



**Charter Schools Institute**  
The State University of New York

## **Summary of Performance**

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### **ELM COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL PROPOSED MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPANSION**

**REPORT DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 2025**

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## **BACKGROUND AND PROPOSED REVISION**

The SUNY Trustees approved the original charter for Elm Community Charter School (“Elm Community” or “the school”) on June 8, 2017. Elm Community opened in the fall of 2018 initially serving 100 students in Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. The school currently serves 468 students in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade in private space at 79-17 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Queens in New York City Community School District (“CSD”) 24. The SUNY Trustees granted Elm Community a full-term, five-year renewal on April 26, 2023. (See the Institute’s renewal report available at: [Elm Community Charter School Renewal Recommendation Report.pdf](#).)

Elm Community has requested a charter revision to serve middle school grades. If approved, the school would expand to operate a middle school program commencing with 6<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2026-27 school year and adding a grade each year to eventually serve 840 students in Kindergarten – 7<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2027-28 school year, the final year of the current charter term. Elm Community is requesting the expansion in response to family feedback indicating strong demand to continue with Elm Community’s educational program design which balances project-based learning and social emotional learning (“SEL”) components with high academic standards.

### **Proposed Middle School Program**

The proposed middle school program builds upon Elm Community’s track record of high academic achievement, strong organizational capacity, and fiscal health. The program parallels Expeditionary Learning (“EL”) Education cultivating deeper learning through mastery of core academic content, critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, and effective communication. Elements of the program include:

- Project-based learning;
- An SEL and advisory program focusing on students’ self-exploration, self-awareness, and character growth;
- A well developed teacher training program focusing on teachers’ ability to create rigorous daily lesson activities with opportunities centered in real world issues and incorporating field studies and opportunities for community engagement;
- A curriculum aligned to the New York State Learning Standards that balances mastery with inquiry based learning;
- A robust assessment system based in knowledge attainment as well as research, collaboration, and presentation skills; and,
- A unique response to intervention (“RTI”) system which provides effective differentiated instruction to all students each day to drive academic growth.

### **Community Need**

Elm Community will primarily serve students living in CSD 24 in Queens. Most students enrolling at the middle school will matriculate from the existing elementary school program, and the grade configuration aligns with that of district schools. The proposed enrollment configuration is feasible based on the school’s current enrollment structure.

## **Facility Needs**

Elm Community is working with its current landlord and has identified a potential facility near its current location. The school has also identified several incubation spaces to allow sufficient time to build out the permanent facility if necessary. The additional space, which would also house the current 5<sup>th</sup> grade, will allow the middle school program to operate in one location and is of an appropriate size to accommodate the enrollment and program elements. The proposed location includes space for interventionists, related service providers, a media lab, maker's space, band room, theatre, visual arts space, and a robotics lab to support the school's key design elements. The building also has appropriate space for offices, conference rooms, nurse's office, an auditorium, gymnasium, cafeteria, playground, and multipurpose areas.

## **Academic Analysis**

From 2021-22 through 2023-24, Elm Community met its key academic Accountability Plan goals in ELA and mathematics. Notably, the school exceeded the targets for all comparative and growth measures included under its goals. In each year, the school's students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficiency at rates that exceeded the local district in both subjects. Elm Community posted comparative effect sizes that surpassed the target of 0.3 each year. This level of performance indicates that in comparison to demographically similar schools across New York State, Elm Community performed higher than expected to a large degree. Elm Community also posted mean growth percentiles that far exceeded the target of 50 in each year with data suitable for analysis. Notably in 2023-24, 77% of the school's students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficiency in mathematics exceeding the absolute target by two percentage points and the district results by 29 percentage points.

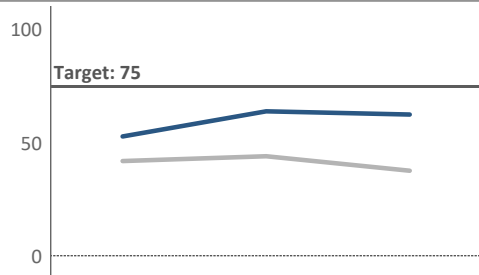
## **Fiscal and Legal Analysis**

The Institute reviewed the proposed middle school program elements including enrollment projections, curriculum, staffing, policies, and budgets and found them satisfactory. The Institute also reviewed the most recent audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and finds the fiscal health of the charter to be satisfactory. Elm Community reported surpluses in most years of the charter term and has built robust cash reserves as a result. Elm Community's expenditures increased over the past two years, resulting in deficits and a decline in its financial responsibility composite score. Additionally, adopting the ASC 842 lease liability accounting standard has increased the long term lease liabilities and caused the debt-to-asset ratio to increase and appear as 'Poor.' The Institute is aware of this accounting standard and is not concerned with the presentation of lease liabilities on the balance sheet given the strength of the school's other fiscal health measures. As of June 30, 2024, Elm Community reported approximately \$2 million in net assets and 3.2 months of cash to meet its general expenditure liabilities within twelve months. The Institute analyzed the potential fiscal impact of the proposed revision on the district and finds it to be minimal given the proposed enrollment configuration. The Institute's most recent Fiscal Dashboard is included below on page 4.

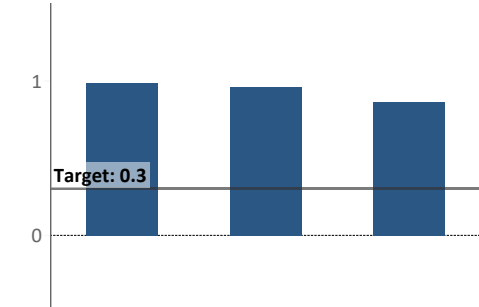
The Institute also reviewed the proposed revision from the legal perspective, and finds it suitable under the Act and applicable law. Therefore, the Institute recommends the Charter Schools Committee approve the requested revision.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL**

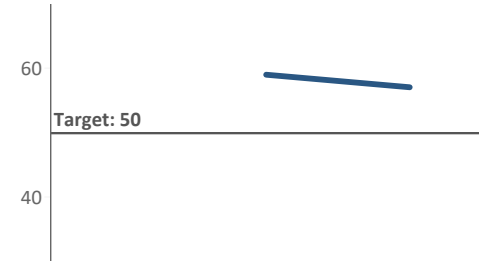
**District Comparison.** The percentage of students enrolled in at least their second year at **the charter** performing at or above proficiency in ELA compared to the district.



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



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



Test Year	Comp Grades	District %	Charter %
2022	3-4	42	53
2023	3-5	44	64
2024	3-5	38	63

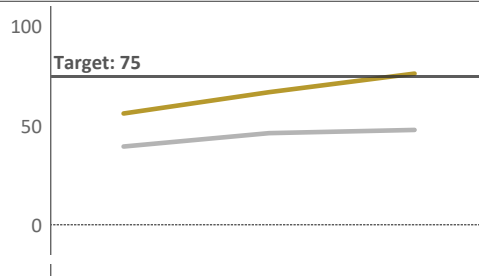
Test Year	Test Grades	ED%	Effect Size
2022	3-4	81.5	0.99
2023	3-5	78.8	0.96
2024	3-5	77.9	0.86

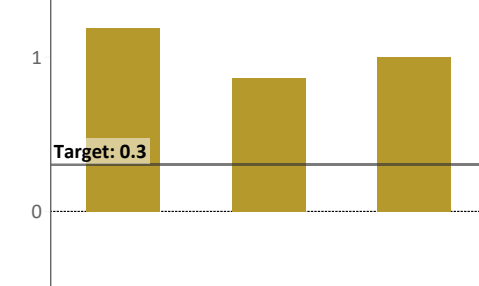
Test Year	Charter Mean Growth
2022	N/A
2023	59.1
2024	57.2

**MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL**

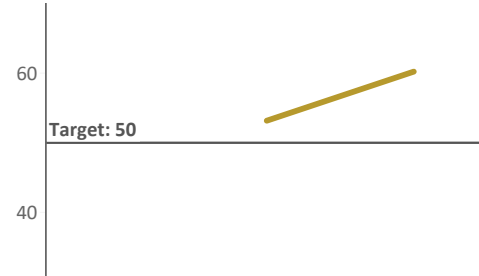
**District Comparison.** The percentage of students enrolled in at least their second year at **the charter** performing at or above proficiency in mathematics compared to the district.



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



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



Test Year	Comp Grades	District %	Charter %
2022	3-4	40	56
2023	3-5	47	67
2024	3-5	48	77

Test Year	Test Grades	ED%	Effect Size
2022	3-4	81.5	1.19
2023	3-5	78.9	0.86
2024	3-5	77.9	1.00

Test Year	Charter Mean Growth
2022	N/A
2023	53.3
2024	60.3

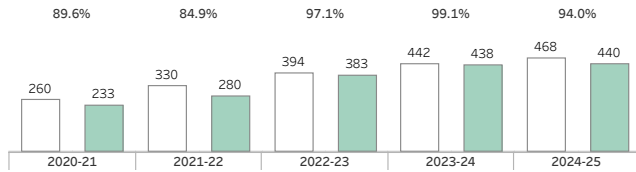


Enrollment

**468 Chartered | 440 Actual**

as of 2024-25

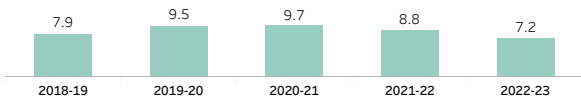
Chartered Enrollment  
Actual Enrollment



Student: Teacher Ratio

**7.2** 383 students : 53 teachers

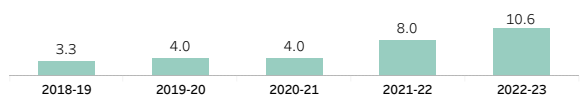
-1.5 vs. PY  
as of 2022-23



Faculty : Admin Ratio

**10.6** faculty : admin

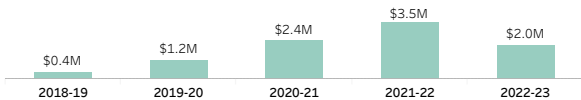
+2.6 vs. PY  
as of 2022-23



Net Assets

**\$2.0M**

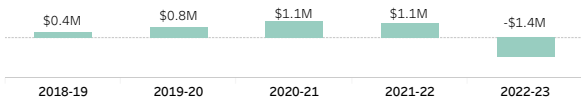
▼40.9% | -\$1.42M vs. PY  
as of 2022-23



Surplus / Deficit

**-\$1.4M**

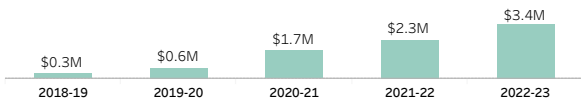
▼232.6% | -\$2.5M  
as of 2022-23



Working Capital

**\$3.4M**

+\$1.0M vs. PY  
as of 2022-23



Score Methodology

- Financial Responsibility Composite Score | Strong 1.5 - 3.0 / Adequate 1.0 - 1.4 / Needs Monitoring < 1.0
- Current Ratio Score | Excellent ≥ 3.0 / Good 1.4 - 2.9 / Poor < 1.4
- Quick Ratio Score | Excellent ≥ 2.5 / Good 1.0 - 2.4 / Poor < 1.0
- Debt to Asset Ratio Score | Excellent < 0.50 / Good 0.51 - .95 / Poor > 1.0
- Months of Cash | Excellent > 3 mo. / Good 1 - 3 mo. / Poor < 1 mo.

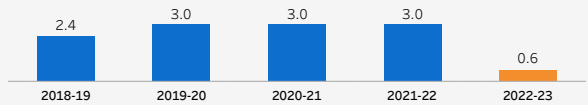
Legend

- ★ Strong / Excellent
- Adequate
- ▼ Needs Monitoring / Poor

Financial Responsibility Composite Score

**0.6**

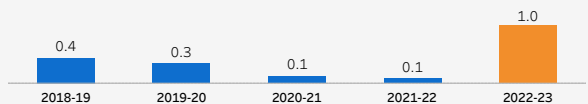
-2.4 vs. PY  
as of 2022-23



Debt to Asset Ratio

**1.0**

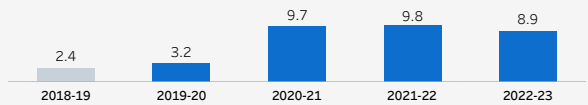
+0.9 vs. PY  
as of 2022-23



Current Ratio

**8.9**

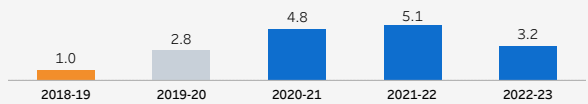
-0.9 vs. PY  
as of 2022-23



Months of Cash on Hand

**3.2**

-1.8 vs. PY  
as of 2022-23



Quick Ratio

**8.9**

-0.4 vs. PY  
as of 2022-23

