

THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY
ATMOSPHERE ACADEMY PUBLIC
CHARTER SCHOOLS*

REPORT DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 2025

VISIT DATE: SEPTEMBER 19 – 20, 2024



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

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CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND

ATMOSPHERE ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

22 Marble Hill Avenue, Bronx, NY | Grades: 6-7 | NYC Community School District 10
 3700 Independence Avenue, Bronx, NY | Grades: 8 | NYC Community School District 10
 5959 Broadway, Bronx, NY | Grades: 9 | NYC Community School District 10
 3840 Corlear Avenue, Bronx, NY | Grades: 10 | NYC Community School District 10
 3893 Waldo Avenue, Bronx, NY | Grades: 11-12 | NYC Community School District 10

MISSION

Through the creation of a highly engaging school setting, Atmosphere not only prepares students to be ready for college, career, and life, but also to succeed once they get there. By actively contributing to the school's shared learning community, Atmosphere students will acquire the character, skills, and knowledge they need to think, collaborate, and lead.

CURRENT CHARTER INFORMATION

Year Opened: 2015
 Serves: 6 – 12th
 Chartered Enrollment: 1,400
 Charter Expires on: July 31, 2025

FUTURE CHARTER INFORMATION

Serves: Kindergarten – 12th
 Chartered Enrollment: 2,304
 Charter Expiration: July 31, 2030

ATMOSPHERE ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES¹

CHAIR

Dr. Michael J. Lagas, EdD.

TREASURER

Jesse J. Greene, Esq.

TRUSTEES

Alan Dillon, Esq.
 James Spitzer, Esq.
 Rabbi Binyamin Krause

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

School culture;	+	Key partners and supporters;	+
Rigorous and diverse course offerings;	+	Student-centered and differentiated instruction;	+
Standards-aligned curriculum;	+	Distributed leadership;	+
Extended day/year;	+	Special education teacher support services ("SETSS"), integrated co-Teaching ("ICT") and self-contained special education settings ("12:1:1");	+

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

"+" : This indicator is generally present.

"-": This indicator is generally not present.



CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS CONTINUED

21 st century learning;	+	Data-driven decision making;	+
English language learner (“ELL”) program;	+	Core values; and,	+
Rapid response to intervention;	+	Governance.	+
Restorative justice;	+		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FULL-TERM RENEWAL

The Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) recommends the SUNY Trustees’ Charter School Committee approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten through 12th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal, with a projected total enrollment of 2,304 students. The Institute makes this recommendation as Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools meets the requirements for renewal set forth in the Policies for 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”).²

REVISION REQUEST

Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools (“Atmosphere”) comes to its second renewal having built a strong and effective 6th – 12th grade program in its subsequent charter term. Through this renewal, the school is seeking to expand down to an elementary program ultimately serving 2,304 students in Kindergarten – 12th grade with a projected opening date for the elementary program in 2028-29. Having opened with a middle school program, the school recognizes serving an elementary program will allow Atmosphere to build a strong academic foundation for students to persist through its middle and high school programs. The school proposes an effective academic program led by an instructional leadership team that aligns to the needs of an elementary program. Atmosphere will build out a lower elementary program serving Kindergarten – 2nd grade and an upper elementary program serving 3rd – 5th grade. In its proposal, Atmosphere outlines specific Key Design Elements for both the lower and upper elementary programs, specifically focused on students’ developmental needs at each level. For example, the lower program will focus on learning to read with clear programs and scheduling in place to build students’ foundational literacy skills and evolve to focus on reading to learn in the upper elementary program. Similarly, the upper program focuses on inquiry-based experiential learning in mathematics to closely align with the current middle school mathematics program philosophy. Across all content areas, leaders are thoughtful in considering the alignment to the current Atmosphere academic program. Starting in upper elementary, Atmosphere will adapt its effective learning systems to align with elementary aged students.

Atmosphere will implement an elementary program that focuses on celebrating learning and growth through a range of extracurricular opportunities and incentives. Programs may include opportunities for students to participate in experiential learning trips to expand students’ exposure to the world.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Atmosphere has established a track record of meeting its Accountability Plan goals, and offers programming that is responsive to student needs. Since its inception, Atmosphere has experienced sustained, upward growth in academic performance, moving from an overall 9% proficiency rate in English language arts (“ELA”) in 2015-16 to 56% in 2023-24. Atmosphere attributes these improvements to its use of bespoke learning systems that help students develop strong study habits in high priority areas such as writing and mathematical problem solving.

Atmosphere’s executive leadership team consists of a chief executive officer (“CEO”), chief learning officer (“CLO”), and chief culture officer (“CCO”) who oversee academics, strategy and development, financial management, school culture, and special populations programming while building leaders across the organization take on roles

². SUNY Renewal Policies (p. 14) are available on the [Institute’s website](#).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

to develop teachers and ensure strong academic outcomes. To cultivate internal leadership capacity, the school leverages a robust distributed leadership model that allows teachers to move into managerial level positions based on merit and need.

Atmosphere offers a comprehensive college preparation curriculum that incorporates progress monitoring and personalized guidance, and students have the opportunity to partake in early college coursework through local university partners. The school is also committed to offering a broad array of extracurricular and career exploration opportunities for students. For example, high school students have the opportunity to pursue internships of their choice, take international class trips to Europe and Asia, or participate in simulated stock market investing clubs under the guidance of experienced financiers. The school also possesses a dedicated special populations team that supports integration and co-planning among special education, general education, and English language learner (“ELL”) providers, and the school offers integrated co-teaching (“ICT”) and special education teacher support services (“SETSS”) in all grades, as well as 12:1:1 settings at the middle school level.

FINDINGS & INFORMATION

Is the charter an academic success?

Atmosphere is an academic success having met or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals over the charter term. The school provides effective, differentiated coaching for teachers, along with data-driven instructional planning that is both collaborative and responsive to student needs. As the school first enrolls students in 6th grade, students come to Atmosphere with wide ranges of academic experiences and levels. To ensure students are brought to grade level standards during their tenure at Atmosphere, the school has an effective at-risk program that carefully analyzes student needs and cultivates a program that meets individual student needs with a wide range of supports across the program. The school’s intervention programs work effectively as evidenced by the school’s strong performance.

The school demonstrates success in the following ways:

- Atmosphere outperformed the district in ELA and mathematics each year of the term by at least 17 percentage points and 19 percentage points, respectively.
- In comparison to schools across the state with similar demographics, Atmosphere performed higher than expected in ELA and mathematics each year according to the Institute’s regression analysis.
- The school also posted commendable growth over the term. In the two years of the Accountability Period with available growth scores, Atmosphere outperformed the target of 50 in both ELA and mathematics.

Is the charter an effective, viable organization?

Atmosphere is an effective viable organization. The board provides effective oversight over the school’s operational aspects and recently added a member with academic experience to support development in its academic oversight skills. Over the charter term, the board has identified additional facilities to accommodate its growing school population and it has continued to optimize its data management and reporting capacities to fit the scale of the organization.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The school's management systems are effective in supporting the educational program. The school has a robust process for gathering staff member input when considering improvements for operations and academics. The school's leadership team effectively manages multiple grades across multiple sites, and both the middle school and high school operations leaders effectively manage teams that allow instructional leaders to primarily focus on the academic program.

Is the charter fiscally sound?

Atmosphere is fiscally adequate based on the Institute's review of the renewal documentation. The education corporation established a sound budget creation method that formulates reasonable and achievable projections and fiscal goals. The education corporation has maintained strong enrollment numbers throughout the current charter term and adequate revenue to cover its expenses. Atmosphere had no material weaknesses or internal control issues in the 2023-24 audit, and it has established a separate dissolution account with the appropriate amounts as required by the charter agreement.

Atmosphere has demonstrated adequate financial performance during the current charter term. Total net assets have grown each year of the term reaching \$2.7 million during the 2023-24 school year. The education corporation has not produced strong liquidity scores, including cash reserves of less than one month, due to current and long-term lease liability obligations. During the finance team's renewal interview, the school outlined specific cash goals to increase liquidity for the upcoming charter term. Atmosphere has maintained adequate teacher to student ratios and adjusted accordingly to reflect enrollment fluctuations.

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

Atmosphere's plans for a future charter term are reasonable, feasible, and achievable. The school plans to continue offering robust career exploration and college preparation programming while extending its search for qualified candidates to fulfill academic and financial leadership roles within its organization. Filling these roles is a crucial priority of the school as in the next charter term, if approved, the school will begin its elementary program during the 2028-29 school year. Atmosphere will build a strong program focused on developing students' foundational reading and mathematics skills. The board also recruited a private elementary school principal to assist members with providing academic oversight.

Atmosphere proposes a reasonable and achievable budget plan for the next charter term and plans to continue investing in student recruitment. The Institute has confidence that Atmosphere will be fiscally adequate during the next charter term.

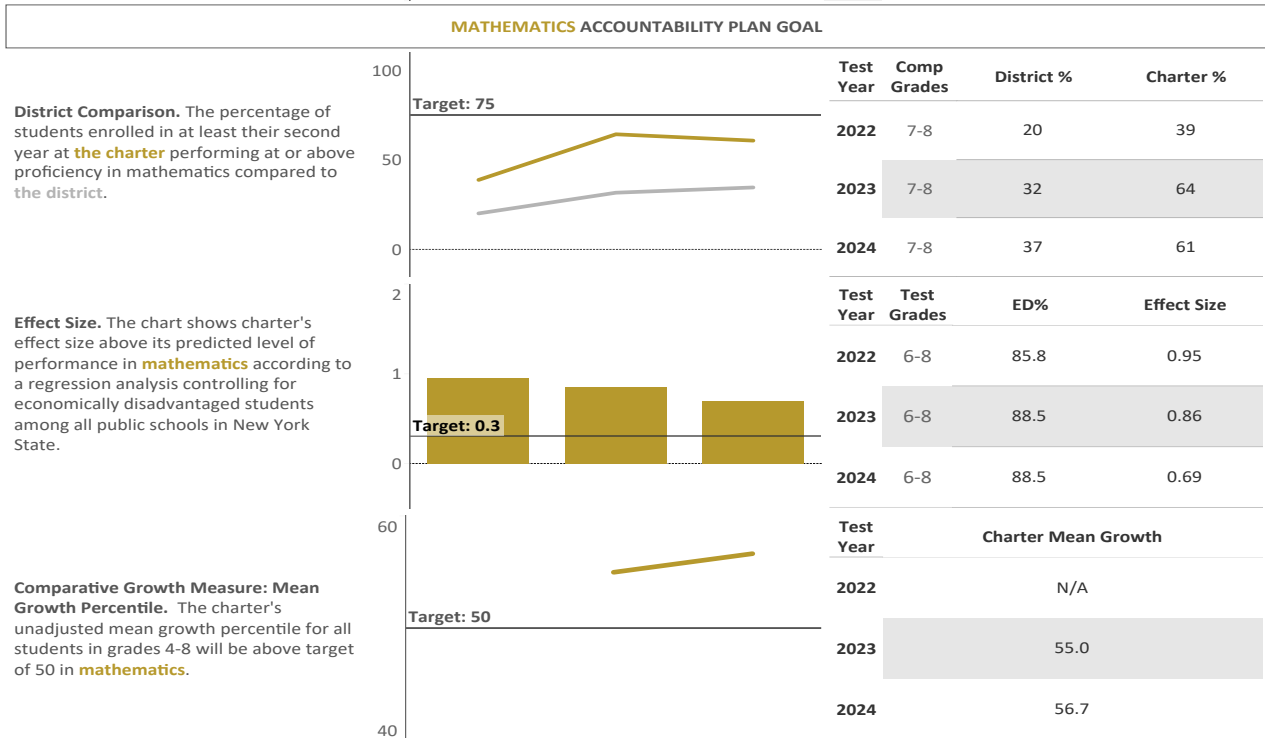
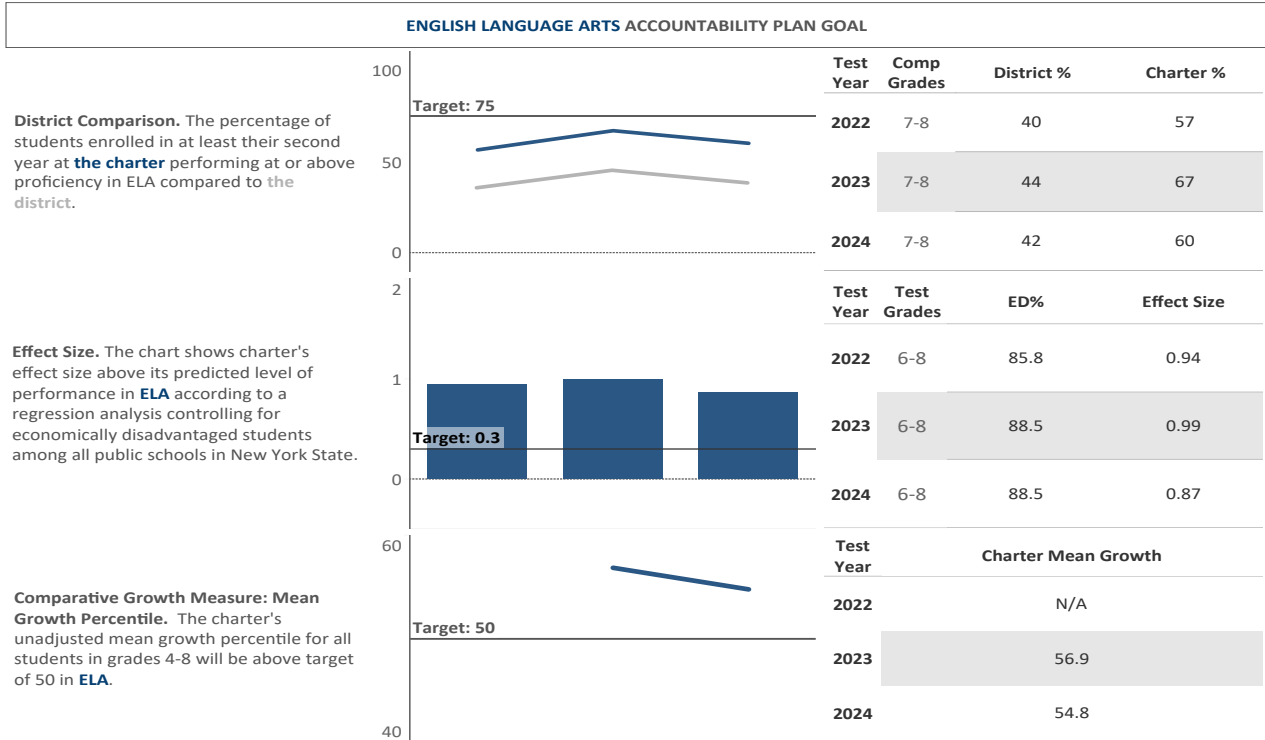
The school is building a new facility for its high school program, which is projected to be completed by the 2028-29 school year. Ultimately, Atmosphere will open the elementary school program and grow to serve Kindergarten – 12th grades across six unique sites.

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 blue – gray – orange. 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.



ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

ATMOSPHERE ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS





ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

ATMOSPHERE ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS



TESTED PERCENTAGES

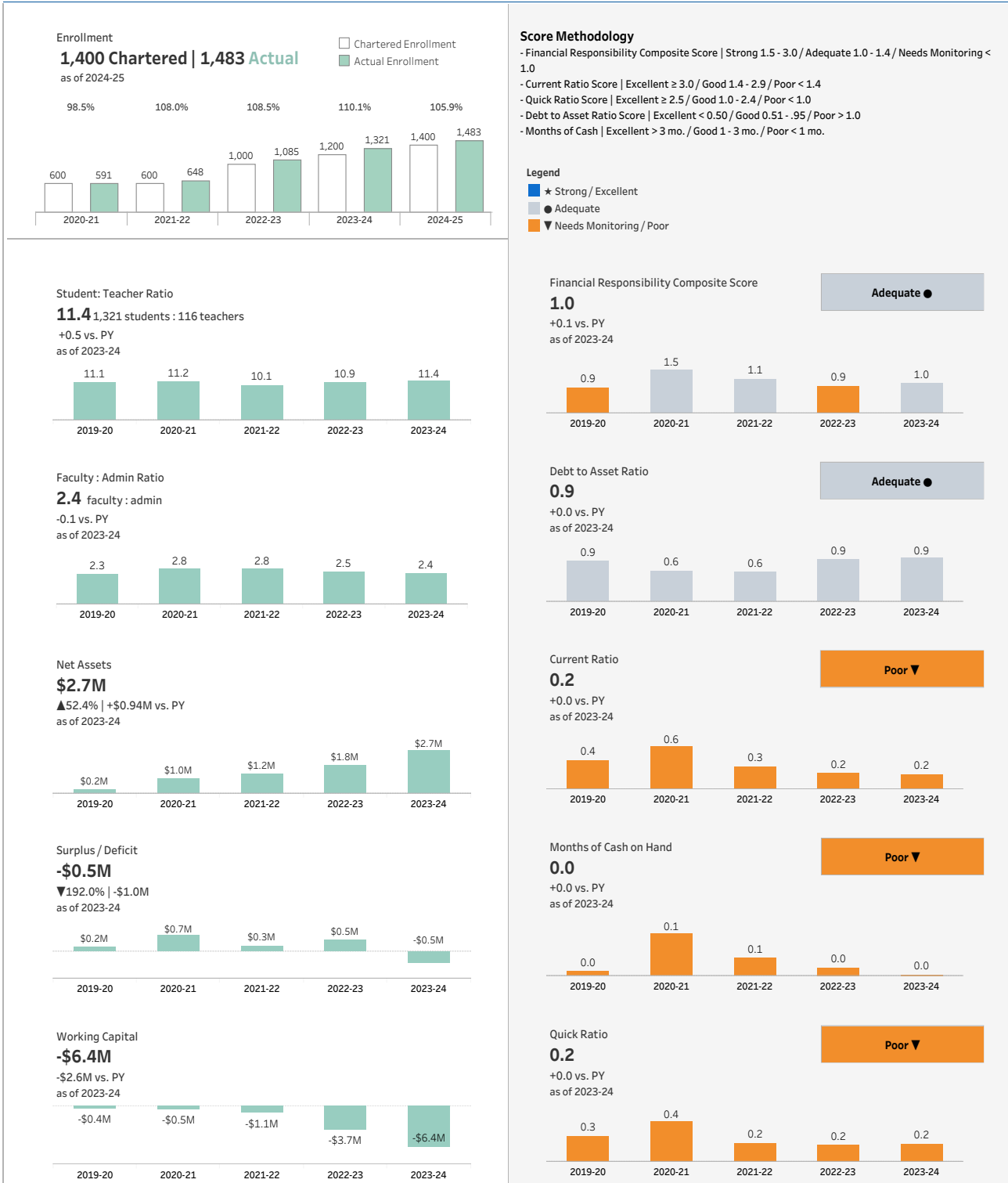
	2022		2023		2024	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
School Tested Number	640	624	776	785	766	767
School Tested %	98.3%	96.1%	96.8%	97.9%	98.3%	98.5%
District Tested %	89.8%	90.3%	88.2%	91.0%	88.2%	91.8%

SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE*

	2022	2023	2024
Students with Disabilities Tested on State Exam	139	168	169
Charter Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	33.8	31.5	23.1
District Percent Proficient	14.7	15.9	17.1
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam	52	76	80
Charter Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress	21.2	25.0	22.5

* 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".

ATMOSPHERE ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS



COMPLIANCE REPORTING



HAS THE SCHOOL 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.

Board Minutes

The board meeting minutes for the past several years are available on the website, but the most recent minutes from the 2024-25 school year need to be posted. The Institute will ensure compliance prior to the start of the next charter term.

FOIL

The Freedom of Information Law (“FOIL”) notice and subject matter list are posted on the website, but the subject matter list requires minor revision to include a link to the website of the committee on open government and the date last reviewed conspicuously indicated. The Institute will ensure compliance prior to the start of the next charter term.

Teacher Certification

The New York State Charter Schools Act of 1998 (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 or career and technical education courses.

Atmosphere uses a teacher salary scale that rewards certified teachers and sets a clear deadline for uncertified teachers to complete the certification process. The school considers certification, professional development, and growth within teacher ratings.

Atmosphere added tuition reimbursement to its compensation package in the fall of 2023. The program allows interested staff members to put a percentage of their salary, which Atmosphere matches, directly toward tuition funds. At the time of the renewal application submittal, six employees opted into the program. Atmosphere partners with Relay’s Teacher Residency Program, which allows employees to attend the Relay Graduate School of Education at a discounted price. Atmosphere also partners with Manhattan College to place student teachers into middle and high school classrooms. This process provides a pipeline of certified teacher candidates who have already been trained to meet Atmosphere’s expectations.

At the time of the renewal review, the school employed 89 lead teachers. Of the 89 lead teachers, 38 were uncertified, which is 23 teachers over the allowable limit under the Act. Of the 38 uncertified teachers, 33 did not meet the appropriate qualifications under the Act.

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION & ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

To report on parent satisfaction with the school’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 Survey Data

The Institute compiled data from the New York City Department of Education’s (“NYCDOE’s”) annual family survey from the 2023-24 school year for each school due for renewal. Of the 52% of Atmosphere families who responded in 2023-24, 89% expressed satisfaction with the school.

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 12 parents in attendance at the focus group generally expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school, with a particular emphasis on how the school helps students develop confidence in regard to self-expression, talents, and interests. Participants spoke of the trusting relationships between families and teachers and how teachers maintain close communication about student academic and social emotional performance via email, phone calls, the ParentSquare app, and the PowerSchool platform.

In areas for improvement, parents raised concerns about the perceived high level of teacher turnover in the middle school grades. They expressed a desire to provide feedback to the school regarding programming and academic placements. Families also emphasized the need for more individualized support for students with disabilities and increased mental health workshops and team-building programs to foster socialization and community opportunities beyond extracurricular activities.

Public Comments

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

The NYCDOE held its required hearing on the renewal application for Atmosphere via videoconference on November 19, 2024. A school leader spoke about the school’s successful track record over the years and how the school aims to support the community. Eight other school officials spoke in support of the application. They cited the school’s 2020 identification as a Recognition School by the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”), the increase in proficiency rates over time, and the extracurricular programs offered such as clubs, electives, sports, and other activities. They spoke about how the school offers a career pathways program where scholars can intern during their junior and senior years. In addition, the school officials spoke about the school’s partnerships with the City University of New York’s College Now program offering advanced placement courses

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION & ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

and with St. John’s University offering college credit. They also spoke about how the school promotes creative and critical thinking, encourages students to solve problems and explore diverse perspectives, engages students in real world projects, and ensures that students are digitally literate. No one spoke in opposition to the renewal.

Enrollment and Retention

Atmosphere makes good faith efforts to meet its enrollment and retention targets. The school currently meets the enrollment target for students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students, but does not meet the enrollment target for ELLs. The school has made progress toward the retention targets for each of the three subgroups.

Persistence in Enrollment

An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2023-24, 84% of Atmosphere students returned from the previous year. Student persistence data from previous years of the charter term is available in the student demographics section of the report.

The Institute derived the statistical information on persistence in enrollment from its database. No comparative data from the NYCDOE or the NYSED is available to the Institute to provide either district or statewide context.

Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2023-24		Target	Charter
enrollment	economically disadvantaged	81.5	88.5
	English language learners	25.2	6.7
	students with disabilities	19.3	20.9
retention	economically disadvantaged	87.5	83.6
	English language learners	88.0	85.3
	students with disabilities	86.2	80.7

Atmosphere

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APPENDICES

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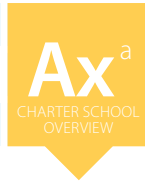
STUDENT
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CHARTER CHARACTERISTICS

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT ¹	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2020-21	600	591	99%	6–8
2021-22	600	648	108%	6–8
2022-23	1,000	1,085	109%	6–10
2023-24	1,200	1,321	110%	6–11
2024-25	1,400	1,483	106%	6–12

CHARTER SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY

SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
2015-16	First Year Visit	June 9, 2016
2016-17	Evaluation Visit	April 25, 2017
2019-20	Initial Renewal Visit	September 18–19, 2019
2024-25	Subsequent Renewal Visit	September 19–20, 2024

CONDUCT OF THE RENEWAL REVIEW

DATE(S) OF REVIEW	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
September 19 – 20, 2024	Ciani Jones	Senior Analyst
	Desree Cabrall-Njenga	School Evaluator
	Guerschmide Saint-Ange	External Consultant

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

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Atmosphere met its key academic Accountability Plan goals over the charter term. In English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics, the school exceeded the targets for all comparative and growth measures in every year of the term. Atmosphere did not yet enroll 12th grade students until the 2024-25 school year and therefore has not produced outcomes to evaluate the performance of its high school program against the SUNY Accountability Plan goals. However, the school has posted high credit accumulation and Regents attainment for its first and second year cohorts. These data are a reliable, positive leading indicator of future high graduation rates.

In ELA, Atmosphere posted high absolute achievement from 2021-22 to 2023-24. Students enrolled in their second year outperformed the local district by at least 17 percentage points each year. Compared to other schools across the state enrolling similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students, Atmosphere consistently outperformed expectations each year. In every year for which data is available, the school achieved a mean growth score that exceeded the target of 50.

In mathematics, Atmosphere also met its goal. From 2021-22 to 2023-24, the school’s students enrolled in at least their second year posted proficiency rates that surpassed the local district by at least 19 percentage points. Atmosphere exceeded the target of 0.3 on its effect size measure each year. According to the Institute’s regression analysis, Atmosphere performed higher than expected to a large degree compared to demographically similar schools across the state. The school also exceeded its growth target each year.

ASSESSMENT

Atmosphere has an effective assessment system that leads to improved learning outcomes and instructional effectiveness. The school exhibits a strong culture of data responsiveness along with a commitment to refining assessment systems as the organization expands. To determine instructional priorities throughout the year, Atmosphere administers internally drafted interim assessments each quarter. In September, Atmosphere administers baseline assessments across all grades to capture student performance against state standards, and the school’s data team make results accessible to coaches and teachers via the school’s data platform. Content area directors then guide teachers and academic managers using this information to define areas of focus and to make adjustments to curricular scope and sequence documents. At the midpoint of the year, Atmosphere administers its midyear interim assessment to refine student groupings, identify students for academic intervention, and generate predictions for student performance on state exams. Academic leaders also leverage midyear interim assessment data to evaluate coaches and teachers, identify student readiness for June Regents exams, and recognize student effort. Between interim assessments, teachers track student progress using standard formative assessments such as exit tickets, quizzes, projects, end-of-unit assessments, and checks for understanding (“CFUs”) during daily lessons.

Atmosphere also participates in Advanced Placement examinations and student outcomes on these summative assessments help inform curricular shifts, academic intervention scheduling, and the validity of internal assessments. High school students have the opportunity to take the ACT and SAT exams in addition to the PSAT exam in 10th or 11th grade to determine eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship.

The school employs a full-time data manager who manages all data platforms and trains staff members in analyzing assessment trends and developing action plans. During department level meetings, content leaders, directors, and teachers work collectively to revise strategic student groupings, determine content to reteach, and modify academic intervention coursework. In addition to these practices, Atmosphere has recognized the need to strengthen its approach to closing learning gaps in mathematics and ELA, and the organization has begun surveying adaptive learning software to address student skills deficits that its current assessment systems do not capture.

CURRICULUM

Atmosphere’s curriculum supports teachers with instructional planning. The school’s curricular choices support student achievement, and content leaders work closely with teachers to think critically about curricular choices while making revisions as they see fit. The school has effective systems for selecting and revising curricula based on student learning needs, and school leaders provide strong monitoring of curriculum implementation to promote consistent instructional delivery across subject areas.

Teachers follow a curricular framework that includes student performance expectations aligned to state standards and across grades, and the school makes adjustments to these materials throughout the year in response to student performance. Content area managers support the onboarding and implementation of curricular materials, and instructional leaders develop and update unit plans, pacing guides, and scope and sequence documents for each content area. The school sets clear expectations for lesson planning that result in purposeful and focused instruction. Lesson plan templates guide and establish expectations for lesson components, and teachers must identify success criteria, learning targets, standards, vocabulary, and station activities in each plan. Lesson plans also include opportunities for students to engage in the material through activities that allow them to explore new material and grapple with it intellectually, explain the content they are learning, elaborate further on the content, and complete an evaluation of what they know through assessment. Teachers submit lesson plans to instructional leaders weekly and receive both written and verbal feedback.

In both the middle and high school programs, Atmosphere uses a blend of third party and internally developed curricular materials. In ELA, the school employs a bespoke curriculum, English Systems, which aims to build skills related to informational text comprehension, literary analysis across genres, grammar, vocabulary building, and constructed responses in accordance with New York State Next Generation Learning Standards. At the high school program, students have the opportunity to take coursework tied to English Regents expectations, pre-Advanced Placement (“AP”), and AP literature and composition and early college content through Saint John’s University.

In mathematics, teachers pull from EngageNY and custom made mini-lessons while adding resources from Formative, Delta Math, Fishtank, and Khan Academy. These supplemental resources help address student learning gaps via video modeling, differentiated activities, and real time assessment results. In science, middle school program teachers rely on the Amplify curriculum, and at the high school program, science teachers use a mix of resources from HMH and McGraw Hill. In social studies, teachers reference internally drafted curricula as well as pre-AP course materials for World History along with primary source documents.

Atmosphere continuously refines its curricula based on student performance data. As part of this process, the school has restructured its schedule, removing select courses to prioritize extended instructional blocks dedicated to state exam preparation. While this use of data has served to boost performance on standardized assessments in the short term, the school has an opportunity to address deeper student learning gaps and foster higher-order thinking skills to support long-term student success after graduation.

PEDAGOGY

High quality teaching and learning is evident across Atmosphere classrooms. Atmosphere offers purposeful, standards-aligned instruction, and teachers implement effective strategies to check for student understanding, promote critical thinking, and maximize learning time. Teachers display a mastery of classroom management and the Institute observed positive learning environments across classrooms. During lessons, students engage in a gradual release of responsibility model and work collectively in small groups with teacher guidance before engaging in independent practice. This model helps promote student ownership of learning to encourage collaboration and the development of leadership skills.

Atmosphere’s teachers and leaders use a series of data trackers to monitor student progress and achievement, and trackers include student achievement on baseline and midyear assessments along with Regents “sprints” that teachers use to place students in groups, determine readiness for independent practice, and identify intervention needs, or to modify scope and sequence documents. Teachers also use trackers to record data on checks for understandings, daily exit tickets, and weekly quizzes. The school monitors social emotional data through behavior tracking on the Kickboard platform.

Despite these strong practices, there are opportunities to improve student questioning techniques to deepen engagement with content and to broaden conceptual understanding. While many teachers use strategies to extend upon student thinking, the skillful execution of these strategies is inconsistent across classrooms.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Atmosphere has strong instructional leadership. The school has a well resourced instructional leadership team to manage academics and culture across campuses, and staff members display a commitment to the belief that all students can succeed. However, the school has the opportunity to invest further in the development of inexperienced teachers as a means of strengthening long-term instructional capacity.

Atmosphere’s chief executive officer (“CEO”) serves as the organization’s chief academic officer (“CAO”), and a chief learning officer (“CLO”) manages special education and English language learner (“ELL”) staffing and programs. At the building level, leadership teams routinely review teacher evaluation and instructional coaching, monitor student progress toward graduation, and track the effectiveness of behavioral supports. In addition, as the school experiences periodic teacher vacancies, it relies on building leaders to serve as classroom teachers as it searches for highly qualified teachers in the interim. Although this approach ensures that students consistently receive instruction from experienced pedagogues over the short term, the school has the opportunity to refine its systems for providing intensive training and development to support inexperienced teachers.

Content level managers report to building leaders and conduct bi-weekly coaching meetings for individual teachers and co-teaching pairs as well as weekly grade-level meetings and department meetings. In these meetings, teachers and leaders review assessment data from the week to create groupings for its weekly achievement block that focuses on test preparation. Leaders frequently conduct informal observations and offer teachers feedback within 24 hours of the observation. Building leaders use a modified version of the Danielson Framework for Teaching to conduct monthly formal teacher evaluations in collaboration with content, culture, and grade team leaders, and each leader must present artifacts to support evaluation claims. The school has also implemented a quality control committee to promote intervisitations across teachers and norm on procedures related to evaluations and observations.

Atmosphere provides ample opportunities for teachers and leaders to attend and present at education conferences, and the school has a robust internal professional development program that includes weekly grade-level team and departmental meetings during which teachers plan from assessment outcomes and receive training on the school's proprietary learning scaffolds. In addition, nine Atmosphere high school teachers have participated in AP Course Institutes, and seven building leaders have participated in national conferences or assessment training. Leaders also identify exemplary teaching of specific strategies for subgroups and coordinate intervisitation between teachers struggling with a strategy and those who have mastered it. The director of special education leverages the NYCDOE charter schools weekly mailing list to find professional development opportunities for teachers in the areas of special education and the ELL department.

AT-RISK PROGRAM

Atmosphere meets the education needs of at-risk students. The school has clear, compliant procedures for identifying students who are at risk for academic failure, students with disabilities ("SWDs") and ELLs. For students with disabilities, the school engages in the child find process in collaboration with teachers, leaders, families, and the Committee on Special Education ("CSE") to evaluate students and implement services. For students struggling academically within the general education setting, the school implements a Response to Intervention ("RTI") framework using the record review, interview, observation, and test protocol ("RIOT"), and the instruction, curriculum, environment, learner ("ICEL") matrix alongside tiered interventions. Assessments for students with disabilities include questions related to individualized education program ("IEP") goals to track of academic progress, and teachers must provide weekly assessment results and functioning levels for each IEP evaluation. ELL students partake in all classroom assessments such as weekly quizzes, Do Now's, CFUs, and exit tickets, and students take the New York State English as a Second Language Test ("NYSESLAT") each year to monitor progress on language acquisition.

Atmosphere offers integrated co-teaching ("ICT") and special education teacher support services ("SETSS") in 6th through 12th grade, and teachers of general education and special education content plan together during weekly content and grade level meetings. ELL teachers and general education teachers co-plan lessons and receive formal and informal observations of their implementation of the sheltered instruction observation protocol ("SIOP"). Atmosphere also offers 12:1+1 classroom settings in 6th through 8th grade, and the school partners with the Committee on Special Education ("CSE") to obtain agency assignments for paraprofessionals, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech services. At the time of writing, approximately one-fifth of Atmosphere's student population receives special education services.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Atmosphere’s organizational structure effectively supports its educational program through clear lines of accountability, a focus on staff member retention, and systems to monitor progress toward academic and enrollment goals. Leadership development is a priority, with an emphasis on professional development to sustain growth and continuity within the organization, and the school has a management team that manages alignment across the 6th – 12th grade school program. From an operational standpoint, each program has an operations leader who manages an operations team across the school sites. The structures are effective and staff members know who to go to for what.

Atmosphere demonstrates strong organizational capacity by actively engaging stakeholders—students, staff, families, and community partners—in decision-making processes, and the school leverages feedback loops through surveys and consultations to ensure alignment between goals and the needs of the broader community. This inclusive approach serves as a vital mechanism for continuous improvement in leadership and school operations.

The school possesses a highly collaborative organizational culture in which leadership is receptive to staff member input when seeking to improve operational and instructional systems. In addition, the school’s distributed leadership model helps foster internal capacity by empowering staff members to assume leadership roles and drive organizational improvement. However, the Institute noted that the CEO currently holds multiple roles encompassing both financial and academic leadership, and that the school has the opportunity to expand its leadership team to ensure the long term viability of the organization’s capacity.

BOARD OVERSIGHT & GOVERNANCE

The Atmosphere board works effectively to meet the charter’s Accountability Plan goals. Its five current members possess the skills necessary to monitor the fiscal and operational health of the organization. Members possess backgrounds in law, real estate, and finance, and leverage their respective backgrounds to provide general support with legal claims, personnel concerns, real estate transactions, and the securing of loans. The board also counsels the school’s CEO in regard to critical priorities such as conducting an executive search for a future chief academic officer and chief finance officer, and stabilizing the school’s finances through increasing enrollment and the use of conservative budgetary practices.

Board committees provide oversight in the areas of middle school and high school operations, finance, and governance, and each month Atmosphere staff members present committees with comprehensive data dashboards depicting trends for the school’s key performance metrics in academics and finance. Committees then turnkey this information for full board consideration during monthly plenary sessions. The board uses a robust self-evaluation tool to reflect on its performance and evaluates the performance of the CEO using an eight point rubric and self-evaluation protocol.

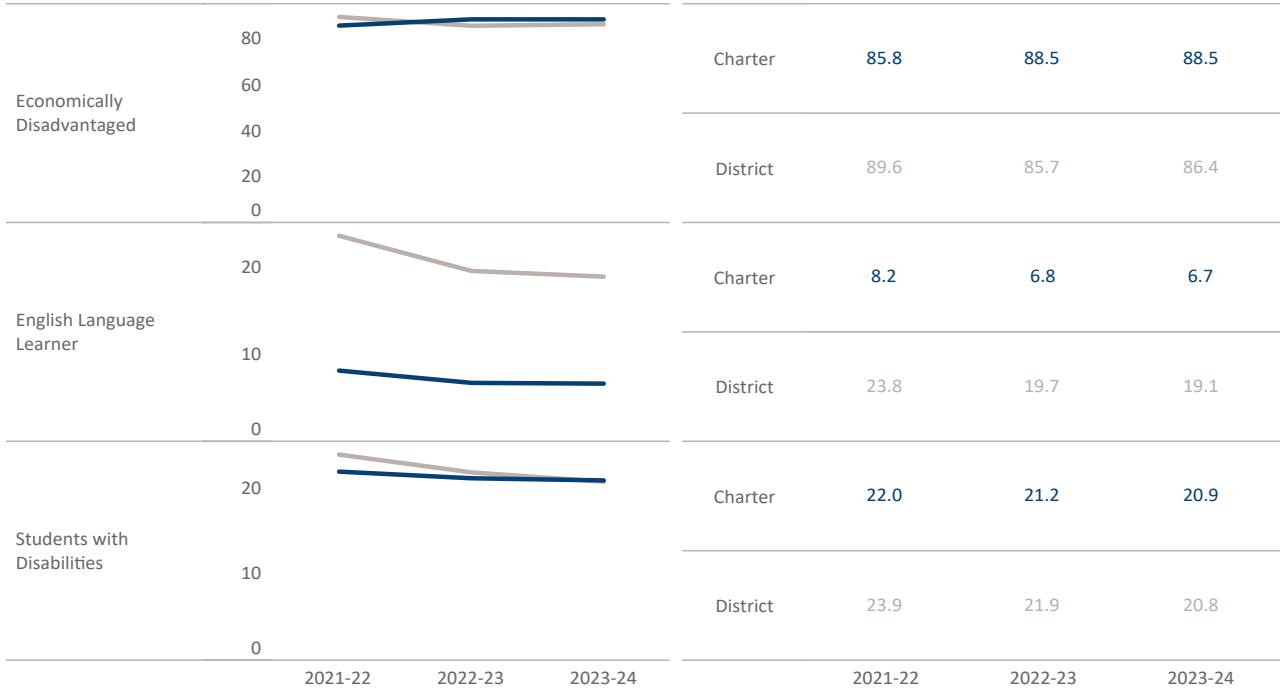
The Atmosphere board is committed to ensuring that students engage in rich career exploration opportunities and extracurricular activities such as equestrianism and stock market investing clubs, but has received no internal or external support to assist with academic oversight to date. The board has recently recognized the need for academic expertise and has recruited an elementary school principal to join its board.



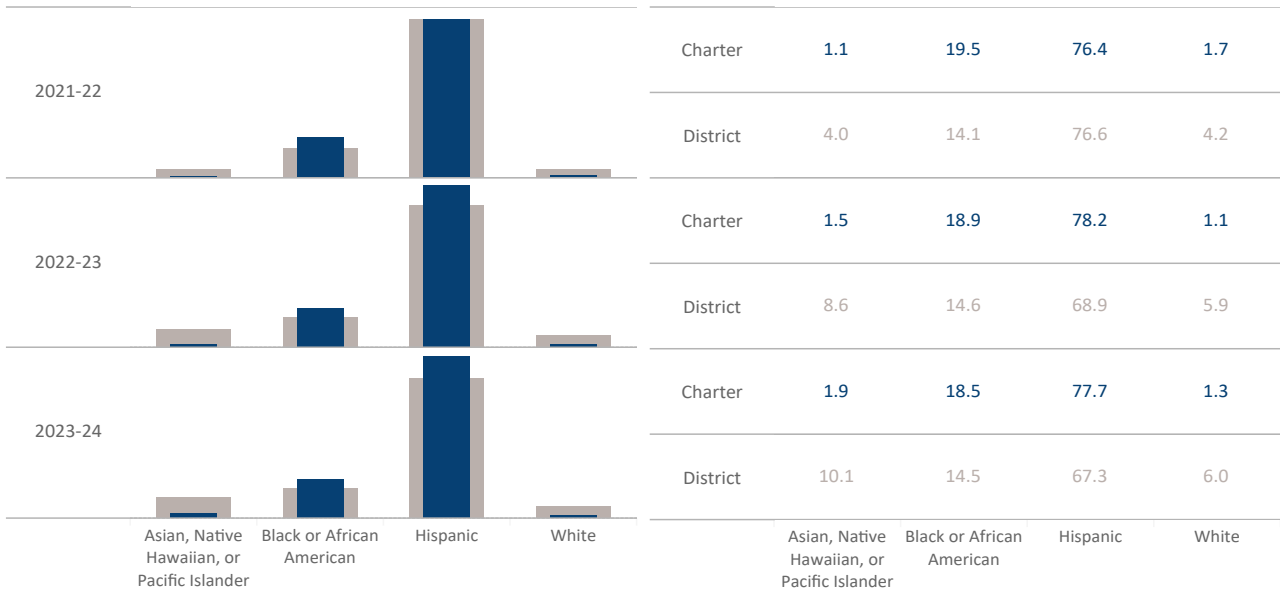
Atmosphere Academy Public Charter Schools

Bronx CSD 10

Student Demographics: Sub-populations



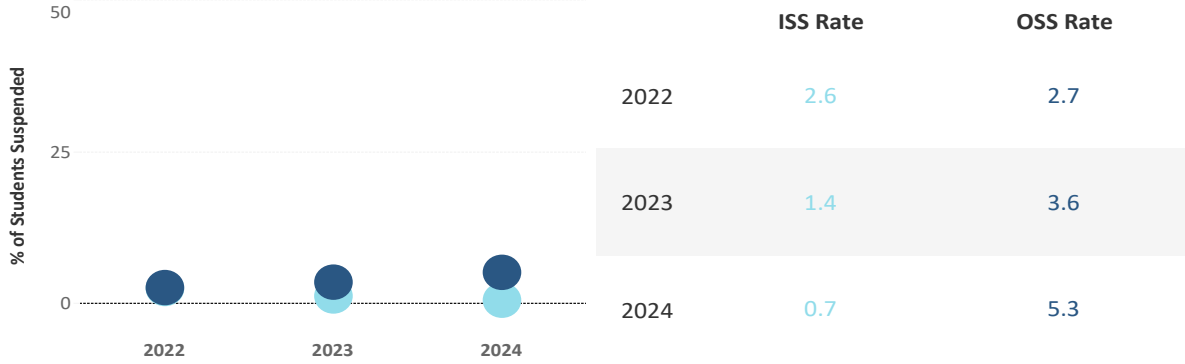
Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity



* Data reported in these charts reflect BEDS day enrollment counts as reported by the NYSED.



Atmosphere Academy Public 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

	2022	2023	2024
	0	2	1

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



FISCAL BENCHMARKS SUMMARY



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.	+

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.	+

"+" : 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.



INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
<p>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 to ensure current operating systems are reflected.</p>	<p>OCTOBER 2024</p>

DOES THE EDUCATION CORPORATION COMPLY WITH FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

The education corporation has complied 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 will have generally been filed in a timely, accurate, and complete manner:

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
<p>Annual financial statement audit reports, including federal Single Audit report, if applicable.</p>	<p>+</p>
<p>Annual budgets.</p>	<p>+</p>
<p>Un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses, and enrollment.</p>	<p>+</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Grant expenditure reports.</p>	<p>N/A</p>



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.	N/A
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.	+
Atmosphere currently does not maintain one month of cash on hand, but it is actively working towards increasing its liquidity for the proposed charter term.	



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