9,906,303	12,180,247	24,046,275	39,321,336	52,055,220
Total Temporally Restricted Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
Total Revenue - GRAPHS 2 & 3	9,906,303	12,180,247	24,046,275	39,321,336	52,055,220

Change in Net Assets

Net Assets - Beginning of Year - GRAPH 2	(571,642)	782,764	4,792,227	3,577,466	2,676,091
Prior Year Adjustment(s)	-	(571,642)	197,188	4,989,415	8,566,881
Net Assets - End of Year - GRAPH 2	(571,642)	211,122	4,989,415	8,566,881	11,242,972

APPENDIX C: FISCAL DASHBOARD

ZETA CHARTER SCHOOLS - NEW YORK CITY (COMBINED)

CHARTER INFORMATION - (Continued)

Functional Expense Breakdown

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Personnel Service					
Administrative Staff Personnel	1,298,284	908,854	1,605,510	2,727,834	3,939,625
Instructional Personnel	2,142,394	2,991,568	5,269,433	9,039,785	12,479,078
Non-Instructional Personnel	-	-	25,282	171,937	129,226
Personnel Services (Combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Salaries and Staff	3,440,678	3,900,422	6,900,225	11,939,556	16,547,929
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes	749,702	847,811	1,362,358	2,211,712	3,097,749
Retirement	47,675	113,215	122,225	344,853	360,133
Management Company Fees	1,047,934	1,390,909	2,918,153	4,901,960	6,225,979
Building and Land Rent / Lease / Facility Financing	2,370,956	2,543,207	3,931,080	6,494,560	7,900,444
Staff Development	119,424	169,918	308,998	526,751	847,939
Professional Fees, Consultant & Purchased Services	276,533	565,142	617,985	809,301	808,669
Marketing / Recruitment	858,372	424,885	692,041	943,827	1,484,119
Student Supplies, Materials & Services	696,759	502,365	685,781	3,144,140	3,109,704
Depreciation	171,916	190,059	478,832	1,136,265	4,663,817
Other	697,995	749,550	1,236,370	3,290,945	4,332,647
Total Expenses	10,477,943	11,397,483	19,254,048	35,743,870	49,379,129

CHARTER ANALYSIS

ENROLLMENT

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Original Chartered Enrollment	360	480	1,080	1,372	1,778
Final Chartered Enrollment (includes any revisions)	360	480	840	1,312	1,749
Actual Enrollment - GRAPH 4	318	469	853	1,280	1,751
Chartered Grades	-	-	-	-	-
Final Chartered Grades (includes any revisions)	-	-	-	-	-

Primary School District:

Per Pupil Funding (Weighted Avg of All Districts)	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Increase over prior year	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

Revenue	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Operating	29,999	25,209	27,222	30,608	29,553
Other Revenue and Support	1,112	777	983	112	173
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	31,110	25,985	28,206	30,720	29,726
Expenses	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Program Services	29,363	21,667	20,385	25,439	26,073
Management and General, Fundraising	3,543	2,649	2,200	2,486	2,124
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	32,906	24,315	22,585	27,925	28,198
% of Program Services	89.2%	89.1%	90.3%	91.1%	92.5%
% of Management and Other	10.8%	10.9%	9.7%	8.9%	7.5%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses - GRAPH 5	-5.5%	6.9%	24.9%	10.0%	5.4%
% of Revenue Expended on Facilities	24.8%	21.5%	16.9%	16.6%	15.3%

Student to Faculty Ratio

9.6	9.0	8.6	9.1	9.5
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Faculty to Admin Ratio

3.3	3.7	4.1	4.4	3.4
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Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - GRAPH 6

Score	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Fiscally Strong 1.5 - 3.0 / Fiscally Adequate 1.0 - 1.4 / Fiscally Needs Monitoring < 1.0	(0.7)	0.8	2.7	2.1	1.6
	Fiscally Needs Monitoring	Fiscally Needs Monitoring	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong

Working Capital - GRAPH 7

Net Working Capital	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
As % of Unrestricted Revenue	(666,717)	297,937	3,692,152	6,182,239	8,815,892
Working Capital (Current) Ratio Score	-6.7%	2.4%	15.4%	15.7%	16.9%
Risk (Low ≥ 3.0 / Medium 1.4 - 2.9 / High < 1.4)	0.7	1.2	2.4	2.4	2.8
Rating (Excellent ≥ 3.0 / Good 1.4 - 2.9 / Poor < 1.4)	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	Poor	Poor	Good	Good	Good

Quick (Acid Test) Ratio

Score	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Risk (Low ≥ 2.5 / Medium 1.0 - 2.4 / High < 1.0)	0.7	1.1	2.3	2.3	2.8
Rating (Excellent ≥ 2.5 / Good 1.0 - 2.4 / Poor < 1.0)	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW
	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Excellent

Debt to Asset Ratio - GRAPH 7

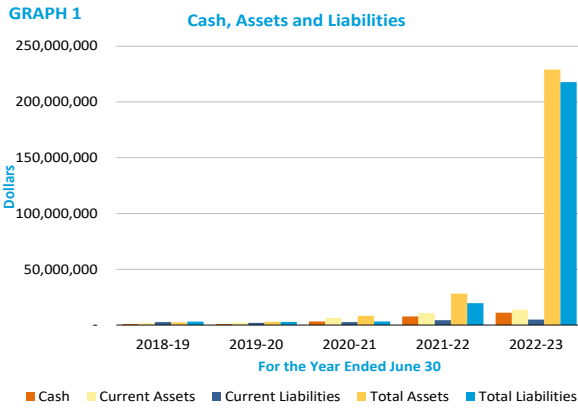
Score	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Risk (Low < 0.50 / Medium 0.51 - .95 / High > 1.0)	1.2	0.9	0.4	0.7	1.0
Rating (Excellent < 0.50 / Good 0.51 - .95 / Poor > 1.0)	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
	Poor	Good	Excellent	Good	Poor

Months of Cash - GRAPH 8

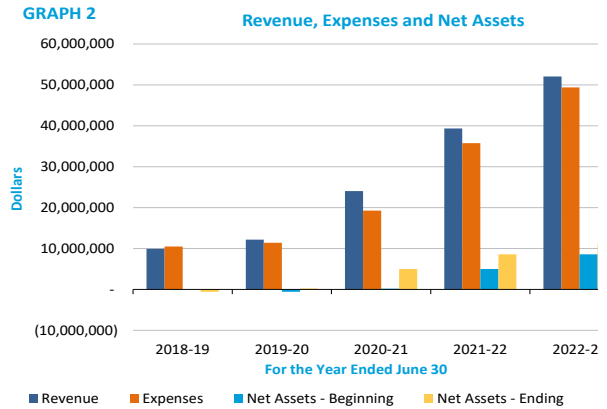
Score	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Risk (Low > 3 mo. / Medium 1 - 3 mo. / High < 1 mo.)	1.2	1.1	2.0	2.6	2.7
Rating (Excellent > 3 mo. / Good 1 - 3 mo. / Poor < 1 mo.)	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good

APPENDIX C: FISCAL DASHBOARD

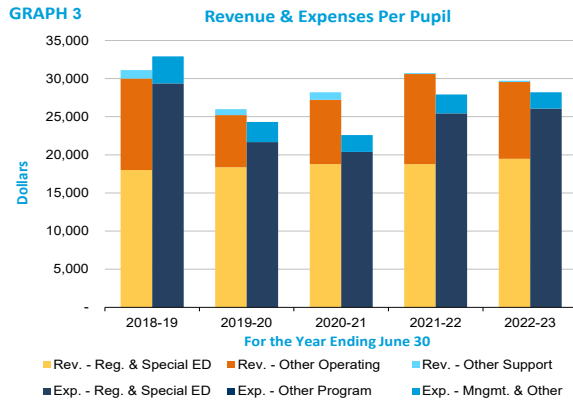
ZETA CHARTER SCHOOLS - NEW YORK CITY (COMBINED)



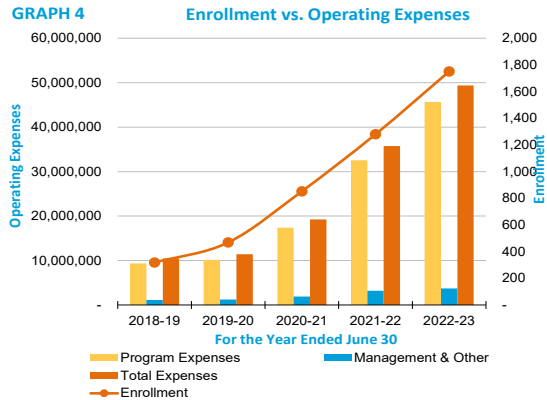
This chart illustrates the relationship between assets and liabilities and to what extent cash reserves makes up current assets. Ideally for each subset, subsets 2 through 4, (i.e. current assets vs. current liabilities), the column on the left is taller than the immediate column on the right; and, generally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



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



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

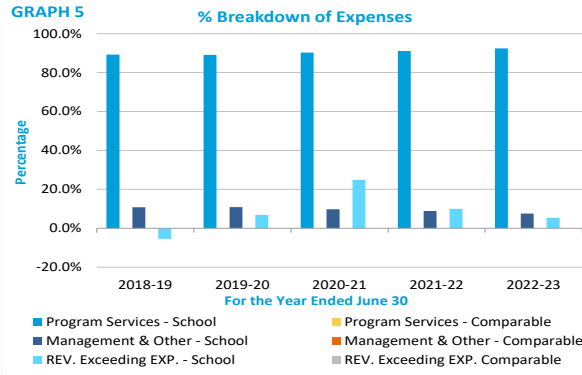


This chart illustrates to what extent the school's operating expenses have followed its student enrollment pattern. A baseline assumption that this data tests is that operating expenses increase with each additional student served. This chart also compares and contrasts growth trends of both, giving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

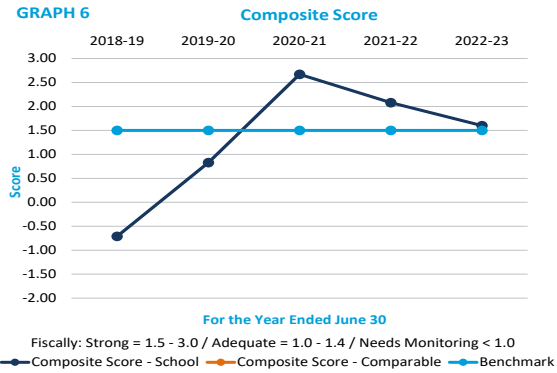
APPENDIX C: FISCAL DASHBOARD

ZETA CHARTER SCHOOLS - NEW YORK CITY (COMBINED)

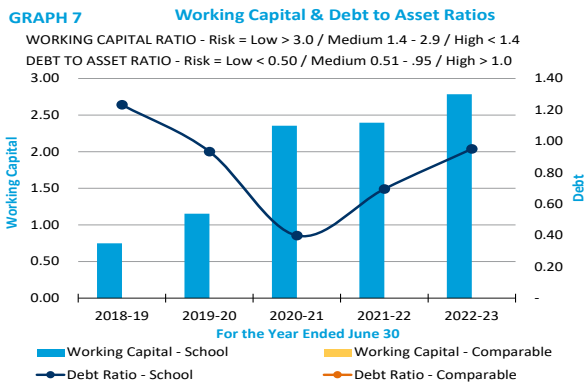
Comparable School, Region or Network: -



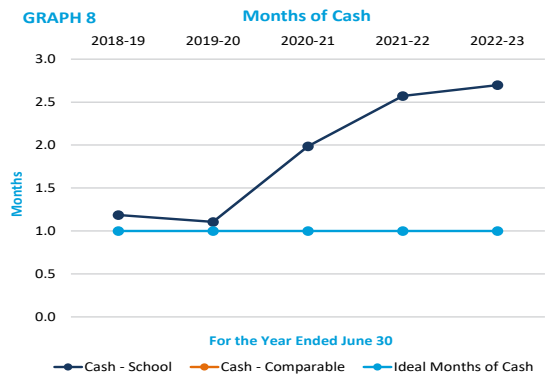
This chart illustrates the percentage expense breakdown between program services and management & others as well as the percentage of revenues exceeding expenses. Ideally the percentage expense for program services will far exceed that of the management & other expense. The percentage of revenues exceeding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



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



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



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



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

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353 Broadway
Albany, New York 12246
518-445-4250