

# THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY  
AMBER CHARTER SCHOOL EAST  
HARLEM*

*REPORT DATE: APRIL 2, 2025*

*RENEWAL REVIEW DATE: JANUARY 21, 2025*



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

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# CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND

## AMBER CHARTER SCHOOL EAST HARLEM

220 East 106<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, New York | Grades: K - 6 | NYC Community School District 4 | East Harlem

### MISSION

*Amber Charter Schools provide our students with an academically rigorous and well-rounded education, along with strong character development, which will enable them to prosper in their future endeavors.*

### CURRENT CHARTER INFORMATION

Year Opened: 2000  
 Serves: Kindergarten–6<sup>th</sup>  
 Chartered Enrollment: 410  
 Charter Expires on: June 30, 2025

### FUTURE CHARTER INFORMATION

Serves: Kindergarten–7<sup>th</sup>  
 Chartered Enrollment: 385  
 Charter Expiration: July 31, 2026

### AMBER CHARTER SCHOOL EAST HARLEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES<sup>1</sup>

#### CHAIR

Dr. John Gutierrez

#### VICE CHAIR

Amador Centeno

#### SECRETARY

Soledad Hiciano

#### TRUSTEES

Robyn Epps  
 Kim Ramos  
 Li'Esha Garcia  
 Lindsay Long  
 Luina Munoz-BlueSpruce  
 Brad Olsen  
 Dr. Miguelina German  
 Timothy Day  
 Khiera Pena

### KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Literacy: 90 minutes of instruction per day;	+	Spanish as a foreign language: all students will learn Spanish language and culture;	+
Mathematics: 90 minutes of instruction per day;	+	Enrichment: students will have opportunities to learn art, music, physical education, and technology;	+
Science: 90 minutes of instruction per week;	+	Culture: The Amber Way teaches achievement, community, responsibility, honesty, and respect as character traits; and,	+
Social Studies: 90 minutes of instruction per week;	+	Service: every student is required to complete a community service project every year.	+

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

"+" : This indicator is generally present.

"-" : This indicator is generally not present.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### FULL-TERM RENEWAL

**Renewal through July 31, 2026.** The Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) recommends the SUNY Trustees’ Charter School Committee approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Amber Charter School East Harlem (“Amber East Harlem”) through July 31, 2026 to align each related education corporation’s charter and renewal schedule going forward. If renewed, the school will be granted the authority to provide instruction to students in such configuration as set forth in the charter’s Application for Renewal. The Institute makes this recommendation as Amber East Harlem meets the requirements 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”).<sup>2</sup>

The Institute further recommends the SUNY Trustees renew for a full term of one year the provisional charter of Amber Charter Schools, the New York not-for-profit charter school education corporation.

The table below presents information on the Institute’s plan<sup>3</sup> to align the charter expiration dates of the charters under the education corporation. By the 2025-26 school year, the charter expiration dates for all charter schools in Amber Charter Schools will align. At that time, the Institute will conduct a full renewal review of all charters in the education corporation:

CHARTER	2024-25	2025-26
Amber Charter School East Harlem	Charter Expiration	Alignment Year
Amber Charter School Inwood		Charter Expiration
Amber Charter School Kingsbridge		Charter Expiration

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Amber Charter Schools (“Amber Schools” or the “education corporation”) is approaching the 25<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of its founding by the Community Association of Progressive Dominicans (“ACDP”), a non-profit organization that provides direct services and assistance to Dominican immigrant communities in Upper Manhattan and the Bronx. Over its 25 year history, the education corporation has grown from the flagship Amber East Harlem to serve students and families at two other schools: Amber Charter School Kingsbridge (“Amber Kingsbridge”) and Amber Charter School Inwood (“Amber Inwood”). A school services team (“SST”) supports the three schools with financial management and oversight; talent management and recruiting; operations, leadership, and administration; education and instruction related services; communications; community relations; student recruitment; admissions; and, policies and procedures.

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

3. The above plan does not guarantee a specific renewal outcome for the education corporation or any of its charter schools.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Amber East Harlem has an effective program consisting of high quality instructional leadership and programmatic elements, allowing teachers to deliver lessons that improve student achievement. Teachers implement rigorous curricular materials that ensure students are well prepared for their future educational aspirations. Over the course of this charter term, Amber Schools revised and aligned its curricular programs to ensure consistency across content and grade levels while providing strong supporting tools to teachers. Amber East Harlem also strengthened its assessment and data collection systems and utilizes data to inform all instructional decisions. The “Amber Way,” which focuses on five core character traits of achievement, community, responsibility, honesty, and respect, provides the foundation for the school’s culture. The school infuses the “Amber Way” in classroom lessons, service projects, and professional development. The education corporation is fiscally sound despite a decline in enrollment throughout the charter term, and the board has implemented effective procedures to ensure the sustainability of the organization in the future.

### FINDINGS & INFORMATION

#### ***Is the charter an academic success?***

Amber East Harlem is an academic success, having met or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals in mathematics and English language arts (“ELA”).

- In the 2022-23 school year, Amber East Harlem exceeded all comparison measures for both its ELA and mathematics goals.
- In ELA, Amber East Harlem posted an effect size far above the target of 0.3 each year of the charter term, as well as a mean growth score surpassing the target of 50 in the 2023-24 school year.
- In the 2022-23 school year, Amber East Harlem grew its mathematics proficiency by 30 percentage points from the prior year and outperformed the district by 15 percentage points.

#### ***Is the charter an effective, viable organization?***

Amber Schools and its charter, Amber East Harlem, are effective, viable organizations. The “Amber Way” character development structure supports staff member and student culture throughout the schools. As the education corporation has grown to support three schools, it built out an effective SST to meet the evolving needs of the organization.

#### ***Is the charter fiscally sound<sup>3</sup>?***

Amber Schools is fiscally adequate based on the Institute’s review of the renewal documentation. The education corporation established strong methods of budget creation that involve all departments of the network to develop accurate revenue and expense projections. The finance team meets with the board monthly to present an enrollment report and discuss trends. The education corporation maintains adequate enrollment throughout the current charter term. The 2023-24 annual financial audit did not present any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. Amber Schools maintains a separate bank account with the established amounts for dissolution as required by the charter agreement.

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.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Amber Schools demonstrated adequate financial performance during the current charter term, with net assets of \$8.8 million and 3.3 months of cash on hand as of the 2023-24 school year. The education corporation experienced deficits during the last three years of operation primarily due to facility costs and lower than anticipated enrollment. Amber Schools maintains adequate teacher to student ratios throughout the current charter term and adjusts when necessary to reflect enrollment fluctuations. The education corporation prioritizes spending on facilities improvements, salary increases, and technology expenses to support teacher retention and quality academic programming.

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

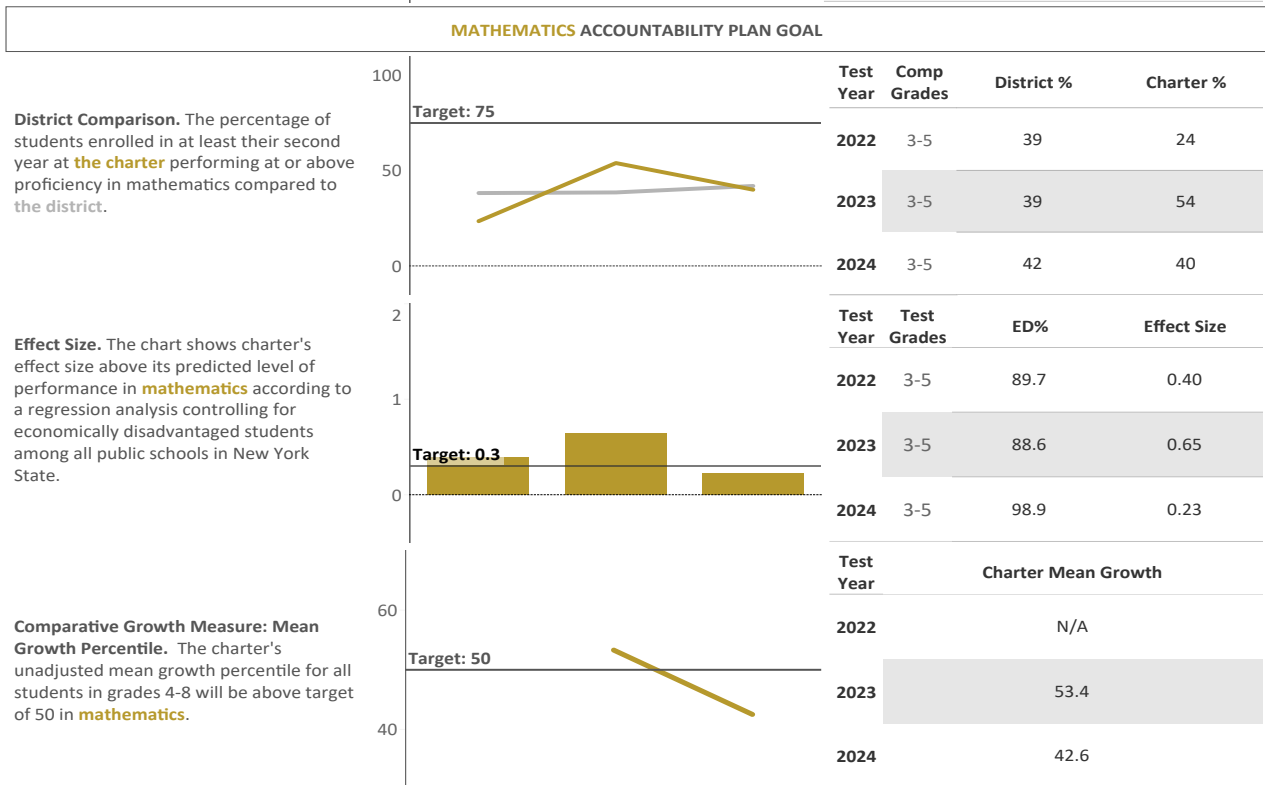
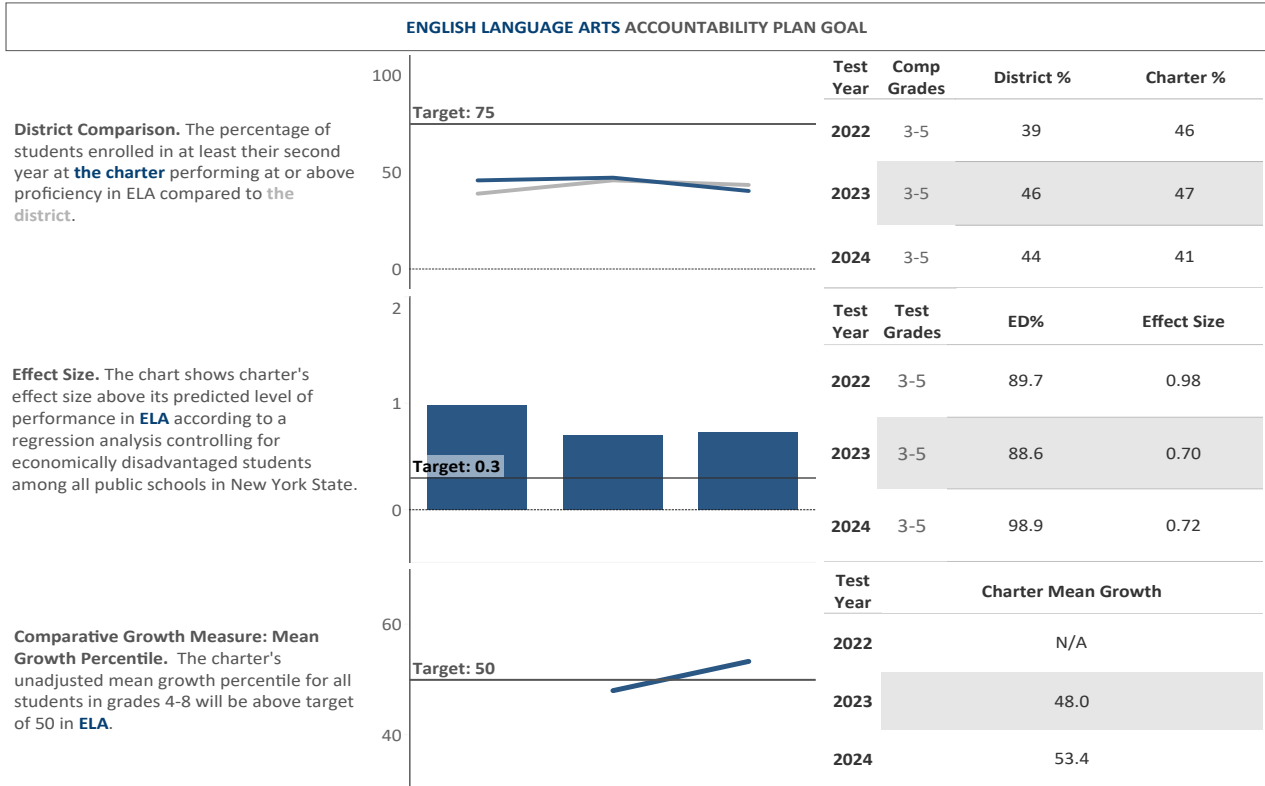
Amber Schools' plans for the future are reasonable, feasible, and achievable. The budget provided in the renewal documentation contains reasonable revenue and expense projections for the proposed charter term given the history of the education corporation.

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# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

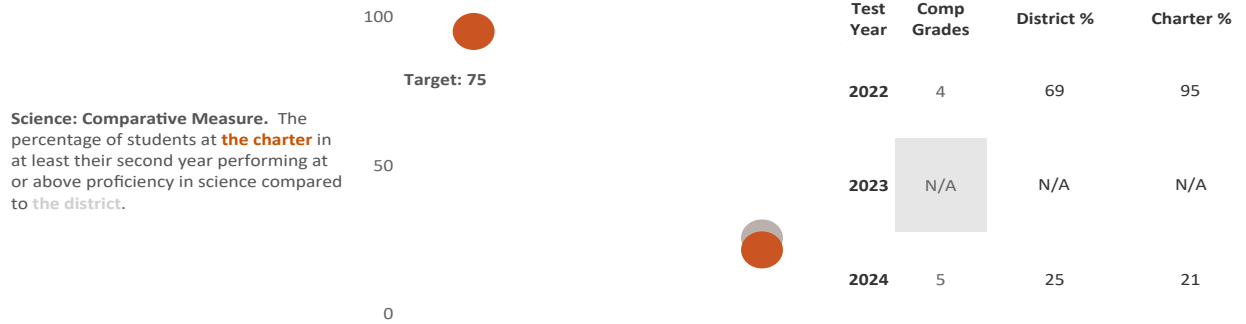
## AMBER CHARTER SCHOOL EAST HARLEM



# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

## AMBER CHARTER SCHOOL EAST HARLEM

### SCIENCE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL



### TESTED PERCENTAGES

	2022		2023		2024	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
School Tested Number	198	198	186	183	175	176
School Tested %	99.0%	99.0%	97.9%	96.8%	97.2%	97.8%
District Tested %	80.3%	80.4%	75.9%	83.7%	70.9%	81.4%

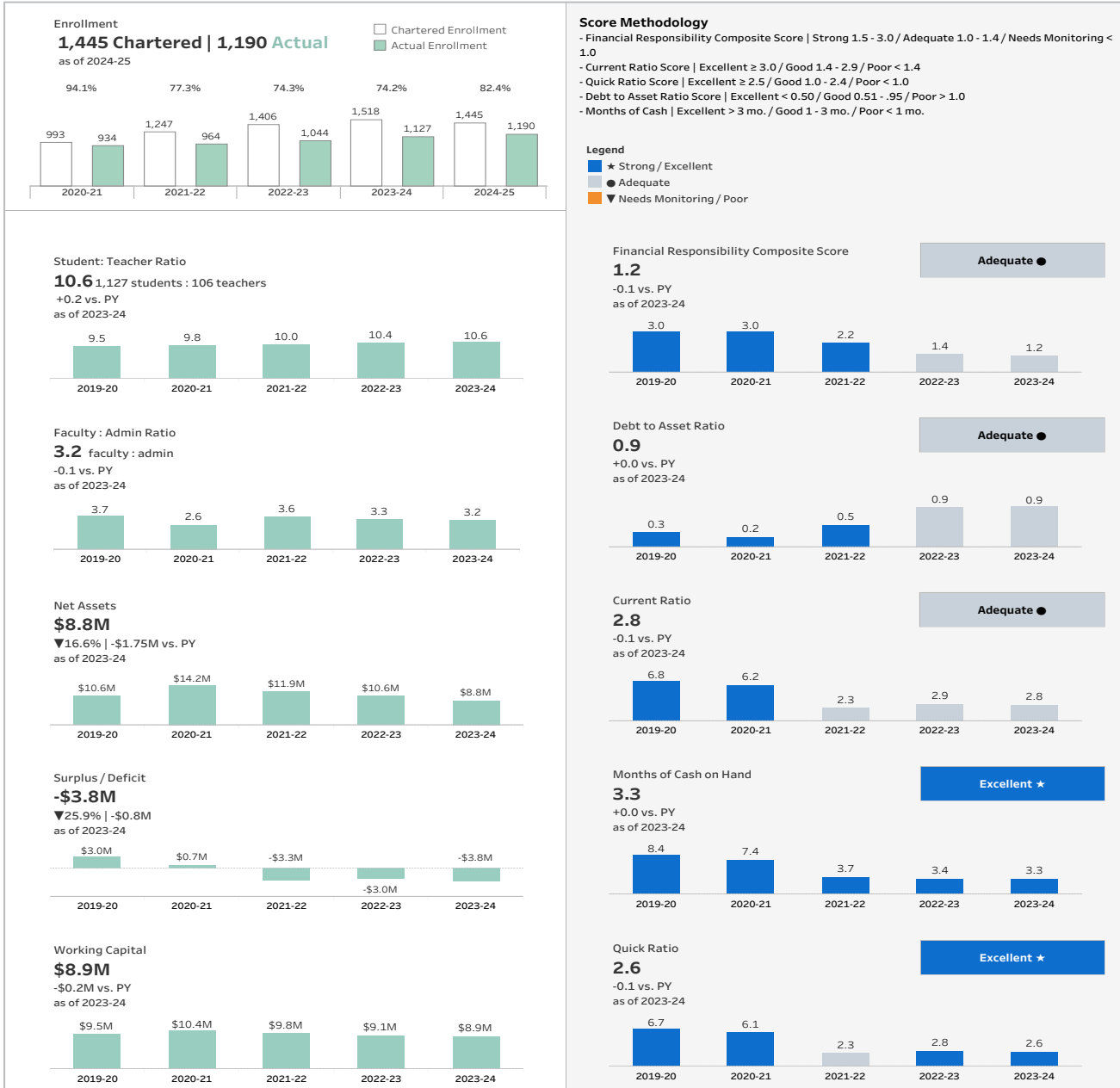
### SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE\*

	2022	2023	2024
Students with Disabilities Tested on State Exam	33	33	49
Charter Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	39.4	33.3	18.4
District Percent Proficient	14.6	19.8	17.7
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam	34	35	41
Charter Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress	20.6	51.4	22.0

\* 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".

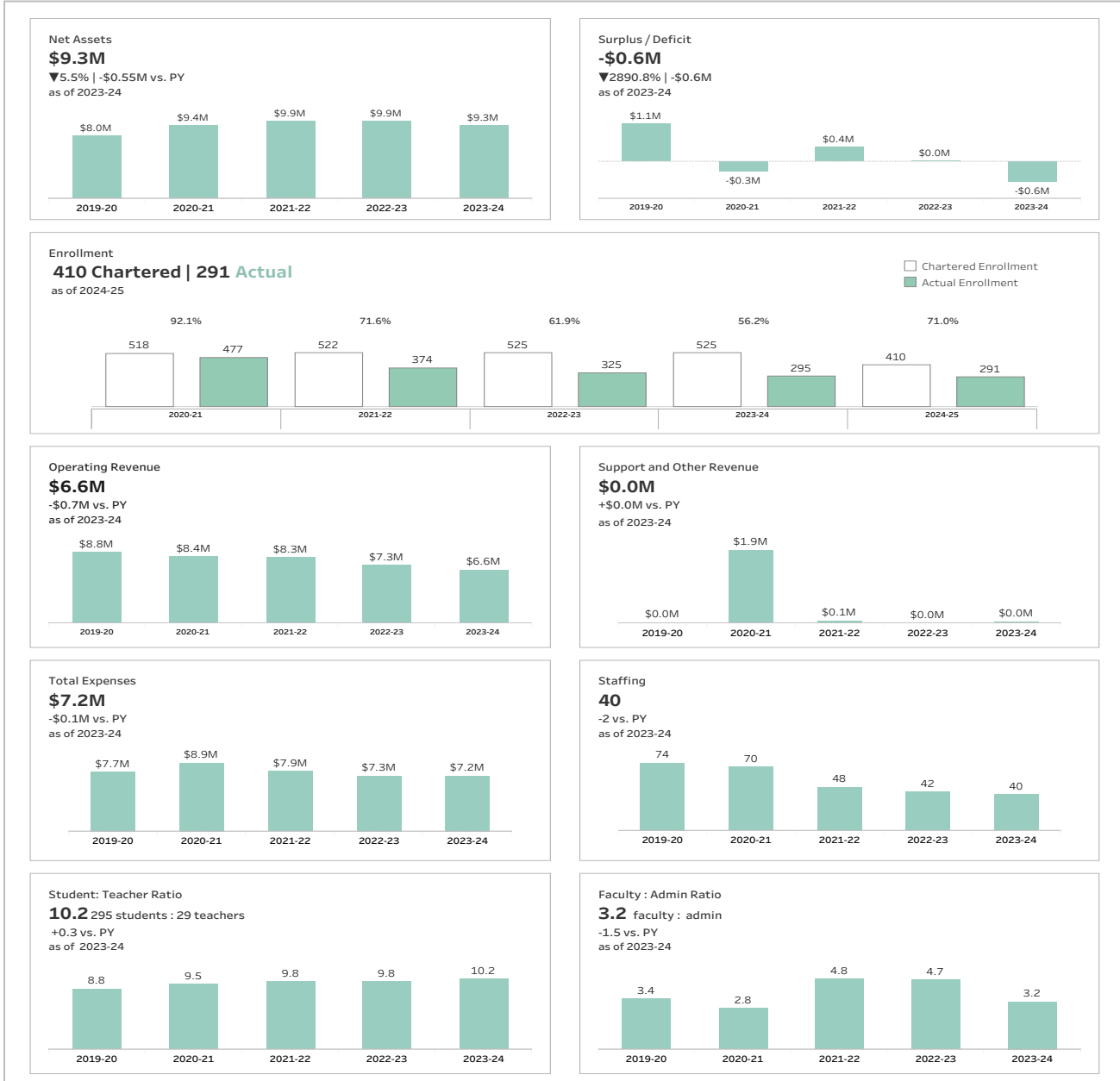
# FISCAL DASHBOARD

## AMBER CHARTER SCHOOLS



# FISCAL DASHBOARD

## AMBER CHARTER SCHOOL EAST HARLEM



## 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.*

#### **Annual Reports**

The education corporation posted the August 1<sup>st</sup> submission portion of the 2023-24 annual report on its website, but the education corporation must post the annual Accountability Plan Progress Report and financial audit. The Institute will ensure compliance prior to the start of the next charter term.

#### **FOIL**

The education corporation has a complete Freedom of Information Law (“FOIL”) policy and notice, but the subject matter list requires minor revision to clearly indicate when it was last updated to ensure annual review.

#### **Teacher Certification**

The Act allows charters to hire up to 15 uncertified lead teachers contingent upon those teachers meeting certain requirements including: two years of Teach for America experience; three years of teaching experience; status as a higher education professor; exceptional experience in a subject; or, teaching science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (“STEM”) or career and technical education courses.

Amber Schools partners with Manhattan College to provide special education teacher residencies and with National University to offer master’s degrees in social-emotional learning. Amber Schools is in the process of establishing a partnership with Relay Graduate School of Education to expand their support for teacher certification and professional development. The education corporation assists with certification program enrollment, preparation for required exams, and understanding state-specific requirements. Amber Schools also tracks progress toward certification and conducts regular check-ins with uncertified teachers.

At the time of the renewal review, Amber East Harlem employed 24 lead teachers. Of the 24 lead teachers, 15 were uncertified, which is within the allowable limit. Of the 15 uncertified teachers, 11 met 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 and data regarding persistence in enrollment.

### **Parent Survey Data**

The Institute compiled data from the school’s annual family survey. The school conducts at least an annual survey to gauge family satisfaction. In 2023-24, 77% of families responded to the survey. Of those respondents, 89% indicated satisfaction with the school.

### **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 New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”) held its required hearing on the Amber East Harlem renewal application via videoconference on October 23, 2024. Two school officials spoke in support of the renewal application citing the education corporation’s history of serving the community and the application’s consideration of enrollment trends, demographic shifts, funding considerations, and the school’s capacity. No one spoke in opposition to the renewal.

### **Enrollment and Retention**

Amber East Harlem makes good faith efforts to meet its enrollment and retention targets. The school meets its enrollment targets for economically disadvantaged students and English language learners (“ELLs”) and comes close to meeting the enrollment target for students with disabilities. The school must work to improve retention among all subgroups. The SST supports with monitoring the enrollment and retention targets of the charters within Amber Schools.

### **Persistence in Enrollment**

An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2023-24, 82% of Amber East Harlem 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 New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) is available to the Institute to provide either district or statewide context.*

# COMMUNITY SATISFACTION & ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

<b>Amber Charter School East Harlem's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2023-24</b>		<b>Target</b>	<b>Charter</b>
<b>enrollment</b>	economically disadvantaged	83.2	99.4
	English language learners	14.7	16.7
	students with disabilities	27.6	22.4
<b>retention</b>	economically disadvantaged	92.1	82.4
	English language learners	95.1	87.5
	students with disabilities	91.9	77.0

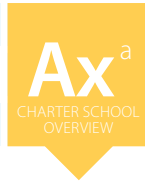
Amber East Harlem

# Ax

APPENDICES

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**CHARTER CHARACTERISTICS**

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT <sup>1</sup>	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2020-21	518	477	92%	K-5
2021-22	522	374	72%	K-5
2022-23	525	325	62%	K-5
2023-24	525	295	56%	K-5
2024-25	410	291	71%	K-6

**CHARTER SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY**

SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
2000-01	First Year Visit	June 6, 2001
2001-02	Evaluation Visit	May 16, 2002
2002-03	Evaluation Visit	March 18 – 19, 2003
2004-05	Initial Renewal Visit	November 3 – 5, 2004
2006-07	Evaluation Visit	April 25, 2007
2007-08	Evaluation Visit	April 3, 2008
2009-10	Subsequent Renewal Visit	October 1, 2009
2011-12	Evaluation Visit	November 3, 2011
2013-14	Subsequent Renewal Visit	March 17, 2014
2018-19	Subsequent Renewal Visit	June 5 – 6, 2019
2024-25	Subsequent Renewal Review	January 21, 2025

**CONDUCT OF THE RENEWAL REVIEW**

DATE(S) OF REVIEW	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
January 21, 2025	Katy Clayton	School Evaluator

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

Amber Charter School East Harlem (“Amber East Harlem”) met or came close to meeting its key academic Accountability Plan goals in English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics over the majority of the term. Notably, it posted particularly high results in 2022-23 when it exceeded the targets for all comparison measures under its goal areas.

In ELA, Amber East Harlem came close to meeting its goal from 2021-22 through 2023-24. The school’s students enrolled in at least their second year posted proficiency rates on the state’s ELA exam that were at or near the district results for the same grades in every year. The school posted effect sizes far above the target of 0.3 each year indicating that the school performed higher than expected to a large degree in comparison to demographically similar schools across the state. Although the school’s overall proficiency rate declined slightly compared to the district in 2023-24, Amber East Harlem posted a high mean growth score above the target of 50 indicating it grew the learning of all students on average at a rate higher than its statewide peers.

In mathematics, Amber East Harlem also came close to meeting its goal over the term. With 54% of students enrolled in at least their second year scoring at or above proficient in 2022-23, the school increased its performance by 30 percentage points from the prior year and outperformed the district by 15 percentage points. In 2023-24, the school posted a proficiency rate approximately the same as the district. From 2021-22 through 2023-24, the school posted positive effect sizes indicating that in comparison to schools across the state enrolling similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students, Amber East Harlem performed at least slightly higher than expected. The school posted a mean growth percentile above the target of 50 in one of two years during the term with data suitable for analysis.

### ASSESSMENT

Amber Schools utilizes a variety of valid and reliable assessments to measure student progress against clearly defined expectations for knowledge and skill attainment. Teachers and school leaders analyze the data regularly and use the resulting information to adjust lessons, instructional pacing, and student groups. The schools’ ongoing analysis and adjustments to instruction improve student learning.

Amber Schools administers i-Ready assessments in ELA and mathematics three times each year, network-developed interim and mock exams for each content area twice annually, and formative assessments from the curricular programs on a routine basis. In addition, teachers collaborate in grade level teams to create aligned exit tickets and quizzes that ensure students master daily lesson content. These assessments, along with the diagnostic and internally created Amber reading assessment, allow the schools to monitor student academic growth and achievement effectively throughout the year.

Teachers analyze data from each assessment to evaluate student mastery of grade level standards, identify gaps, plan effective response to data lessons, group students for small group instruction, and monitor progress over time. The data manager uses Illuminate and PowerSchool to create and share out a set of analyses with school leaders and teachers during monthly student data meetings. Teachers, staff developers, and

instructional leaders also meet to analyze data following each administration of the benchmark and i-Ready assessments. Leaders, staff developers, and grade level teams of teachers attend these meetings to identify state standards and particular test items where students performed lower than expected. Grade level teams then develop re-teaching plans to ensure they effectively deliver the missed content.

Amber Schools provides regular progress reports and achievement updates from teachers to parents through formal methods like report cards and progress reports. The schools also provide frequent, informal updates to parents through text messages, phone calls, and the ParentSquare software application.

## CURRICULUM

Amber Schools implements a clear curricular framework aligned to state standards across all grades to provide teachers with the structures to plan high quality instruction. Beginning in the 2020-21 school year, Amber Schools adjusted its curriculum to better support teachers in their instructional planning. The new curriculum streamlines materials for consistent and effective planning and delivery of instruction. Integrated assessments allow the schools to seamlessly monitor lesson effectiveness.

Amber Schools implements the Into Reading literacy curriculum for the elementary grades and Into Literature for ELA instruction at the middle school level. To address areas of need in phonics instruction, the schools introduced the Magnetic Reading Foundations program for all Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students during the 2023-24 school year. After piloting a different mathematics curriculum to mixed results, the schools committed to Into Math for elementary and middle school instruction. Throughout the charter term, Amber Schools evaluated the needs of both students and teachers to determine which curricular materials best support high quality instruction and alignment across the elementary and middle school programs.

The selected curricula for each of the core content areas provides staff members with rigorous materials and extensive resources to ensure all teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. Teachers appreciate the structure and guidance the curricula afford them in their efforts to plan purposeful and focused lessons.

## PEDAGOGY

Amber Schools demonstrates effective instruction across its schools as evidenced by the Institute's visits over time. Through first year visits, mid-charter term evaluation visits, and previous renewal visits, the Institute has conducted multiple observations across grade levels.

High quality instruction is evident throughout Amber Schools classrooms. School leaders and teachers have high expectations for a supportive and productive learning environment. Teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to state standards and the schools' curriculum. Lessons contain rigorously planned activities that support the attainment of the stated objective. Teachers define and list relevant vocabulary on the board for students to see and use in responses. Teachers understand their co-teaching roles and generally circulate and monitor student work.

Teachers regularly and effectively check for student understanding using a variety of methods. These techniques include cold calling students or circulating around the classroom to talk to students and examine their work to identify misconceptions. Teachers consistently collect student data throughout a lesson and

use any misconception as an opportunity to adjust teaching in the moment. In most classrooms, teachers use station learning to interact with small groups of students to effectively gauge student learning and use follow up questioning to further probe for understanding. In lessons that demonstrate good problem solving skills, teachers ask higher order thinking questions and require students to justify their thinking. Although teachers' lesson plans include opportunities for students to grapple with difficult material, leaders recognize an opportunity to ensure these plans consistently translate into classroom practice.

The majority of lessons maximize learning time with appropriate pacing and efficient transitions. Most teachers are organized with materials prepared in advance, allowing them to move students quickly through lesson activities. Students are aware of procedures and focus on relevant small group learning centers. The school has a culture that supports smooth routines and on task behavior during lessons. Teachers successfully redirect students when they exhibit off task behavior to maintain focus on teaching and learning.

### INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Amber Schools implements effective instructional leadership systems to establish an environment of high expectations and comprehensive teacher support. Leaders at both the school level and school services team ("SST") provide sustained coaching and professional development for each teacher aligned to a consistent vision for educational excellence across the schools.

Staff developers based at each school provide ongoing coaching to teachers to address individualized classroom needs. Principals and assistant principals meet with each teacher and teacher assistant to set goals for both student performance and pedagogy in alignment with the Danielson Framework. The principal and assistant principal conduct observations of each teacher three times per year and liaise with staff developers on a routine basis to ensure teachers are well supported. Leaders provide feedback on both formal and informal observations through TeachBoost, which allows leaders to see performance trends throughout the school year.

Amber Schools holds regular data meetings in which teachers work with school-based data managers and assessment coaches to analyze student needs and create action plans for instruction. Leaders incorporate data from i-Ready and state assessments as well as mid-unit quizzes and exams into Illuminate to support teachers in their planning and response cycle. These meetings ensure that professional learning is interrelated with classroom practice and responsive to student data.

Instructional leaders implement a comprehensive professional development program to develop both veteran and novice teachers at each school effectively. In addition to workshops and training sessions on relevant topics throughout the school year, Amber Schools holds an annual intensive summer institute to align teachers on new instructional initiatives, best practices, and coordination across teams. Teachers also use Witsby, an online platform for individualized professional development that leverages resources from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Finally, leaders hold focus groups on core content areas to provide a space for teachers to deeply explore their subject matter and collaborate with one another.

## AT RISK PROGRAM

Amber Schools meets the educational needs of at-risk students. The schools implement clear and compliant procedures for identifying at-risk students. Instructional leaders and teachers use assessment data to identify students struggling academically. The schools' Response to Intervention ("RTI") prevention framework prioritizes high quality, differentiated tier 1 instruction in every classroom. Teachers provide more targeted tier 2 interventions to small groups during tutoring and designated intervention blocks. If students do not demonstrate progress after teachers provide interventions, teachers and instructional leaders will refer students to the child study team for additional support. After the child study team implements additional interventions, the team makes a formal referral to the district committee on special education ("CSE") if the student is still not making progress. The school administers a home language questionnaire followed by the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners ("NYSITELL") to identify ELLs.

Amber Schools implements several programs that effectively address the needs of at-risk students. Teachers provide after school tutoring to target the specific academic needs of at-risk students. To facilitate language acquisition for ELL students, schools offer a standalone ELL class using the total physical response ("TPR") approach, as well as differentiated in-class supports. For students with disabilities, the school provides special education teacher support services ("SETSS") through pull out sessions based on student individualized education program ("IEP") goals. The schools offers counseling in-house and coordinate with the district to provide related services for students.

Instructional leaders support teachers with regular analysis and discussion of subgroup data to monitor at-risk student achievement. Leaders disaggregate student performance data by ELLs, students with disabilities, and other at-risk student factors to ensure the schools provide support for any student at risk of academic failure. As a result, teachers are aware of student progress toward meeting IEP goals, achieving English language proficiency, and school based goals for students struggling academically. Leaders work with teachers to create action plans for reteaching specific standards when students do not demonstrate mastery, and follow up with each teacher to determine student progress. In addition to the ongoing subgroup analysis, the special education coordinator shares IEPs at a glance with teachers at the beginning of the year and ongoing progress updates throughout the year. The ELL teacher shares English language proficiency levels with teachers and updates teachers and parents on student growth periodically.

The school provides effective training and professional development to at-risk program providers and general education teachers. During monthly data meetings, instructional leaders coach and collaborate with teachers to identify and plan support for students at risk of academic failure. The SST offers some internally produced professional development focused on differentiation and engagement strategies. The schools also send intervention teachers to the Collaborative for Inclusive Education for additional training and support.

Amber Schools creates regular opportunities for coordination between classroom teachers and at-risk program teachers. Special education, intervention, and ELL teachers participate in weekly grade level team meetings on a rotating schedule and collaborate both formally and informally. The schools have a strong culture of collaboration to support meaningful exchanges that support student outcomes. For example, teachers communicate via email, between class periods, during planning periods, and after school to share student updates and concerns to consider as they plan lessons.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Amber Schools effectively supports the delivery of a high quality educational program. Amber Schools currently operates three schools. The board and the SST work effectively to deliver a rigorous educational program and establish a clear, purposeful administrative structure. Over the charter term, the board and the SST improved systems and adjusted responsibilities among staff members in order to carry out the mission of the organization. By promoting staff members from within Amber Schools to the SST, the organization preserved its culture and maintained consistent expectations for performance.

Leaders at Amber Schools align goals across the SST, the schools, and individual staff members to ensure consistent growth in support of the organization’s mission. Each member of the SST, principal, and teacher have goals that clearly align with the relevant responsibilities of each role. The lines of accountability and reporting are clear across every level of the organization. School leaders manage school staff members including teachers. Amber Schools recognizes the need to develop its capacity to successfully continue supporting the growth of the three schools as the network expands its middle school programming.

Amber Schools has an established track record of retaining high quality staff members. As the education corporation and the SST have grown, each has replaced vacant positions and filled newly created positions with existing employees to the fullest extent possible. This strategy allows Amber Schools to maintain its organizational culture and decrease time for onboarding staff members in new roles.

## BOARD OVERSIGHT & GOVERNANCE

Amber Schools’ board members work effectively to achieve the schools’ Accountability Plan goals. The board has procedures in place to govern each school and strategically evaluates its performance as well as the performance of the schools in order to improve student academic outcomes.

Board members possess the requisite skills and have put in place structures and procedures to govern the schools effectively. Board members have a wide range of skills including backgrounds in education, finance, non-profit management, facilities, operations, and law. The board reserves seats for one current teacher and three current parents of students at each of the three Amber Schools. Standing committees include finance, facilities, education, development, and nominating, which meet regularly and report to the full board. The board is currently seeking to expand its membership in order to add strategic expertise and to ensure strong succession planning. In particular, the board is seeking to add members with expertise in law, technology, finance, and facilities.

The board requests and receives necessary information to provide rigorous oversight of the schools’ programs and finances. Principals and the co-chief executive officers (“co-CEOs”) provide regular and frequent reports to the education committee and full board regarding the latest successes or challenges at the school level. These reports include detailed information regarding student performance and include disaggregation of results for ELLs, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities. The SST provides detailed monthly financial reports to the finance committee and the full board as well as periodic reports on student and teacher recruitment and retention. Board members are aware of the school’s Accountability Plan goals and consistently assess how the school performs against these goals.

The board successfully recruits, hires, and retains effective personnel. The board directly manages and evaluates the co-CEOs using an evaluation rubric. The rubric includes data goals based on the school's Accountability Plan, as well as other goals that are revised or set yearly to reflect organizational priorities. The board regularly evaluates its performance. With the support of a consultant, the board developed a standardized approach to self-assessment. Each year, board members complete a survey assessing the board's systems and efficacy at achieving goals. The consultant analyzes responses and then facilitates strategic board discussions based on the self evaluation outcomes, which helps the board develop and refine strategic short- and long-term goals.

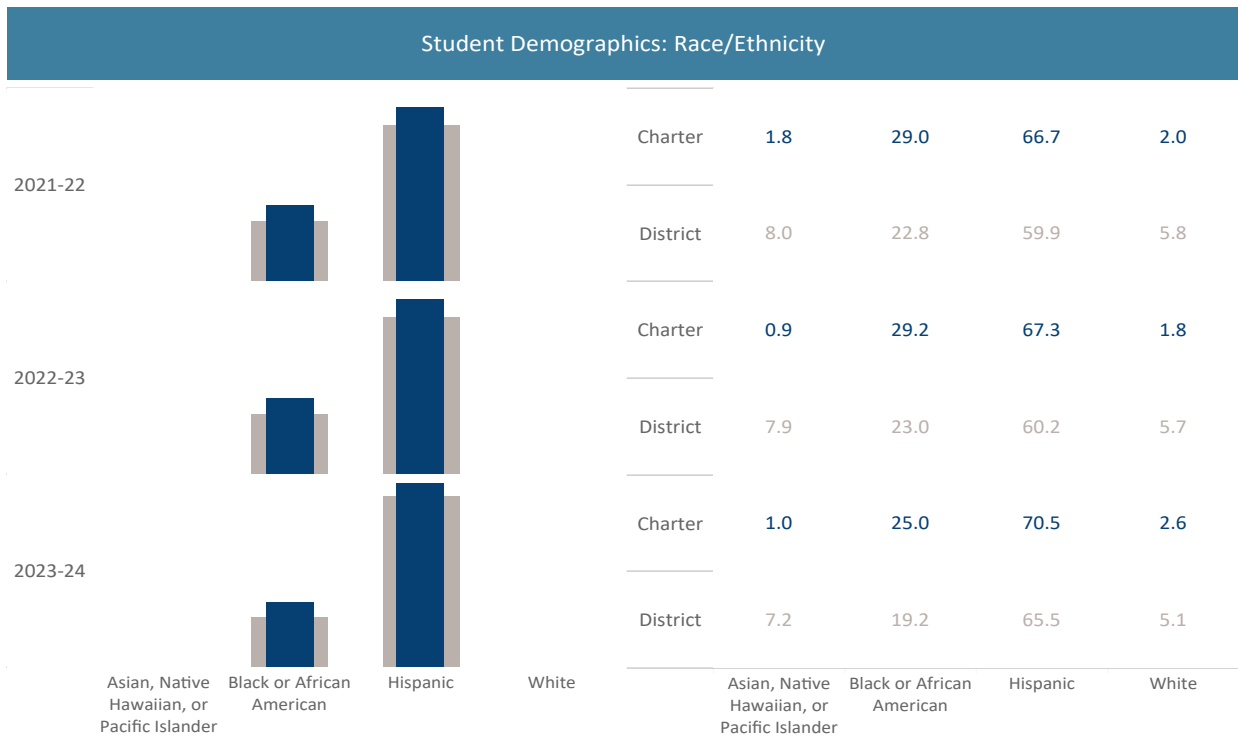
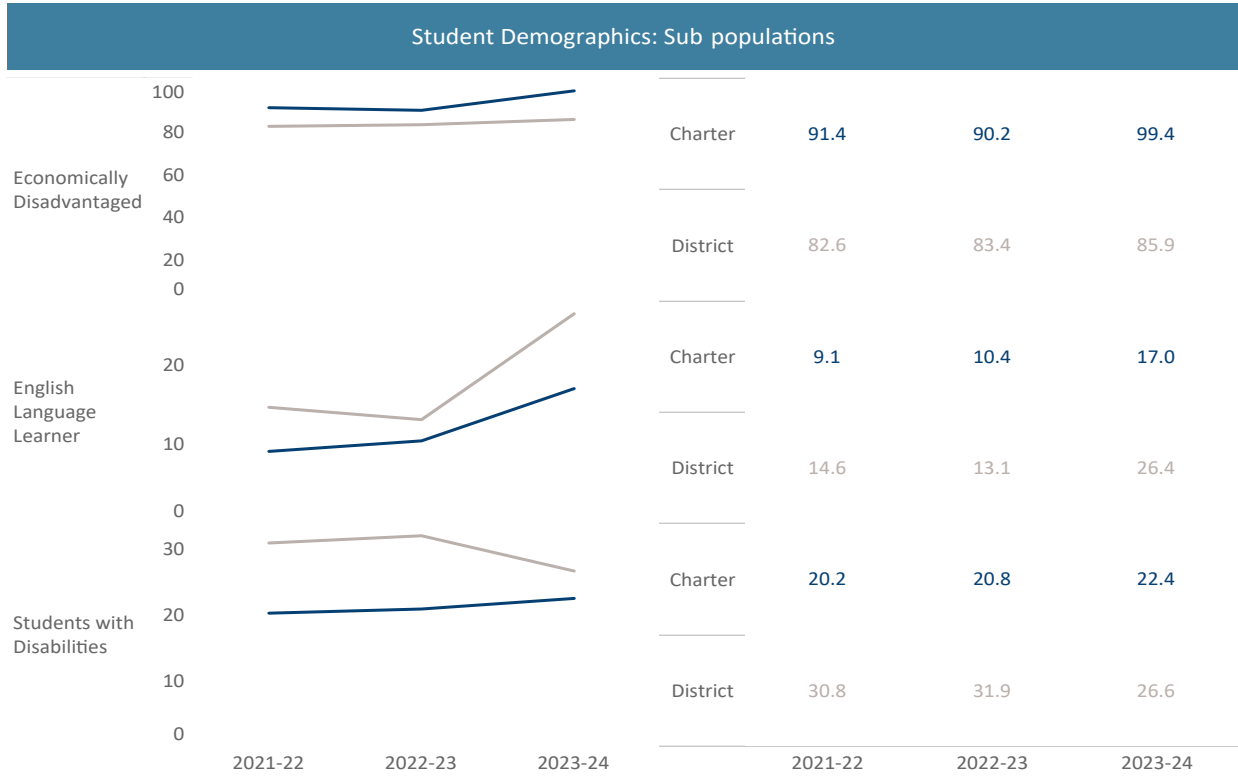
The board effectively communicates with families and the larger school community. The board reserves a position for family representatives from each of the Amber Schools to help ensure parents' voices and concerns are represented at board meetings. Some board members also conduct classroom walkthroughs with school leaders and attend community events to interact with the greater student, teacher, and parent body.

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Amber Charter School East Harlem

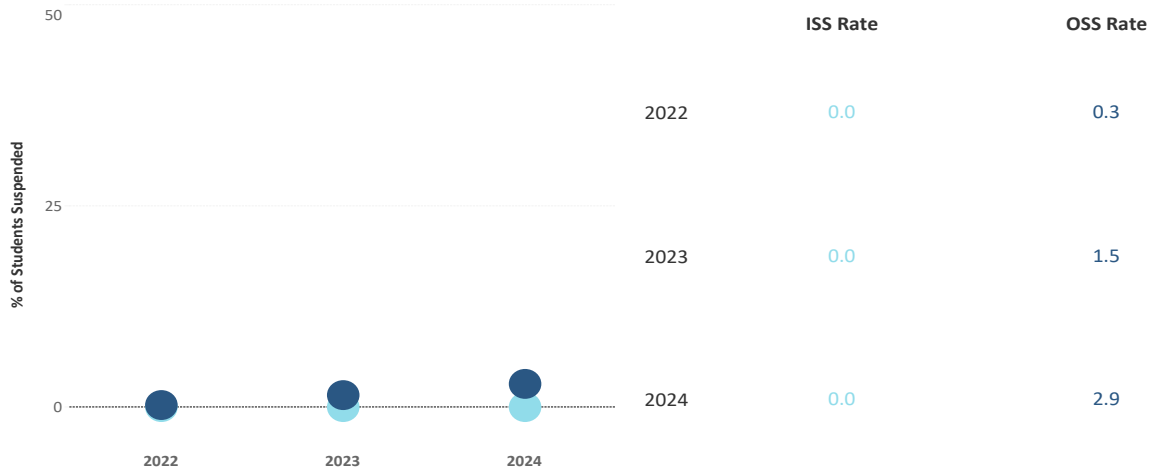
Manhattan CSD 4



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



Amber Charter School East Harlem



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
2021-22	79.0			
2022-23	76.7	0	0	0
2023-24	81.7			

\* 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.	-

The education corporation experienced deficits during the last three years of operation primarily due to facility costs and lower than anticipated enrollment.

"+" : 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.

## DOES THE EDUCATION CORPORATION MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE INTERNAL CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES?

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

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
The education corporation has a history of sound fiscal policies, procedures, and practices, and appropriate internal controls.	+
The most recent audit report was free of any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal controls.	+
The education corporation reviews and updates its Financial Policies and Procedures Manual (“FPPM”), which covers the charter, on a regular basis. The most recent review of the FPPM is found in the next column. The Institute recommends, as a best practice, that the education corporation review and update its FPPM on an annual basis to ensure current operating systems are reflected.	<b>JANUARY 2023</b>

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

## 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.	+



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