

# THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY  
SOUTH BUFFALO CHARTER SCHOOL*

*REPORT DATE: APRIL 2, 2025*

*VISIT DATE: NOVEMBER 14–15, 2024*



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

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## CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND

# SOUTH BUFFALO CHARTER SCHOOL

154 South Ogden Street, Buffalo, New York | Grades: K-8 | Buffalo City School District

### MISSION

South Buffalo Charter School is a collaborative learning community. Our focus on learning is driven by research, data, and collaborative reflection to increase student achievement. We are dedicated to creating students that are prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century through an environment that encompasses character education, technology integration, and rigorous academics.

### CURRENT CHARTER INFORMATION

Year Opened: 2000

Serves: Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup>

Chartered Enrollment: 900

Charter Expires on: June 30, 2025

### FUTURE CHARTER INFORMATION

Serves: Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup>

Chartered Enrollment: 900

Charter Expiration: June 30, 2030

### SOUTH BUFFALO CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES<sup>1</sup>

#### PRESIDENT

Christopher Schafer

#### VICE PRESIDENT

Anne Marie Tryjankowski

#### TREASURER

Matthew S. Szalkowski

#### SECRETARY

Kathleen Linhardt

#### TRUSTEES

Jennifer Mack

Carine Merritt

### KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Collaborative learning community;



Extended day and school year;



New York State standards based curriculum;



Professional development; and,



Technology integration;



Parent/guardian engagement.



Character education;



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 South Buffalo Charter School (“South Buffalo”) for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten - 8<sup>th</sup> grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal with a projected total enrollment of 900 students. The Institute makes this recommendation as South Buffalo 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”).<sup>2</sup>*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Buffalo met or came close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals in mathematics and English language arts (“ELA”) during its current charter term. The school implements a strong governance structure, effective instructional leadership, clear focus on equity, and high-quality pedagogy. Leaders, teachers, and the board work collaboratively to identify priorities and areas for improvement that align to the school’s mission while ensuring a consistent emphasis on student achievement.

South Buffalo establishes a culture of collaboration and accountability that manifests in mission alignment and high expectations across all staff members. Leaders communicate clear expectations for teacher performance and student achievement by regularly observing classrooms and providing teachers actionable feedback. The school uses a “grows and glows” framework that proves invaluable for continuous improvement and refinement of instructional practice. Through its partnership with Buffalo State University, South Buffalo delivers tutoring and remediation to struggling students as well as professional development and mentorship for teachers.

High-quality instruction is evident across South Buffalo classrooms. Lessons are rigorous and result in high levels of student engagement. Teachers use the school’s diagnostic and formative assessments to guide their teaching and drive targeted instructional strategies for small groups. Instructional leaders have identified the need to increase the amount of opportunities for higher-order thinking and problem solving in lessons and are working to address this priority during coaching sessions and professional development meetings.

### FINDINGS & INFORMATION

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

South Buffalo demonstrates academic success as the school met or came close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals in both ELA and mathematics reflecting a steady improvement in student outcomes since the previous renewal. Over the course of its charter term, the school’s academic program evolved through deliberate strategies including the adoption of research-based curricula, robust professional development, and a data-driven approach to instruction.

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

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In ELA, the school's focus on building foundational literacy skills through programs like Magnetic Reading and a supplemental phonics curriculum fosters a culture of reading among students. Teachers effectively use diagnostic tools and formative assessments to track progress, and these efforts result in students demonstrating increased engagement and proficiency in reading and writing. Similarly, the school's methodical rollout of its new mathematics curriculum has yielded steady growth in student achievement. South Buffalo demonstrates academic success in the following ways:

- Over the charter term, South Buffalo's students enrolled in at least their second year achieved proficiency rates that exceeded the district average by at least 11 percentage points in ELA and 14 percentage points in mathematics.
- From 2021-22 to 2023-24, South Buffalo increased its proportion of students scoring at or above proficiency in mathematics by 17 percentage points. In alignment with the school's increase in proficiency rate, the school posted a mean growth percentile two points above the target.
- South Buffalo's at-risk programming meets the needs of all students, in particular students with disabilities. From 2021-22 to 2023-24, students with disabilities enrolled in at least their second year increased their average ELA proficiency by five percentage points and their average mathematics proficiency by 20 percentage points.

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

South Buffalo is an effective and viable organization demonstrating strong governance practices, operational capacity, community engagement, and mission alignment. The school establishes clear structures and processes that support the delivery of its academic program and ensure long-term sustainability.

The school remains steadfast in its mission to foster academic achievement and personal growth in a supportive and inclusive environment. Key design elements are evident in both classroom practices and professional development efforts. Programs like Choose Love for social-emotional learning and the integration of equity initiatives strengthen the school's culture and support its mission to develop well-rounded, socially conscious students.

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

South Buffalo is fiscally sound based on the Institute's review of the renewal documentation. The education corporation has strong methods for budget creation that involve all departments of the school to map priorities and develop accurate revenue and expense projections. The finance team meets with the board monthly to present an enrollment report and receive feedback. The education corporation maintains strong enrollment numbers throughout the current charter term resulting in adequate revenues to cover its expenses. The 2023-24 annual financial audit did not present any internal control findings or material weaknesses. South Buffalo preserves a separate bank account with the established amounts for dissolution as required by the charter agreement.

South Buffalo demonstrates positive financial performance during the current charter term with net assets of \$30.2 million and 10.5 months cash on hand reserves growing each year. The current and quick liquidity ratios dropped during the 2023-24 annual financial audit due to a balloon mortgage payment coming due. This future payment caused

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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historical long-term debt to be moved to current liabilities lowering the liquidity ratios in the Institute's dashboard. The Institute does not consider this to be a risk moving into the proposed charter term given the education corporation's current financial health. South Buffalo maintains adequate teacher to student ratios. The education corporation's spending reflects current priorities including support for the academic program, staff member salary increases, property maintenance, facility upgrades, and expansion of the music program due to student demand.

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

The education corporation's plans for the future are reasonable, feasible, and achievable. Leaders demonstrate a pragmatic approach to sustaining operations and addressing areas of growth for the next charter term. The school's leadership and board have identified clear priorities and adjust as needed to ensure continued improvement and alignment with the school's mission and performance goals.

The school maintains stable financial management supported by careful oversight from the board's finance committee. The budget strategically allocates funds to sustain essential programs, invest in professional development, and maintain necessary staffing levels. Moving forward, the school plans to allocate additional funding toward targeted interventions, expanded teacher training, and updates to instructional technology. The future budget in the renewal documentation contains reasonable revenue and expense projections. The Institute has confidence South Buffalo will continue to be financially healthy in the next charter term. Leadership will pursue potential grant opportunities and partnerships to offset costs and support these efforts.

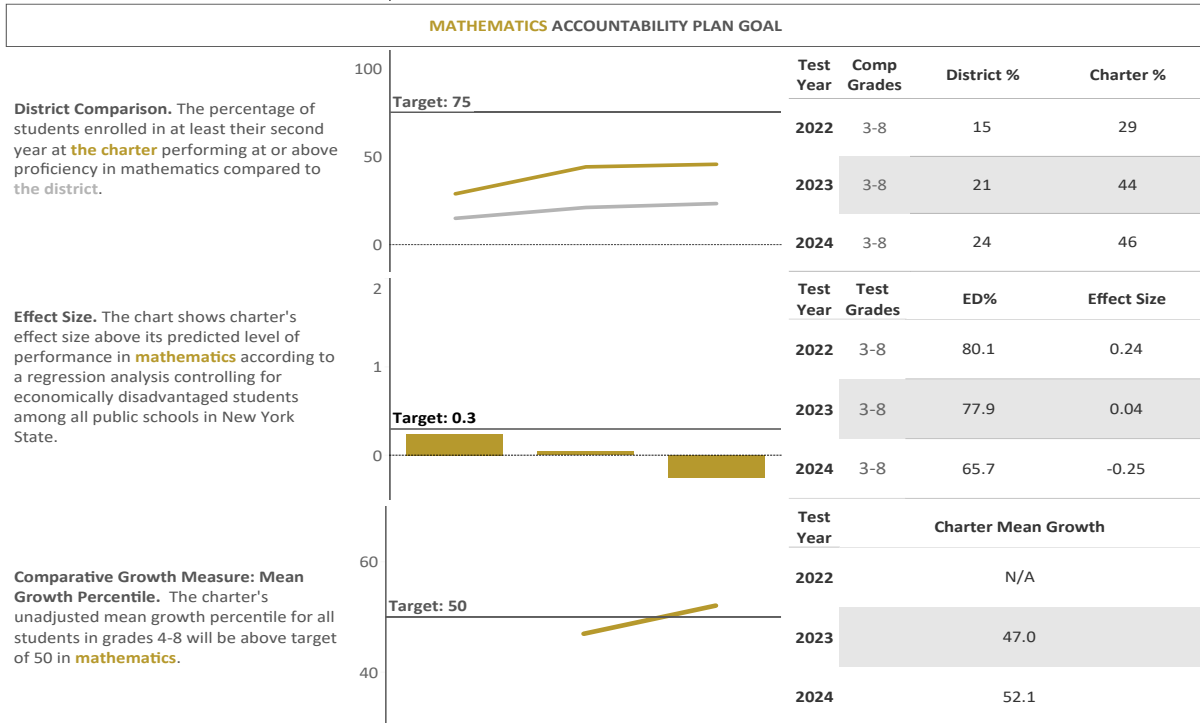
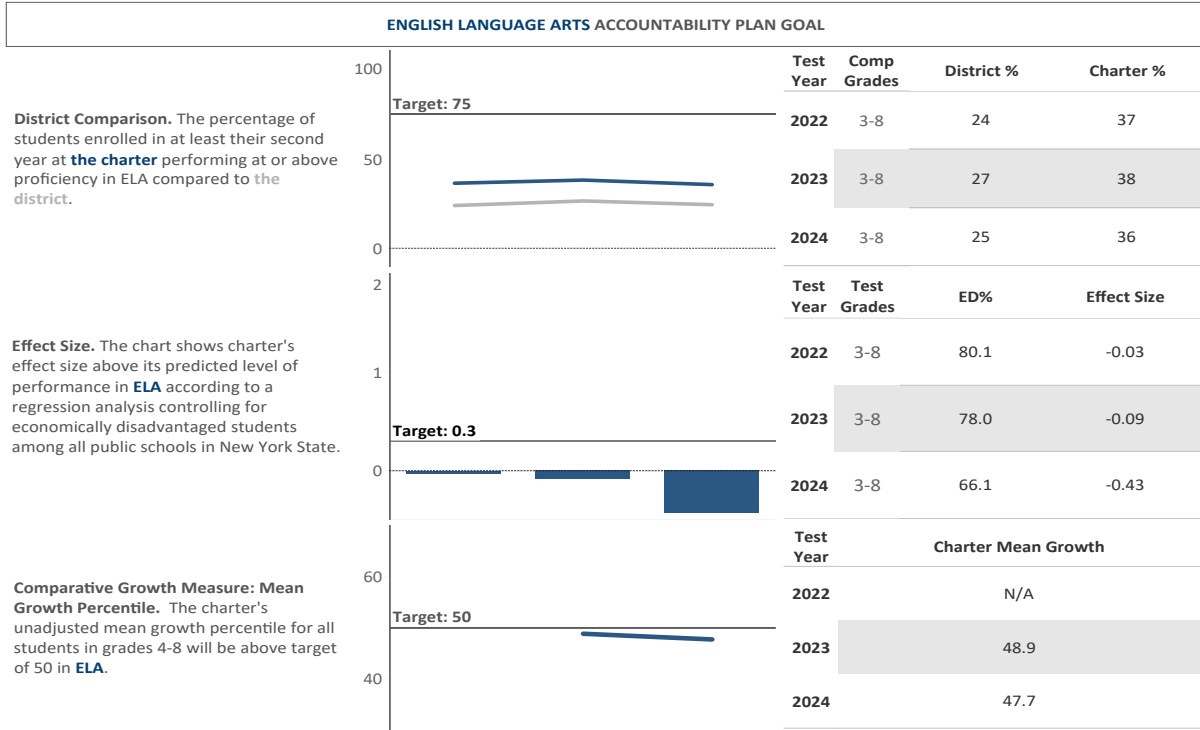
The school has taken steps to ensure its facilities meet current needs while planning for future demands. Recent updates improve the functionality of the learning environment, and the facilities committee continues to manage maintenance and long-term planning.

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# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

## SOUTH BUFFALO CHARTER SCHOOL

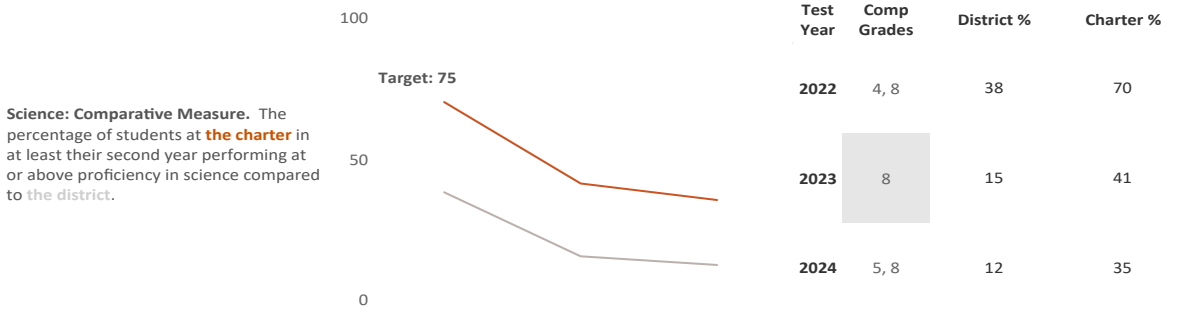




# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

## SOUTH BUFFALO 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	555	531	529	484	507	487
School Tested %	94.2%	90.5%	89.5%	81.9%	86.5%	83.1%
District Tested %	82.9%	80.4%	86.8%	86.4%	86.1%	87.6%

### SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE\*

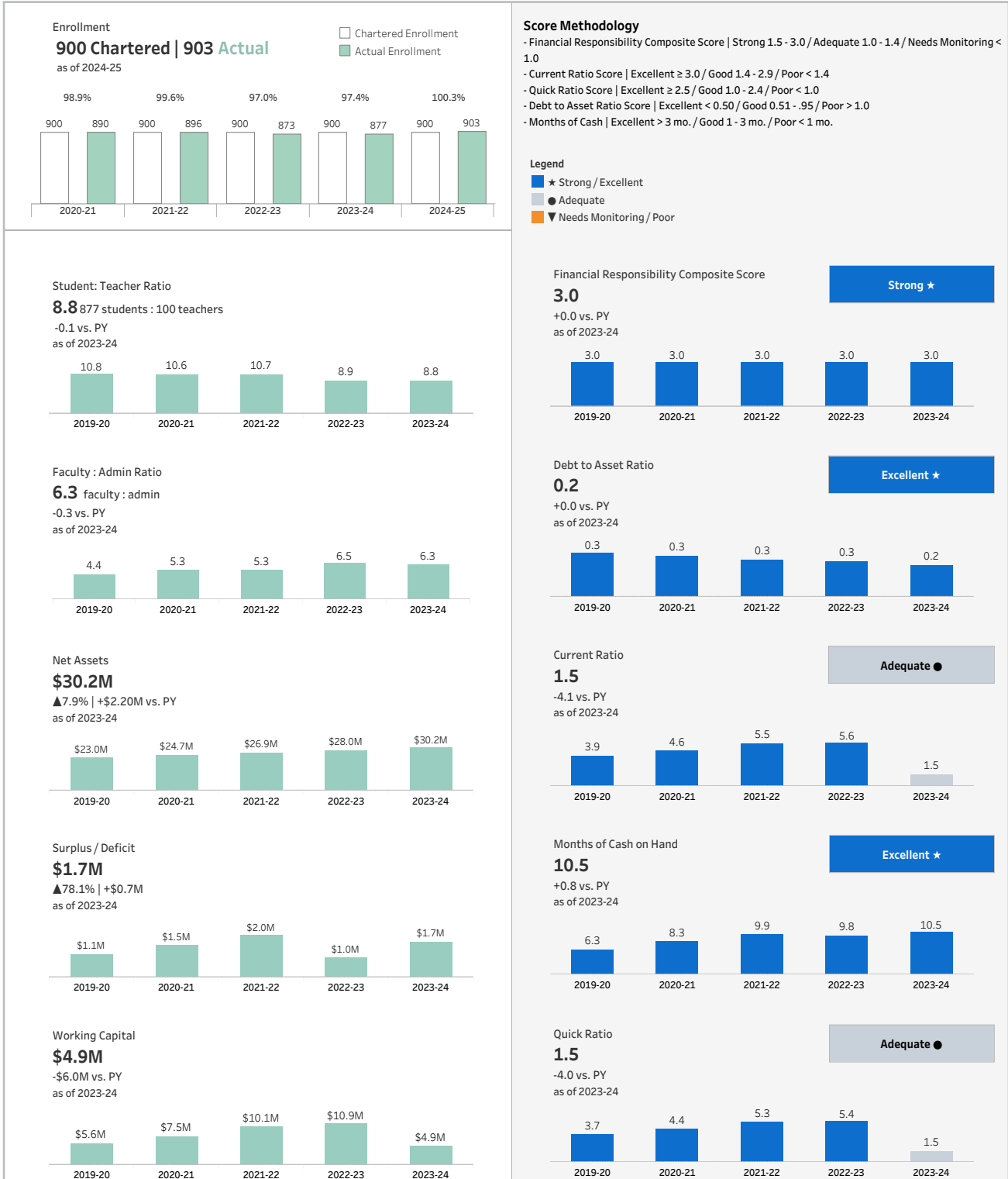
	2022	2023	2024
Students with Disabilities Tested on State Exam	56	40	43
Charter Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	5.4	15.0	11.6
District Percent Proficient	7.2	9.0	9.2
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam	20	14	10
Charter Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress	30.0	50.0	60.0

\* 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

## SOUTH BUFFALO 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**

The education corporation submitted its annual reports to the Institute and the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) on time but has not posted the most recent reports directly on the school’s website on the date of submission as required by the Act. The Institute will ensure compliance prior to the start of the next charter term.

#### **Code of Ethics/Conflict of Interest Policy**

At the time of the renewal review, the school did not have a compliant code of ethics and conflicts of interest policy. The Institute will work with the school to ensure compliant policies are in place prior to the start of the next charter term.

#### **FOIL**

The school has a complete Freedom of Information Law (“FOIL”) policy but does not have the required subject matter list posted to its website. The Institute will ensure compliance prior to the start of the next charter term.

#### **Health Services Policy**

At the time of the renewal review, the school’s health services policy was not up to date in relation to exemptions from immunizations. The Institute will work with the school to update its policy prior to the start of the next charter term.

#### **504 Policy**

At the time of the renewal review, the school did not have a compliant 504 Policy. The Institute will work with the school to ensure a more compliant policy prior to the start of the next charter term.

#### **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.

Buffalo State University partners with South Buffalo and offers multiple programs to support with Buffalo State University’s school of education programming. Through this, many teaching candidates have the opportunity to student teach, and South Buffalo leaders often recruit candidates through these strong partnerships.

At the time of the renewal review, South Buffalo employed 40 certified lead teachers.

## 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 South Buffalo’s annual family survey for the 2023-24 school year. The school solicits feedback from families in multiple areas including school safety, quality of education, and satisfaction with staff members. In 2023-24, 34% of families responded to the survey. Of the families who responded, 94% demonstrated satisfaction with the school. The Institute recognizes that the low response rate may not be representative of the school community.

### ***Parent Focus Group***

The 17 families in attendance at the focus group expressed satisfaction with South Buffalo. Families shared appreciation for the multiple touchpoints throughout the year teachers have about their children. Families appreciate the clarity and frequency of communication about academic performance and schoolwide events. Families demonstrated a strong level of pride for the school and attributed the strong community feeling of the school to caring staff members, ample extracurricular and sports programs, and a well-maintained facility. Families recognize that staff members go above and beyond to ensure that students are safe and participate in an effective academic program. During the visit, the Institute had the opportunity to observe a family event focused on literacy, which was well-attended and included meaningful activities to engage families and students.

### ***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.

Buffalo City School District held its required hearing on the South Buffalo renewal application on October 9, 2024. Based on the meeting notes and materials provided by the district, the superintendent of the school presented the school’s mission and vision, grade levels and enrollment, recruitment efforts, student subgroup data, retention rates, demographics, and financial data. The principal spoke about teacher recruitment efforts with Buffalo State University to recruit student teachers more reflective of the demographics of the student population. Another school leader shared that the school collaborates with the district whenever a student transfers in or out of South Buffalo. Since the school’s last district hearing, it has hired two social workers to bolster social-emotional work. The superintendent shared that the school’s sports programs, such as volleyball and soccer, help with student attendance. Additionally, members of the school shared the school is working to become a community school by renting out the facility to local dance studios and other charter schools. The English language learner (“ELL”) teacher shared how they began working at the school as a substitute teacher and progressed to a full-time ELL teaching role through a combination of professional development and the school’s certification partnerships.

# COMMUNITY SATISFACTION & ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

## Enrollment and Retention

South Buffalo makes good faith efforts to meet its enrollment and retention targets for economically disadvantaged students, ELLs, and students with disabilities. The school comes close to meeting its enrollment target for economically disadvantaged students and meets the retention target for those students. The school acknowledges the need to improve its enrollment and retention of ELLs and students with disabilities. South Buffalo implements a robust recruitment strategy that includes billboard advertisements in high-need areas, partnerships with community organizations, and events such as open houses and family engagement nights.

## Persistence in Enrollment

An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2023-24, 95% of South Buffalo 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 (“NYSED”) is available to the Institute to provide either district or statewide context.*

South Buffalo Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2023-24			Target	Charter
enrollment	economically disadvantaged		81.4	79.3
	English language learners		18.5	2.5
	students with disabilities		19.0	9.7
retention	economically disadvantaged		93.4	98.9
	English language learners		95.7	83.3
	students with disabilities		94.1	91.3

South Buffalo

# Ax

APPENDICES

PAGES Ax 1-10

<b>CO<sup>A</sup></b> CHARTER OVERVIEW PAGE Ax 1	<b>BS<sup>B</sup></b> BENCHMARK SUMMARY PAGE Ax 2	<b>SD<sup>C</sup></b> STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS PAGE Ax 6	<b>FB<sup>D</sup></b> FISCAL BENCHMARK PAGE Ax 8
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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	900	890	99%	K-8
2021-22	900	896	100%	K-8
2022-23	900	873	97%	K-8
2023-24	900	877	97%	K-8
2024-25	900	903	100%	K-8

**CHARTER SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY**

SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
2000-01	First Year Visit	May 25, 2001
2001-02	Evaluation Visit	April 9, 2002
2002-03	Evaluation Visit	January 7–8, 2003
2004-05	Initial Renewal Visit	October 13–14, 2004
2006-07	Evaluation Visit	March 29, 2007
2009-10	Subsequent Renewal Visit	November 10, 2009
2011-12	Evaluation Visit	December 14–15, 2011
2013-14	Subsequent Renewal Visit	March 11, 2014
2017-18	Evaluation Visit	May 7–8, 2019
2018-19	Evaluation Visit	May 13–14, 2019
2019-20	Subsequent Renewal Visit	October 1–2, 2019
2022-23	Evaluation Visit	April 23, 2023
2024-25	Subsequent Renewal Visit	November 14–15, 2024

**CONDUCT OF THE RENEWAL REVIEW**

DATE(S) OF REVIEW	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
November 14–15, 2024	Desree Cabrall-Njenga	School Evaluator
	Andrew Kile	Director of School Evaluation

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

South Buffalo met or came close to meeting its key academic Accountability Plan goals in English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics over the majority of its subsequent charter term. Notably, the school’s students enrolled in at least their second year outperformed the district in both subjects in each year with data suitable for analysis. South Buffalo also came close to meeting its science goal and met its Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”) goal.

In ELA, South Buffalo came close to meeting its goal during the term. From 2021-22 through 2023-24, the school’s students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficiency at rates that exceeded the district average by at least 11 percentage points each year. In contrast, in comparison to demographically similar schools statewide the school performed lower than expected according to the Institute’s effect size analysis. The school posted mean growth percentiles that approached the target of 50 in 2022-23 and 2023-24. South Buffalo must grow the learning of all students such that it improves its performance against these measures.

South Buffalo came close to meeting its mathematics goal over the term. In every year with data suitable for analysis, the school’s students enrolled for at least two years posted proficiency rates that exceeded the district by at least 14 percentage points. From 2021-22 to 2023-24, the school increased the proportion of those students scoring at or above proficiency by 17 percentage points. In 2021-22 and 2022-23, the school posted comparative effect sizes that were positive and indicated that the school performed slightly higher than expected in comparison to schools across the state enrolling similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students. In the following year, South Buffalo’s effect size was negative but the school posted a mean growth score two points above the target.

### ASSESSMENT

South Buffalo has effective elements of an assessment system that are yielding improvements in teaching and learning. The school administers a robust suite of assessments that includes i-Ready assessments, interim assessments, running records, phonics decoding assessments, and daily exit tickets. The school improved its data collection tools over the charter term, but does not yet leverage a centralized system to provide leaders and teachers with comprehensive student level information. Leaders recognize this is necessary to support stronger differentiation efforts across the academic program. The school implements effective practices that allow teachers to use student achievement data for grouping students. Based on all available achievement data, teachers generally group students by ability in both ELA and mathematics. During certain blocks, students engage in small group instruction for tier 2 and tier 3 supports based on a review of student i-Ready data. Other students engage in i-Ready’s individualized student program for reading and mathematics skills.

The school prioritizes differentiation as a method of tier 1 instructional support for all students. However, based on observations, the implementation of differentiation strategies varies based on teacher skill. Leaders recognize the need to focus more walkthroughs and observation time specifically on teachers’ differentiation strategies and co-teaching methods. For example, the Institute did not observe consistently effective analysis of exit tickets so that teachers nimbly adjust small groups in response to address foundational skills missed by students.

## CURRICULUM

South Buffalo’s curriculum supports teachers with instructional planning. The school has a curricular framework with student performance expectations that provide a structure aligned to state standards and vertically aligned across grades. Over the charter term, the school updated programs, including i-Ready Classroom Math in 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade and eMath for 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and Algebra I instruction. The school piloted both mathematics programs and observed an associated rise in student performance before fully rolling out the materials to the current grade levels. In ELA, the school introduced Magnetic Reading Phonics for Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade during the charter term. The school is managing updates to the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (“TCRWP”) to ensure South Buffalo offers students a high-quality reading and writing program that reflects current research-based evidence about effective instruction.

Teachers plan purposeful lessons and know what to teach and when based on the school’s curricular materials. In integrated co-teaching (“ICT”) classrooms, teachers purposefully plan out their roles to ensure they maximize having two teachers in the classroom. Teachers paired with Buffalo State University student teachers also adjust lesson plans strategically to leverage this additional capacity.

## PEDAGOGY

High quality instruction aligned to state standards is evident across South Buffalo classrooms. Teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school’s curriculum. Teachers consistently use diagnostic and formative assessments to guide instruction, ensuring that instruction is tailored to student needs. Classroom observations reveal a strong emphasis on structured routines, effective time management, and clear instructional goals supporting foundational learning across all grades.

All teachers implement effective classroom management practices, creating a positive learning environment focused on academic achievement. Teachers maximize learning time through efficient transitions and clear behavioral expectations, ensuring that students remain engaged and on-task. With ongoing support from leadership and professional development, the school is well-positioned to continue improving instructional depth and quality.

While instruction is generally effective and supports students in acquiring foundational skills, leaders have identified opportunities to further improve teachers’ practice. To deepen students’ cognitive engagement and higher-order thinking, leaders are working to provide more targeted coaching and professional development on questioning techniques, productive struggle, and inquiry-based learning. These efforts aim to ensure that students not only meet standards but also develop advanced analytical and problem-solving skills. Leaders also recognize the need for continued coaching and support on intervention strategies to ensure that lab periods and small group instruction better meet the needs of students struggling academically.

## INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

South Buffalo has strong instructional leadership. School leaders establish an environment of high expectations for teacher performance and development of content knowledge and pedagogical skills. As a result, all staff members communicate a clear belief that all students can succeed. Leaders provide clear and consistent feedback through formal evaluations, informal observations, and structured tools like the “grows and glows” framework. These practices ensure that teachers receive actionable insights to adjust their instructional approaches.

Professional development is comprehensive and aligned with classroom practice, addressing areas such as phonics, literacy, culturally responsive teaching, and data analysis. Leaders actively facilitate opportunities for collaboration through grade level meetings, vertical alignment discussions, and partnerships with external organizations like Buffalo State University. These efforts enhance teacher capacity and contribute to greater instructional consistency across classrooms.

Instructional leaders are deeply involved in coaching and supervision, regularly observing classrooms and following up on feedback implementation. The school's focus on data-driven instruction is evident in its use of interim assessments and diagnostic tools to identify trends and inform teaching strategies. Leaders also provide opportunities for teachers to plan collaboratively, ensuring alignment across grade levels and subjects.

Despite these strengths, there is room to improve instructional leadership by strengthening coaching practices and expanding teacher-led professional learning opportunities, which empower teachers to take ownership of their growth and foster a culture of collaboration and shared expertise. Leaders recognize the need for enhancing the rigor of professional development and increasing capacity of instructional leadership to challenge and equip teachers with advanced skills.

#### AT RISK PROGRAM

The school meets the educational needs of at-risk students. South Buffalo implements compliant procedures to identify students struggling academically, students with disabilities, and English language learners ("ELLs"). For students struggling academically, the school focuses on tier 1 differentiation strategies and daily intervention blocks for all grades. Teachers use the school's phonics program, reading recovery intervention program, and teacher-created materials during the intervention blocks for direct instruction while other students utilize i-Ready's individualized computer-based learning program. Teachers and leaders monitor progress of students struggling academically through the school's regular assessment cycles. For students going through the Response to Intervention ("RTI") system, the student support team ("SST") meets regularly to monitor the effectiveness of interventions.

The school provides ICT and some related services directly for students with individualized education programs ("IEPs"). Teachers meet regularly and have co-planning time to discuss specific student needs and instructional strategies with at-risk program staff. Special education teachers closely track student progress toward meeting IEP goals and report out to the general education teachers ensuring all teachers are aware of specific supports for each student with an IEP.

The school's ELL teacher delivers instruction in both a push-in and pull-out format to directly support ELLs. The school uses National Geographic Our World program to supplement the ELL program in addition to modifying classroom instructional materials or providing direct support on a core content area lesson. The ELL teacher monitors student progress through i-Ready assessments as well as classroom performance data. However, the school does not have a tool to monitor students' progress toward mastery of English listening and speaking skills.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The school's organizational structure effectively supports its educational program. A clear administrative structure, with well-defined roles and responsibilities, ensures that all staff members have the support needed to deliver high-quality instruction. The leadership team emphasizes collaboration and accountability, creating an environment where staff members feel valued and equipped to succeed.

The school implements policies and procedures that promote stability and efficiency, including a clear system for discipline that results in the consistent application of rules across classrooms. Efforts to enhance teacher retention are highly effective with leaders fostering a positive work culture through professional development, structured supports, and staff appreciation initiatives. These efforts have contributed to commendably low turnover rates.

South Buffalo's student enrollment is strong and high proportions of student's persist in the school year over year. While overall enrollment and retention is strong, the school faces some challenges in meeting enrollment targets for students with disabilities and ELLs. Leaders are addressing these gaps through targeted outreach and recruitment strategies under oversight of the board.

South Buffalo aligns resource allocation with the school's academic and operational goals, dedicating funding to staffing, curricular programs, and professional development. Leaders dedicate time to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's initiatives and make necessary changes to its academic programming or allocation of funds. Leaders recognize the need to refine data systems to disaggregate student performance data by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status to further enhance the school's ability to address specific student needs.

## BOARD OVERSIGHT & GOVERNANCE

The school's board provides effective governance and demonstrates a clear commitment to the school's mission and strategic objectives. Board members possess diverse expertise including education, finance, and human resources, enabling them to comprehensively oversee the school's operations and academic performance. The board has been proactive in identifying and mitigating gaps in its capacity by actively seeking to recruit additional members with financial expertise.

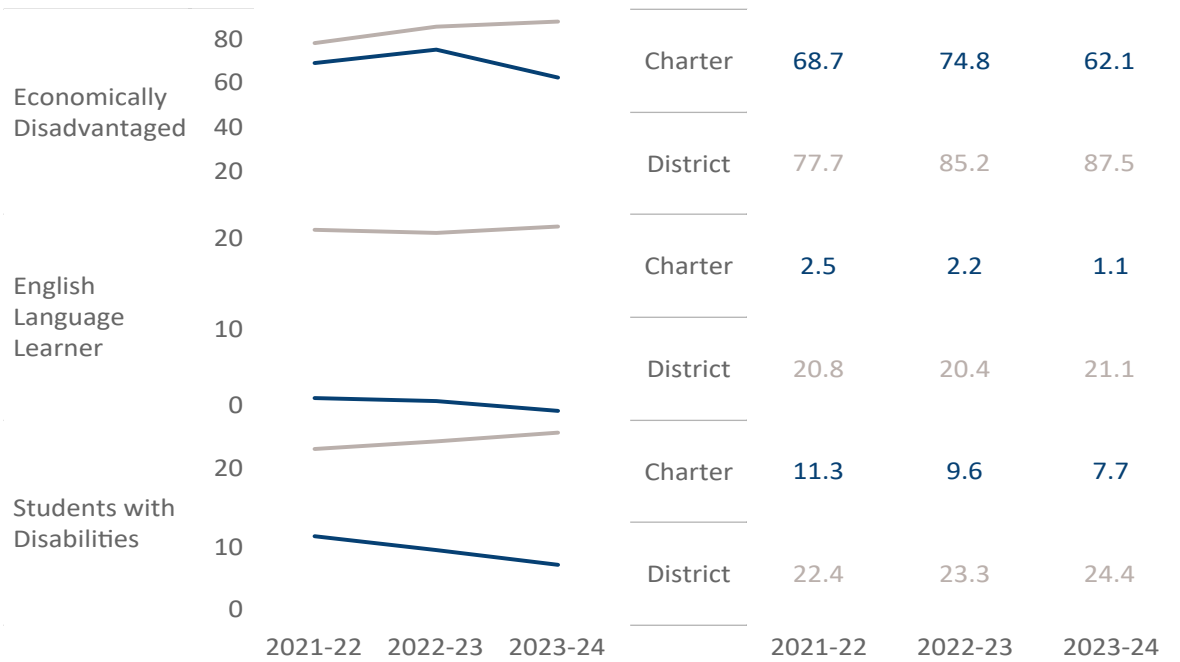
Regular board meetings include detailed reports from school leadership which provide insights into students' academic growth, resource allocation, and progress against organizational priorities. The academic committee has been particularly effective in analyzing data trends, setting actionable goals, and working collaboratively with school leaders to improve student outcomes. Board members solicit feedback from families and stakeholders as part of their decision-making processes, demonstrating the board's commitment to transparency and community engagement.

The board's governance practices include an annual self-evaluation process to assess effectiveness and identify areas for growth. The board recognizes the need to prioritize formal strategic planning and is working closely with school leadership to align resources with long-term goals. Initiatives such as reinstating the exit interview policy and engaging with alumni reflect the board's forward-thinking approach to building a positive school community.

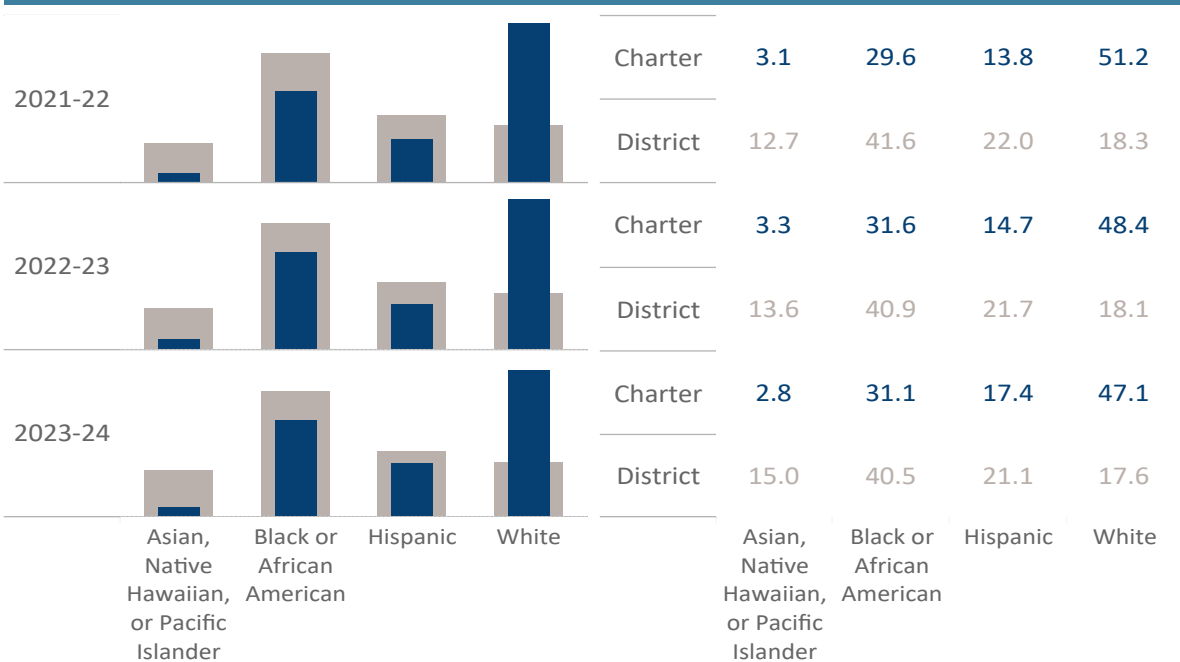
### South Buffalo Charter School

### Buffalo City School District

#### Student Demographics: Sub-populations

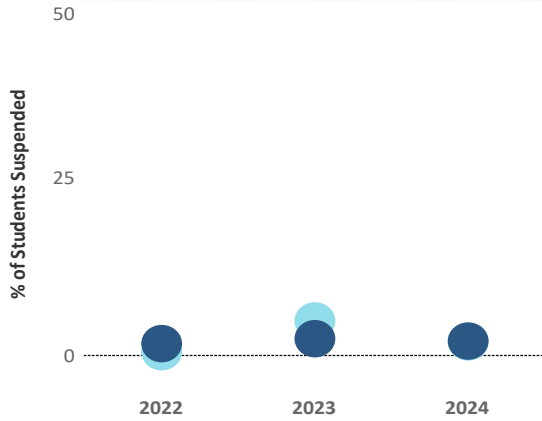


#### Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity



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

### South Buffalo Charter School



### Buffalo City School District

	ISS Rate	OSS Rate
2022	0.6	1.7
2023	4.9	2.4
2024	1.9	2.1

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	90.1			
2022-23	91.2	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
2023-24	95.0			

\* 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, school leaders, 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.	+

“+” : 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>MAY 2019</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.	<b>N/A</b>
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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