

THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY
MERRICK ACADEMY - QUEENS
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL*

REPORT DATE: APRIL 2, 2025

VISIT DATE: OCTOBER 29-30, 2024



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

CONTENTS

1 CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

5 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE DATA

7 FISCAL DASHBOARD

8 COMPLIANCE REPORTING

9 COMMUNITY SATISFACTION AND RETENTION

11 APPENDICES

A: Charter School Overview

B: Benchmark Summary

C: Student Demographics

D: Fiscal Benchmarks Summary



CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND

MERRICK ACADEMY - QUEENS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

136-25 218 Street, Queens, New York | Grades: K-5 | NYC Community School District 29 | Laurelton
 115-30 221st Street, Cambria Heights, New York | Grades: 6 | NYC Community School District 29 | Cambria Heights

MISSION

At Merrick Academy, we inspire every student through a STEAM-focused, inquiry-based education. Our exceptional faculty and innovative curriculum ensure equitable opportunities, nurturing critical thinking, problem-solving, and literacy skills. By partnering with families, we support holistic development, preparing students for high-performing high schools, college, and successful careers.

CURRENT CHARTER INFORMATION

Year Opened: 2000
 Serves: Kindergarten – 6th
 Chartered Enrollment: 725
 Charter Expires on: June 30, 2025

FUTURE CHARTER INFORMATION

Serves: Kindergarten – 8th
 Chartered Enrollment: 1,026
 Charter Expiration: June 30, 2030

MERRICK ACADEMY - QUEENS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES¹

CHAIR
Cameil Dalgetty-Jarvis
TREASURER
James Ding
SECRETARY
Nicole C. Blair-Barzey

TRUSTEES
Gerald Karikari
Tatum T. Boothe
Paula B. James
Linda R. Johnson

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Mission-driven inquiry of equity;	+	Inquiry-driven pedagogical cycles;	+
Critical thinking and inquiry-based pedagogy;	+	Leadership in a science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics context; and,	+
Science of reading as the foundation for literacy;	+	A supportive community for all learners and families.	+
Artificial intelligence integration;	+		

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

The Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) recommends the SUNY Trustees’ Charter School Committee approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Merrick Academy - Queens Public Charter School (“Merrick”) for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten - 8th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal, with a projected total enrollment of 1,026 students. The Institute makes this recommendation as Merrick 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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Merrick opened in fall of 2000 as the first charter school operating in Queens. In June 2023, the SUNY Trustees approved the school’s request to expand to operate a middle school program, which began its expansion in 2024-25 with 6th grade students. The school will grow to serve a full Kindergarten- 8th grade program during the next charter term, giving families the continuity of middle school choice in eastern Queens.

The school has weathered various challenges over its previous charter terms, including inconsistent academic performance and high levels of staff member turnover. During the last renewal in 2020, the school demonstrated significant improvements in instructional leadership, academic performance, board oversight, staff culture, and organizational capacity. During the current charter term, Merrick’s board and school leadership team have stabilized and built upon these improvements, ensuring continued progress and alignment with long-term goals.

This term, the school’s leadership team and board of trustees established three initiatives: transitioning to an inquiry-based learning model, pursuing International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (“IB PYP”) accreditation, and expanding STEAM integration across the school to optimize students’ future academic and career success. With an increased focus on using data in all aspects of school programming and operations, leaders track progress towards each priority according to specific, measurable objectives. The board and school leaders review and update these objectives annually.

Is the charter an academic success?

Merrick is an academic success having come close to meeting its key academic Accountability Plan goals in English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics over the term. The school demonstrated academic progress as reflected in increases in proficiency rates and high mean growth percentiles. Merrick is focused on continuous improvement of academic outcomes through targeted instructional coaching and data-driven supports. The school demonstrates success in the following ways:

- Merrick’s students enrolled in at least their second year posted proficiency rates in mathematics that exceeded the district results by at least four percentage points each year. According to the Institute’s effect size analysis, Merrick performed higher than expected in mathematics each year in comparison to demographically similar schools.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In ELA, Merrick posted incremental improvement on its effect size measure each year from 2021-22 through 2023-24. This level of performance indicates that Merrick performed higher than expected compared to demographically similar schools.
- In both subjects, the school demonstrated high growth scores in 2023-24. Merrick posted mean growth percentiles in ELA and mathematics that exceeded the target of 50 by seven and 11 percentile points, respectively.

Is the charter an effective, viable organization?

Merrick is an effective and viable organization. The school demonstrates programmatic fidelity to its key design elements and mission. As a mature organization, Merrick has overcome numerous challenges to evolve and refine its instructional leadership, curriculum, staffing, communication, board oversight, and community partnerships. The school fosters strong relationships with students' parents and guardians, many of whom participate in the family association and attend board meetings to provide input on decision making. A parental advisory council also meets regularly with school leaders to communicate aspirations and concerns.

Over this charter term, Merrick has made strides towards establishing broader community support and philanthropic partnerships. These efforts include participating in the Queens Power coalition, significantly expanding after school offerings, and qualifying for over one million dollars in Resolution A grants to fund investments in the school's technology systems, specialized STEAM labs, and classroom resources.

Is the charter fiscally sound³?

Merrick is fiscally adequate based on the Institute's review of the renewal documentation. The education corporation implements a comprehensive budget creation process that results in reasonable and achievable projections and fiscal goals. The education corporation's finance team sends monthly financial reports to the board to monitor variances and discuss results. Merrick maintains strong enrollment numbers throughout the current charter term. Merrick had an internal control deficiency in the 2023-24 annual financial audit, which was acknowledged by the board and school leaders and is being rectified in the 2024-25 fiscal year. The education corporation maintains a separate dissolution account with the appropriate amounts as required by the charter agreement.

Merrick demonstrates adequate financial performance throughout the current charter term, with net assets of \$0.9 million and 0.2 months of cash on hand. The education corporation is improving its financial scoring metrics, which the Institute will monitor in the proposed charter term. Merrick made substantial investments for the future of the school in both ELA and mathematics curriculum, student technology, a new facility, summer and after-school programs, and staff member development which caused a decline in ratios and net assets during the current charter term. The education corporation maintains consistent teacher to student ratios throughout the current charter term and adjusts when necessary.

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

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

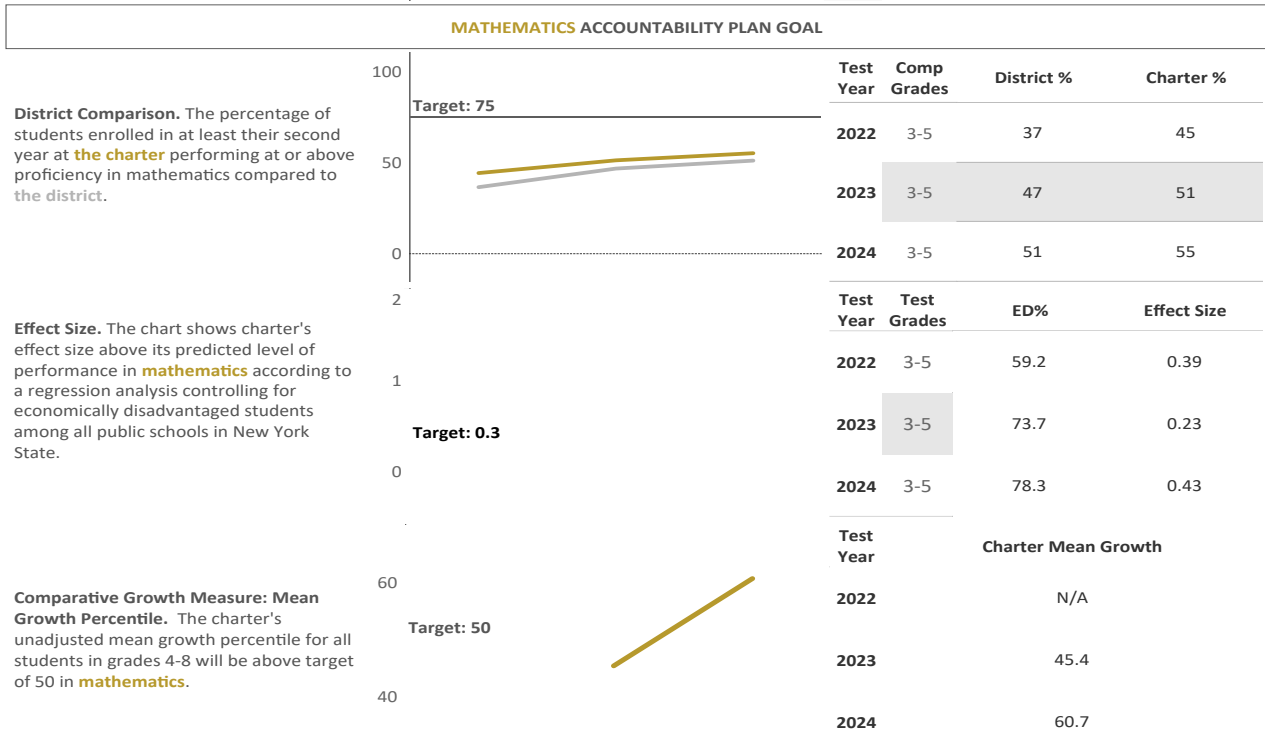
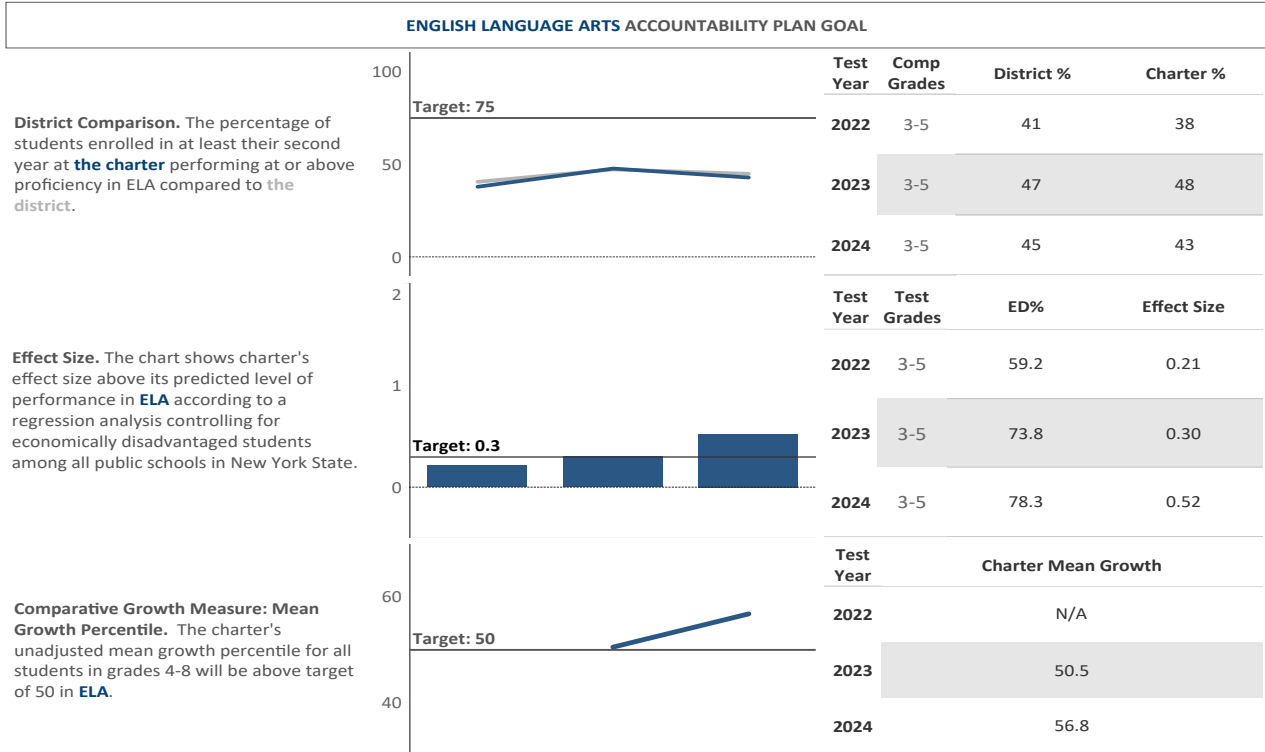
With improved leadership structures and data-driven systems, Merrick’s plans for its next charter term are reasonable, feasible, and achievable. The school plans to expand STEAM programming to involve artificial intelligence integration. Merrick will continue its pursuit of IB PYP accreditation as it builds out its middle school programming. In June 2023, the board signed a long term lease agreement for a state of the art facility blocks away from its current location. The new building is scheduled to open in fall 2026, accommodating the school at scale with grades Kindergarten - 8th.

Merrick proposes a reasonable budget plan that projects increased liquidity for short term liabilities and net assets for the proposed charter term. The Institute has confidence that the investments made by Merrick during the current charter term will result in future surpluses and financial success in the next charter term.



ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

MERRICK ACADEMY - QUEENS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

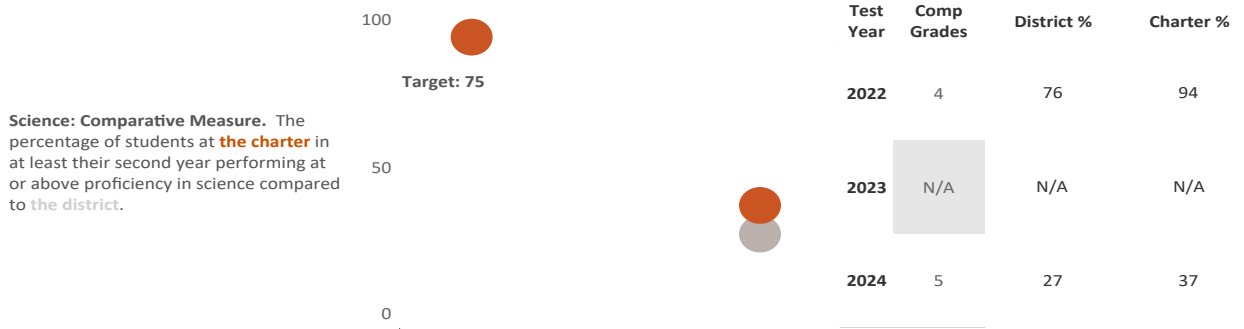




ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

MERRICK ACADEMY - QUEENS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

SCIENCE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL



Science: Comparative Measure. The percentage of students at the charter in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in science compared to the district.

TESTED PERCENTAGES

	2022		2023		2024	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
School Tested Number	221	224	246	241	269	273
School Tested %	86.0%	86.8%	94.3%	92.3%	92.1%	93.5%
District Tested %	80.5%	80.4%	82.5%	84.2%	80.7%	83.6%

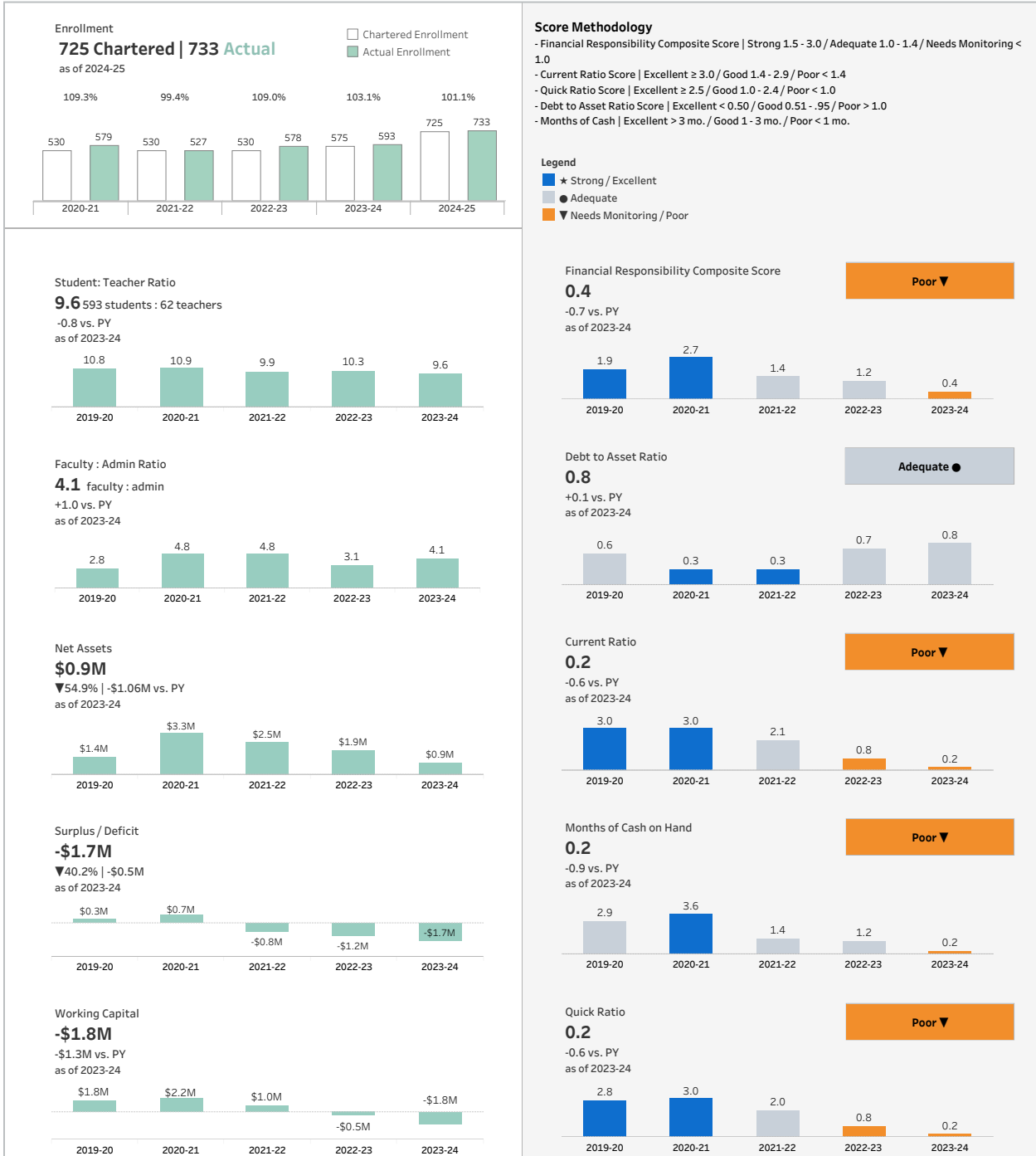
SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE*

	2022	2023	2024
Students with Disabilities Tested on State Exam	33	50	42
Charter Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	12.1	18.0	14.3
District Percent Proficient	11.1	19.9	16.9
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam	20	14	12
Charter Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress	40.0	42.9	25.0

* 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

MERRICK ACADEMY - QUEENS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL



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

While Merrick submitted its annual reports to the Institute and the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) on time, the 2023-24 annual report, comprised of the August 1st submission, Accountability Plan Progress Report, and financial audit, needs to be posted on the school’s website. The Institute will ensure compliance prior to the start of the next charter term.

FOIL

While Merrick has the Freedom of Information Law (“FOIL”) notice on its website, the notice requires minor revisions to be compliant. In addition, a FOIL subject matter list must be posted to the website and must 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 (“STEM”) or career and technical education courses.

Merrick develops individualized plans for uncertified teachers to ensure they are on track to obtain certification within two years. Merrick works with the NYC Charter School Center to determine each teacher’s current certification status, any upcoming expiration dates, and recommendations or next steps to gain or ensure continued certification. Merrick offers personal consultations with certification advisors. The school also provides funding and resources to help teachers gain additional pedagogical knowledge and expertise in their content area.

At the time of the renewal review, Merrick employed 51 lead teachers. Of the 51 lead teachers, 22 were uncertified, which is seven over the allowable limit under the Act. Of the 22 uncertified teachers, 12 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, 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 for the 2023-24 school year. That year, 84% of families participated in the NYCDOE survey. Of the families who responded, 93% expressed satisfaction with the school’s programming.

Parent Focus Group

The seven parents and caregivers in attendance at the focus group expressed high levels of satisfaction with Merrick’s academic and social-emotional support systems. Families emphasized the school’s strong communication practices, highlighting consistent updates on their children’s academic progress through parent-teacher conferences, weekly newsletters, and digital platforms. Parents of English language learners (“ELLs”) and students with disabilities noted the school’s responsiveness to their children’s unique needs, emphasizing targeted supports and individualized attention as strengths of the program.

Participants praised the school’s welcoming and inclusive environment in which students feel safe, valued, and supported. Parents new to the school expressed appreciation for the smooth onboarding process and the sense of community fostered by Merrick. Additionally, families highlighted their trust in school leadership, and the entire instructional team, citing the school’s commitment to both academic rigor and the development of social-emotional skills.

While overall feedback was positive, some parents expressed a desire for expanded enrichment programs and extracurricular opportunities to further engage students outside of the core academic offerings.

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 Merrick renewal application via videoconference on October 29, 2024. No one spoke in support of or in opposition to the application.

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION & ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

Enrollment and Retention

Merrick makes good faith efforts to meet its enrollment and retention targets. The school exceeds the enrollment targets for economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities but does not meet the target for ELLs. Leaders are focused on continual improvement in recruitment and retention efforts. The school demonstrates a commitment to inclusive practices and maintaining a welcoming environment for all families in order to increase ELL enrollment and improve retention of all students year over year.

Persistence in Enrollment

An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2023–24, 87% of Merrick 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.

Merrick Academy - Queens Public Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2023-24		Target	Charter
enrollment	economically disadvantaged	74.7	81.5
	English language learners	12.2	1.8
	students with disabilities	17.8	19.0
retention	economically disadvantaged	92.6	90.6
	English language learners	92.9	91.7
	students with disabilities	92.2	88.9

Merrick

Ax

APPENDICES

PAGES Ax 1-10

CO^A CHARTER OVERVIEW	BS^B BENCHMARK SUMMARY	SD^C STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS	FB^D FISCAL BENCHMARKS
PAGE Ax 1	PAGE Ax 2	PAGE Ax 6	PAGE Ax 8



CHARTER CHARACTERISTICS

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT ¹	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2020-21	530	579	109%	K-5
2021-22	530	527	99%	K-5
2022-23	530	578	109%	K-5
2023-24	575	593	103%	K-5
2024-25	725	731	101%	K-6

CHARTER SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY

SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
2000-01	First Year Visit	May 22, 2001
2001-02	Evaluation Visit	May 13, 2002
2002-03	Evaluation Visit	January 15–16, 2003
2003-04	Initial Renewal Visit	Spring 2004
2006-07	Evaluation Visit	May 24, 2007
2007-08	Evaluation Visit	May 13–14, 2008
2009-10	Subsequent Renewal Visit	November 6, 2009
2011-12	Evaluation Visit	February 15–16, 2012
2014-15	Subsequent Renewal Visit	November 13, 2014
2015-16	Evaluation Visit	March 22 and June 1, 2016
2017-18	Evaluation Visit	April 18–19, 2018
2018-19	Evaluation Visit	April 9–10, 2019
2019-20	Subsequent Renewal Visit	October 16–17, 2019
2022-23	Evaluation Visit	April 4–5, 2023
2024-25	Subsequent Renewal Visit	October 28–29, 2024

CONDUCT OF THE RENEWAL REVIEW

DATE(S) OF REVIEW	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
October 29-30, 2024	Heather Wendling	External Consultant
	Desree Cabrall-Njenga	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

Merrick met or came close to meeting its key academic Accountability Plan goals in English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics over the charter term. Notably in 2023-24, the school exceeded the targets for the effect size and growth measures in both subjects. Merrick also came close to meeting its science goal and met the Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”) goal.

From 2021-22 to 2023-24, Merrick’s students enrolled in at least their second year posted ELA proficiency rates comparable to those of the district. In comparison to schools across the state enrolling similar percentages economically disadvantaged students, Merrick performed higher than expected in each year. The school also exceeded the target for its growth measure in 2022-23 and 2023-24.

In mathematics, Merrick came close to meeting its Accountability Plan goal over the charter term outperforming the district in every year with data suitable for analysis. From 2021-22 through 2023-24, students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficiency at rates that exceeded the district average in the same grades by at least four percentage points. Merrick posted comparative effect sizes that came close to, or exceeded the target of 0.3 each year. This level of performance indicates that the school performed higher than expected compared to demographically similar schools across the state. Notably in 2023-24, Merrick posted a mean growth percentile in mathematics that exceeded the target by 11 points.

ASSESSMENT

Merrick implements a comprehensive assessment system that supports instructional effectiveness and student learning. Over the course of the charter term, the school refined its system to incorporate a suite of assessments more aligned to state standards including the NWEAP MAP, i-Ready, and curriculum-based assessments. Further, the school has increased the timeliness and quality of the data it disseminates to teachers ensuring instructional staff members have the capacity to make necessary changes to lesson plans. Instructional coaches prioritize strengthening teachers’ skills in using data to inform reteaching content, grouping students appropriately, anticipating misconceptions, and monitoring growth between formal assessments.

In order to ensure valid, reliable scoring and the accurate measurement of students progress, teachers collaboratively grade assessments during regular professional learning community (“PLC”) meetings under the guidance of content-area directors. Merrick’s instructional leaders use student performance results to identify areas of growth for coaching and topics for professional development sessions. The school also regularly shares performance results via online platforms to teachers, students, families, and board members. Merrick keeps families informed about student progress through web-based applications, quarterly progress reports, report cards, and parent-teacher conferences.

CURRICULUM

Merrick has a comprehensive curricular framework with supporting tools that effectively aids teachers in instructional planning. Over the charter term, the school completed a curricular audit process to increase rigor and ensure the school uses high quality instructional materials as it works toward its goal of offering the

International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (“PYP”). Accordingly, Merrick implements an array of inquiry-based curricula including Wit & Wisdom in ELA, Eureka Math, and Amplify Science. The school also integrates transdisciplinary units of study aligned with the IB PYP framework into its scope and sequence documents. These additions add depth to content area instruction by emphasizing the development of the whole child, making interdisciplinary connections, and applying learning to real-world situations. Merrick’s curricular framework and supporting materials ensure teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. With guidance from the chief academic officer (“CAO”), principal, assistant principal, and content area directors, teachers internalize weekly lesson plan materials and customize learning activities for their students. Teachers submit weekly lesson plans to instructional leaders who provide actionable, timely feedback. Recently, Merrick launched a pilot initiative to departmentalize the teaching of all subjects from Kindergarten - 6th grade to support teachers in deepening subject area expertise.

PEDAGOGY

Merrick teachers deliver high-quality instruction across all classrooms. Lessons include clear objectives aligned to the school’s curriculum and purposeful activities. Teachers use a variety of effective strategies for monitoring student progress and checking for understanding. For example, teachers circulate the room, cold call on students, and administer exit tickets. As a result, teachers are able to make adjustments in the moment to their instruction and meet the needs of all students. Across most classrooms, teachers maximize instructional time through urgent pacing, efficient transitions, and consistent routines that foster an academically-focused environment. Leaders emphasize conducting smooth transitions and maintaining high levels of engagement to establish an orderly, productive learning environment. Restorative practices are evident in many of the established management routines enabling students to take ownership of learning while maintaining respect and accountability.

As Merrick continues to pursue its IB PYP accreditation, instructional leaders prioritize building teachers’ capacity to promote higher order thinking and problem solving skills in the classroom. Further, leaders emphasize supporting students in making interdisciplinary connections to content and real world contexts. These practices were evident in several classrooms across most grades in the school. However, in some classrooms, teachers missed opportunities to ask higher-order questions which resulted in inconsistent student engagement and depth of discourse.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Merrick has a strong instructional leadership team that establishes high expectations for teaching and learning. Over the term, the school made substantial changes to its instructional leadership model to prioritize instructional coaching and professional development. After a period of frequent leader turnover early in the charter term, the school hired a new CAO, principal, and assistant principals. Merrick created new content director positions specializing in the STEAM subject matter areas. The executive director designed this structure to increase the school’s capacity for supporting teachers. As a result, the school implements a sustained coaching system which includes frequent classroom walkthroughs, weekly PLC meetings for lesson co-planning, data review cycles, formal observations, and a robust written feedback. The school also implements a comprehensive professional development program that includes summer pre-service and a new teacher institute. Merrick’s coaching and professional development systems norm all staff members on the school’s mission, vision, and high expectations for pedagogy.

Merrick’s instructional leaders analyze student performance results and classroom observational data to develop schoolwide pedagogical priorities and specific goals for individual teachers. Leaders provide teachers with specific, actionable recommendations for improvement delivered in the format of “glows and grows” and captured in an accessible digital platform. Teachers report that this system maintains a positive and supportive environment. In order to norm observation and feedback practices, instructional leaders calibrate their coaching through extensive co-observations at the beginning of this school year.

AT RISK PROGRAM

Merrick meets the needs of its at-risk students, including students with disabilities, ELLs, and students struggling academically. The school implements a multi-tiered system of support (“MTSS”) for academic and social emotional intervention and has compliant processes for identifying students in the subpopulations. In order to monitor at-risk student progress, the school employs a continuous data analysis cycle, leveraging the school’s assessment suite to track students’ needs and conduct collaborative intervention planning. Merrick at-risk program staff members have regular, dedicated periods for progress monitoring and turnkey students’ progress toward individualized education program (“IEP”) goals, English language acquisition goals, and other academic goals to general education teachers.

The school has sufficient interventions to meet the needs of the subpopulations. For students with IEPs, Merrick’s special education program staff members provide a range of interventions including special education teacher support services (“SETSS”), integrated co-teaching (“ICT”) classrooms, and a 12:1+1 setting. For ELLs, the school’s English as a new language (“ENL”) teachers modify and deliver the McGraw Hill Wonders curriculum to students during push-in and pull-out sessions. For students identified as struggling academically through Merrick’s diagnostic assessments, the academic intervention services (“AIS”) staff develop an individual learning plan in coordination with classroom teachers and families. The AIS specialists support general education teachers in delivering and monitoring the success of these interventions.

In addition to its academic interventions, Merrick has systems to support students’ social-emotional growth. The school’s licensed social workers and school counselors provide counseling and coordinate with the AIS staff members to monitor students’ progress. The school’s family engagement initiatives, including workshops and frequent outreach efforts, empower families to become active participants in intervention planning. The school includes families during the creation of individual learning plans to ensure that the plans align to family expectations and reflect a culturally responsive design.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Merrick’s organizational structure effectively supports the school’s academic and operational objectives, demonstrating resilience and adaptability. The operations team, led by the chief operations officer, implements clear policies, procedures, and practices that allow the instructional leadership team to carry out the academic program. The school’s organizational structure establishes transparent lines of accountability and clearly defined responsibilities. As a result, teachers understand who to go to for what supports. Additionally, Merrick has effective systems to retain high quality instructional staff members including clear pathways for internal promotions and leadership development. Each leadership team member works with an individualized leadership coach, promoting continuous professional growth.

Merrick’s operational processes are highly organized and the school has systems to regularly monitor and evaluate the programming to make changes as necessary. Leaders review a variety of data across all operational domains including procurement, facilities management, compliance, and student enrollment. In order to ensure smooth coordination across functional areas, the school is working to expand its operational systems with tools like Open Architect that improve data accessibility for effective decision-making. In particular, the school has prioritized enrollment tracking and is reflective about how recruitment strategies can be informed by deeper data analysis. Over the term, Merrick has generally exceeded its chartered enrollment targets and retained students at high rates year over year.

BOARD OVERSIGHT & GOVERNANCE

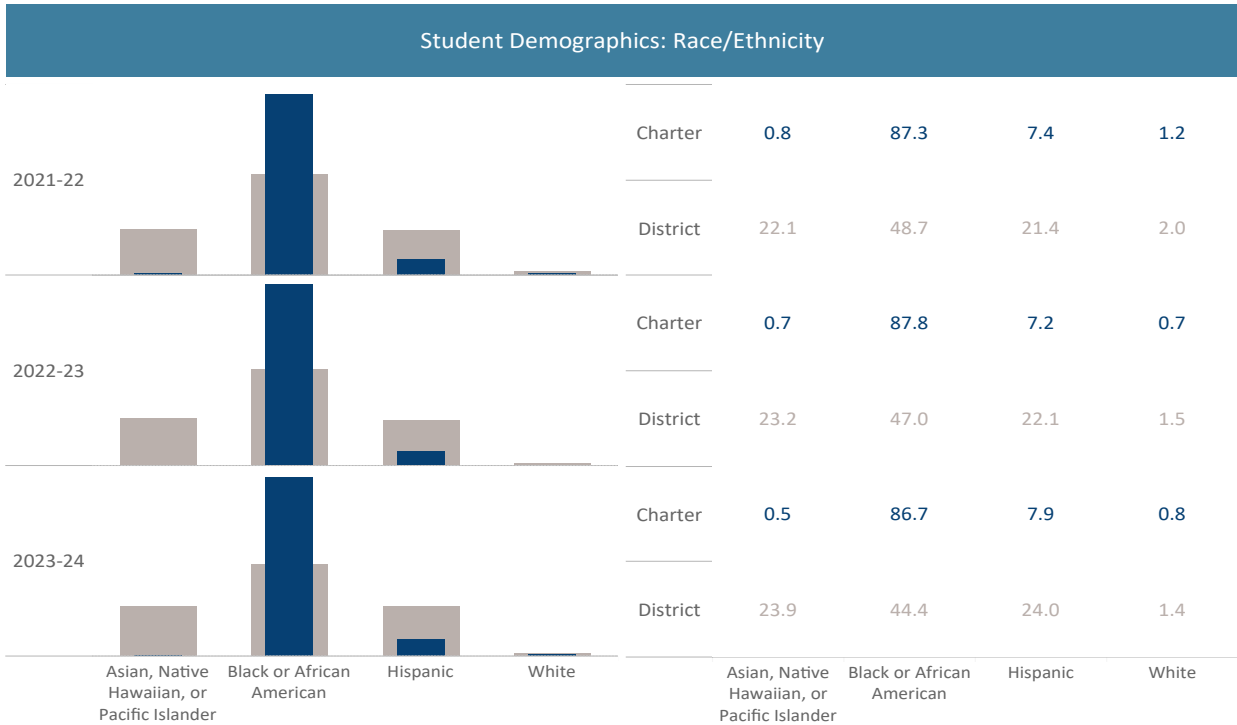
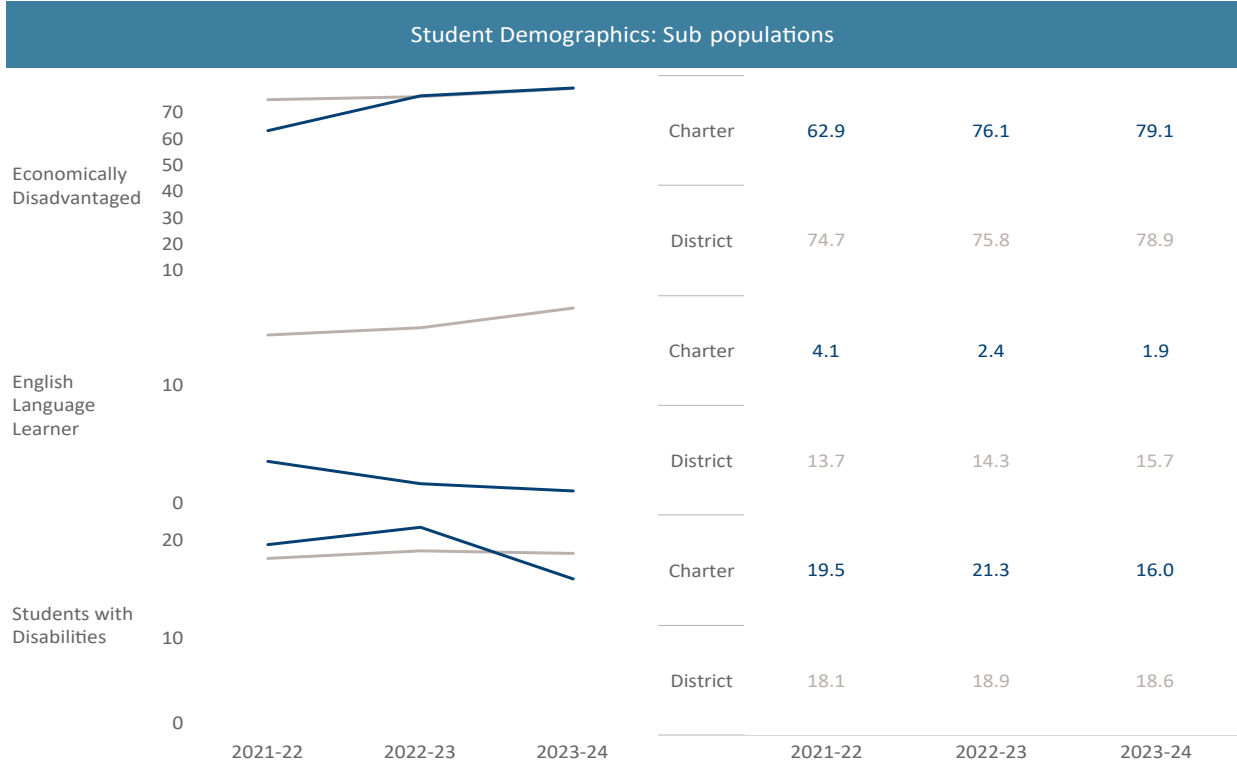
Merrick’s board actively supports the school’s mission, works to achieve the school’s priorities, and monitors the attainment of its Accountability Plan goals. Current board members bring valuable community outreach experience and many members have held longstanding positions on the board, providing continuity to oversight efforts. However, the board recognizes the need to add members with expertise in real estate, finance, and fundraising to support the school’s long term objectives which include bond financing and facilities expansion.

The board requests and receives an array of school data, leveraging common discussion protocols. It effectively monitors student outcomes and operational metrics through academic committee meetings and regular updates from school leaders. As Merrick pursues IB PYP accreditation, the board of trustees recognizes the need to adapt its oversight practices to reflect new, more rigorous academic standards, long-range planning needs, and revised accountability metrics for school leaders. The board conducts regular self-evaluations and evaluates the executive director primarily using school performance results.



Merrick Academy - Queens Public Charter School

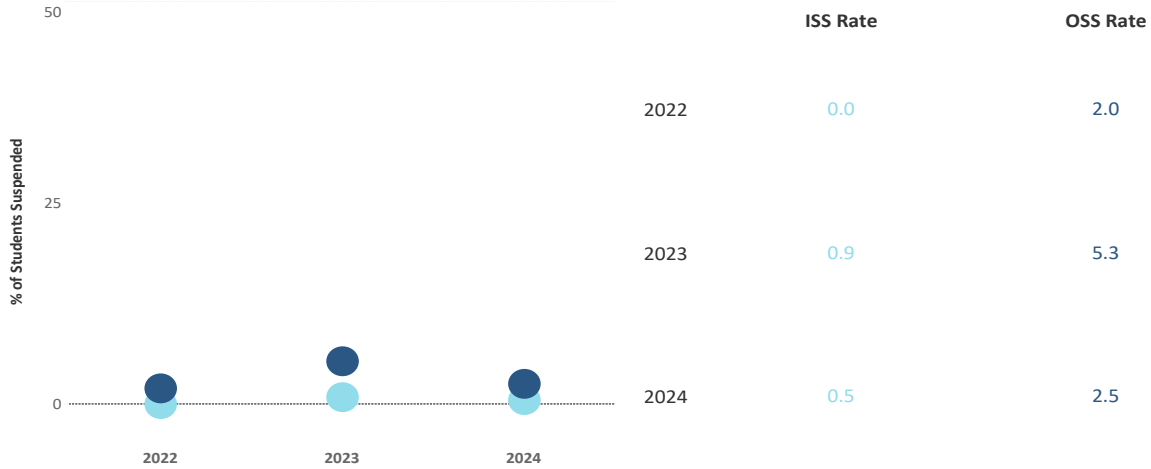
Queens CSD 29



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



Merrick Academy - Queens Public Charter School



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	80.2			
2022-23	85.6	0	0	0
2023-24	86.7			

* 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.	+
<p>During the last charter term, Merrick made several investments including curriculum updates, student technology, a new facility, summer and after-school programs, and staff member development, which resulted in three years of deficits during the current charter term. The education corporation is actively working to rectify these deficits and the budget submitted projects surpluses during the proposed charter term.</p>	

"+" : 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.	JULY 2024
Merrick had an internal control deficiency in the 2023-24 annual financial audit, which was acknowledged by the school. The board and school leaders are working on correcting the issue in the 2024-25 fiscal year.	

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.	N/A
Grant expenditure reports.	N/A

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.	N/A
The education corporation is actively working to improve its financial scoring metrics, which we anticipate improving during the proposed charter term.	



SUNY Charter Schools Institute
H. Carl McCall SUNY Building
353 Broadway
Albany, NY 12246

518.445.4250
www.newyorkcharters.org

