



THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS
INSTITUTE

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT
BROWNSVILLE ASCEND CHARTER
SCHOOL*

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INTRODUCTION & REPORT FORMAT

This report is the primary means by which the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) transmits to the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) its findings and recommendations regarding a school’s Application for Charter Renewal, and more broadly, details the merits of a school’s case for renewal. The Institute has created and issued this report pursuant to the *Policies for the 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”).¹

THE INSTITUTE MAKES ALL RENEWAL RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON

A SCHOOL’S
APPLICATION
FOR CHARTER
RENEWAL

INFORMATION
GATHERED DURING
THE CHARTER TERM

ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE

FISCAL SOUNDNESS

LEGAL COMPLIANCE

RENEWAL
EVALUATION VISIT



Most importantly, the Institute analyzes the school’s record of academic performance and the extent to which it has met its academic Accountability Plan goals.

1. Revised September 4, 2013 and available at: www.newyorkcharters.org/SUNY-Renewal-Policies/.

REPORT FORMAT

This renewal recommendation report compiles the evidence below using the *State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks* (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”),² which specify in detail what a successful school should be able to demonstrate at the time of the renewal review. The Institute uses the four interconnected renewal questions below for framing benchmark statements to determine if a school has made an adequate case for renewal.

RENEWAL QUESTIONS

- 1. IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?**
- 2. IS THE SCHOOL AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?**
- 3. IS THE SCHOOL FISCALLY SOUND?**
- 4. IF THE SUNY TRUSTEES RENEW THE EDUCATION CORPORATION’S AUTHORITY TO OPERATE THE SCHOOL, ARE ITS PLANS FOR THE SCHOOL REASONABLE, FEASIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE?**

This report contains Appendices that provide additional statistical and organizationally related information including a largely statistical school overview, copies of any school district comments on the Application for Charter Renewal, and the SUNY Fiscal Dashboard information for the school. If applicable, the Appendices also include additional information about the education corporation and its schools including additional evidence on student achievement of other education corporation schools.



Additional information about the SUNY renewal process and an overview of the requirements for renewal under the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the “Act”) are available on the Institute’s website at: www.newyorkcharters.org/renewal.

2. Version 5.0, May 2012, available at: www.newyorkcharters.org/SUNY-Renewal-Benchmarks/.



RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

Full-Term Renewal The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Brownsville Ascend Charter School for a period of five years and renew Ascend Charter School’s authority to operate the school with the authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten through 12th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal, with a projected total enrollment of 1,377 students.

To earn an **Initial Full-Term Renewal**, a school must either:



have compiled a strong and compelling record of meeting or coming close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals, and have in place at the time of the renewal review an educational program that, as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks,³ is generally effective; or,



have made progress toward meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals and have in place at the time of the renewal review an education program that, as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, is particularly strong and effective.⁴

3. The Qualitative Education Benchmarks are a subset of the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

In addition to making a recommendation based on a determination of whether the school has met the SUNY Trustees’ specific renewal criteria, the Institute makes the following findings required by the Act:

- 1:** the school, as described in the Application for Charter Renewal meets the requirements of the Act and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- 2:** the education corporation can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner in the next charter term; and,

4. See SUNY Renewal Policies at pp. 12-14. This is Brownsville Ascend Charter School’s first renewal as a SUNY authorized school.

Therefore, the SUNY Trustees will consider the school’s renewal as an initial renewal pursuant to the SUNY Renewal Policies and all initial renewal outcomes including Short-Term Renewal are available.

given the programs it will offer, its structure and its purpose, approving the school to operate for another five years is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act.⁵

Enrollment and retention targets apply to all charter schools approved pursuant to any of the Institute’s Request for Proposal (“RFP”) processes (August 2010-present) and charter schools that applied for renewal after January 1, 2011. Brownsville Ascend Charter School (“Brownsville Ascend”) received its original charter on January 7, 2009 with the York City Schools Chancellor (“NYC Chancellor”) as its authorizer. The school applied for its only renewal in 2013. Per the amendments to the Act in 2010, charter schools are required to make good faith efforts to meet enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners (“ELLs”) and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch (“FRPL”) program.

As required by Education Law § 2851(4)(e), a school must include in its renewal application information regarding the efforts it will put in place to meet or exceed SUNY’s enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, ELLs, and FRPL eligible students. SUNY and the New York State Board of Regents (the “Board of Regents”) finalized the methodology for setting targets in October 2012, and the Institute communicated specific targets for each school, where applicable, in July 2013. Since that time, new schools receive targets during their first year of operation and others receive targets at renewal.

Brownsville Ascend makes good faith efforts to meet its enrollment and retention targets.

In order to attract high numbers of ELLs, students with disabilities and students who are eligible applicants for FRPL, Brownsville Ascend plans to continue the following efforts:

- maintaining an active online presence, including the use of an engaging website as well as several social media tools, to keep families informed and engaged;
- mailing school newsletters or family calendars to interested families monthly;
- maintaining a presence in small community organizations, including local schools, doctors’ offices, churches, early intervention service providers and agencies, and diverse community organizations that serve children with disabilities and ELLs; and,
- translating applications and other materials into Spanish and Haitian Creole.

For additional information on the school’s enrollment and retention target progress, see Appendix A.

5. See New York Education Law § 2852(2).

RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT 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 in Appendix C, which also includes a summary of any public comments.

As of the date of this report, the Institute has received no district comments in response to the renewal application.



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SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BROWNSVILLE ASCEND CHARTER SCHOOL

BACKGROUND

Brownsville Ascend opened its doors in the fall of 2009 initially serving 170 students in Kindergarten and 1st grade. The NYC Chancellor, the school's former authorizer, granted the school a three-year renewal in 2014. The school is authorized to serve 1,004 students in Kindergarten through 8th grade during the 2016-17 school year. The school operates in private space at 1501 Pitkin Avenue, Brooklyn, NY in Community School District ("CSD") 23.

Ascend Charter School's authority to operate Brownsville Ascend expires on June 30, 2017. Pending renewal, the school plans to serve students in Kindergarten through 12th grade, with a projected total enrollment of 1,377 students. A subsequent five-year term of authority would enable the school to operate through June 30, 2022.

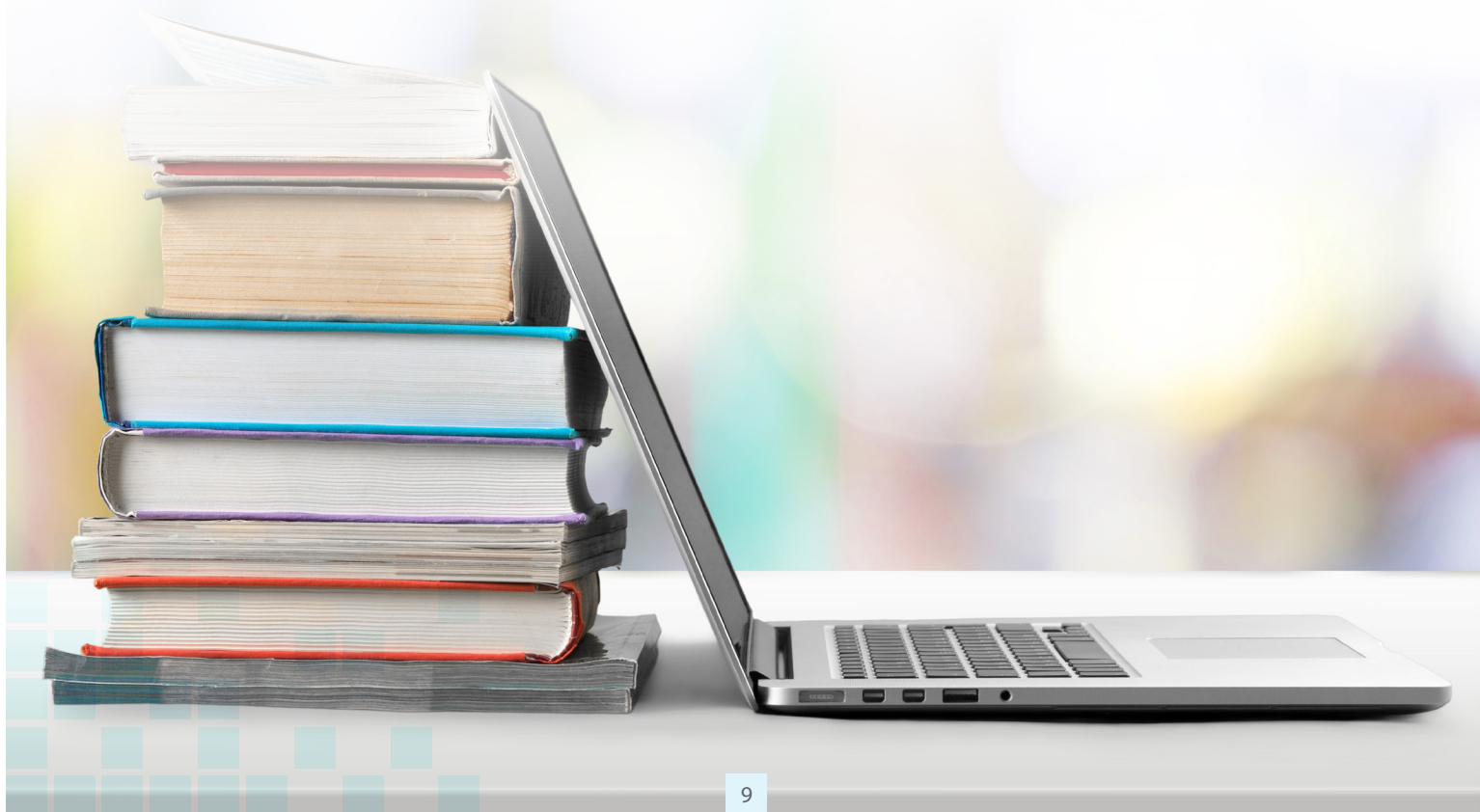
Brownsville Ascend is one of five schools of Ascend Charter Schools, a not-for-profit charter school education corporation. Effective July 1, 2016, three NYC Chancellor authorized schools merged together with two SUNY authorized schools. The SUNY authorized Canarsie Ascend Charter School remained as the surviving education corporation under the name "Ascend Charter Schools." The Act allows authorizers to grant charter school education corporations the authority to operate more than one school under Education Law § 2853(1)(b-1) through merger with one or more education corporations.

The mission of Brownsville Ascend is:



Ascend's mission is to equip every student with the knowledge, confidence, and character to succeed in college and beyond. Our liberal arts curriculum invites students on an intellectual adventure, igniting their natural curiosity. In a warm and supportive community, students build a strong foundation of critical thinking skills, academic habits, and moral integrity, and graduate as independent young adults, prepared to think on their own, thrive on their own, and engage the world as informed, responsible citizens.

All schools within the education corporation, operate under the management of Ascend Learning, Inc. (“Ascend Learning” or the “network”), a New York not-for-profit charter management organization based in New York City. By contract, the network provides the schools with academic, operational, facilities and back-office assistance. Schools utilize the network’s curriculum and assessment materials. The network is also responsible for managing and evaluating the performance of each school and school leader.



SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Having come close to meeting its key Accountability goals in English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics, Brownsville Ascend is an academic success. The school posted a strong record of performance against SUNY’s accountability standards including an upward trend in absolute achievement in both ELA and mathematics beginning in 2013-14. The school came close to meeting the ELA goal in 2014-15, narrowly missing the growth target. In 2015-16, the school met the ELA goal, meeting the target in all comparative and growth measures. After falling short of its target for effect size in 2013-14, the school met all applicable comparative and growth measure targets in the subsequent two years under SUNY’s mathematics goal. The school exceeded SUNY’s performance targets under science.

At the time of the renewal visit, instructional leaders provided coverage for key personnel vacancies, somewhat limiting capacity to provide intense support for teachers. Nevertheless, Brownsville Ascend’s instructional leadership team establishes clearly articulated school-wide expectations and holds teachers accountable for providing high quality instruction. Brownsville Ascend uses clear procedures for identifying students with disabilities, ELLs, and students struggling academically. Brownsville Ascend has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning. Teachers and school leaders access comprehensive data reports to identify trends in student performance and develop effective strategies to meet students’ academic needs. School and network leaders continually monitor student performance to revise the robust curriculum as needed.

Based on the Institute’s review of the school’s performance as posted over the charter term when it was an independent school authorized by the NYC Chancellor (it has not posted scores since the merger); a review of the Application for Charter Renewal submitted by Ascend Charter Schools; a review of academic, organizational, governance and financial documentation; and a visit to the school, the Institute finds that the school meets the required criteria for charter renewal.

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees grant Brownsville Ascend an Initial Full-Term Renewal.



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NOTEWORTHY

Over the charter term, Brownsville Ascend outperformed the local district in both ELA and mathematics. Notably in 2015-16, the school performed 23 percentage points higher than the district in both ELA and mathematics.



ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE



IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

Having come close to meeting its key Accountability Plan goals in this charter term, Brownsville Ascend is an academic success. The program in place at the time of the renewal review features a strong curriculum and high quality instruction.

At the beginning of the Accountability Period,⁶ the school developed and adopted an Accountability Plan that set academic goals in the key subjects of English Language Arts (“ELA”) and mathematics. For each goal in the Accountability Plan, specific outcome measures define the level of performance necessary to meet that goal. The Institute examines results for five required Accountability Plan measures to determine ELA and mathematics goal attainment. Because the Act requires charters be held “accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results”⁷ and states the educational programs at a charter school must “meet or exceed the student performance standards adopted by the board of regents”⁸ for other public schools, SUNY’s required accountability measures rest on performance as measured by state wide assessments. Historically, SUNY’s required measures include measures that present schools’:

ABSOLUTE PERFORMANCE, I.E., WHAT PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORE AT A CERTAIN PROFICIENCY ON STATE EXAMS?

COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE, I.E., HOW DID THE SCHOOL DO AS COMPARED TO SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT AND SCHOOLS THAT SERVE SIMILAR POPULATIONS OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS?

GROWTH PERFORMANCE, I.E., HOW MUCH DID THE SCHOOL GROW STUDENT PERFORMANCE AS COMPARED TO THE GROWTH OF SIMILARLY SITUATED STUDENTS?

Every SUNY authorized charter school has the opportunity to propose additional measures of success when crafting its Accountability Plan. Brownsville Ascend did not propose or include any additional measures of success in the Accountability Plan it adopted when it merged into a SUNY authorized education corporation.

6. Because the SUNY Trustees make a renewal decision before student achievement results for the final year of a charter term become available, the Accountability Period ends with the school year prior to the final year of the charter term. In the case of a renewal where a school has performance data from a prior charter term, the Accountability Period covers the last year of the previous charter term through the second to last year of the charter term under review. In this renewal report, the Institute uses “charter term” and Accountability Period interchangeably.

7. Education Law § 2850(2)(f).

8. Education Law § 2854(1)(d).

The Institute analyzes every measure included in the school's Accountability Plan to determine its level of academic success including the extent to which the school has established and maintained a record of high performance, and established progress toward meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals throughout the initial charter term. The Institute identifies the required measures (absolute proficiency, absolute Annual Measurable Objective attainment, comparison to local district, comparison to demographically similar schools, and student growth) in the Performance Summaries appearing in Appendix B.

The Institute analyzes all measures under the school's ELA and mathematics goals while emphasizing the school's comparative performance and growth to determine goal attainment. The Institute calculates a comparative effect size to measure the performance of Brownsville Ascend relative to all public schools statewide that serve the same grade levels and that enroll students who are similarly economically disadvantaged. It is important to note that this measure is a comparison measure and therefore any changes in New York's assessment system do not compromise its validity or reliability. Further, the school's performance on the measure is not relative to the test, but relative to the strength of Brownsville Ascend's demonstrated student learning compared to other schools' demonstrated student learning.

The Institute uses the state's growth percentile analysis as a measure of Brownsville Ascend's comparative year-to-year growth in student performance on the state's ELA and mathematics exams. The measure compares a school's growth in assessment scores to the growth in assessment scores of the subset of students throughout the state who performed identically on previous years' assessments. According to this measure, median growth statewide is at the 50th percentile. This means that to signal the school's ability to help students make one year's worth of growth in one year's time the expected percentile performance is 50. To signal a school is increasing students' performance above their peers (students statewide who scored previously at the same level), the school must post a percentile performance that exceeds 50.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1A

HAS THE SCHOOL MET OR COME CLOSE TO MEETING ITS ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS?

Brownsville Ascend posted a strong record of performance against SUNY's accountability standards in 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16. The school posted an upward trend in absolute achievement in both ELA and mathematics over those three years. The school came close to meeting the ELA goal in 2014-15, narrowly missing the growth target. In 2015-16, the school met the ELA goal, meeting the target in all comparative and growth measures. After failing to meet the comparative effect size measure in 2013-14, the school met all applicable comparative and growth measure targets in the subsequent two years under SUNY's mathematics goal. The school exceeded SUNY's performance targets under science and remained in good standing under the state's NCLB accountability system.

Brownsville Ascend performed well against SUNY's ELA accountability standard from 2013-14 to 2015-16. In 2013-14, the school's students enrolled in at least their second year outperformed students enrolled in similar grades in the district by 10 percentage points. While the school did not meet SUNY's target for comparative effect size, it performed higher than expected to a small degree in comparison to schools across the state enrolling similar percentages of students who are economically disadvantaged. The following year, Brownsville Ascend came close to meeting SUNY's ELA Accountability Plan goal when the school outperformed the district by 13 percentage points. That same year the school performed higher than expected to a meaningful degree in comparison to schools with similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students. Also in 2014-15, the school posted a mean growth percentile four points below the state median of 50. In 2015-16, the school met all of the comparative and growth measures under SUNY's ELA Accountability Plan goal. That year, 41% of Brownsville Ascend's students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficient, increasing the gap between the school and the district to 23 percentage points. Concomitant with the school's 16 percentage point increase in absolute performance, it posted a mean growth percentile that exceeded the state median by three percentile points. Further, in comparison to demographically similar schools across the state, the school performed higher than expected to a large degree.

Brownsville Ascend also performed well in mathematics over the charter term. In 2013-14, the school's students enrolled in at least their second year outperformed students enrolled in similar grades in the district by 14 percentage points. The school did not post an effect size that met SUNY's target. In 2014-15 and 2015-16, the school met SUNY's required

mathematics accountability standard. The school’s students enrolled in at least their second year outperformed students in similar grades from the district by at least 20 percentage points in both years. The school performed higher than expected to a meaningful degree in comparison to schools with similar concentrations of students who are economically disadvantaged over both years. In 2014-15 and 2015-16, Brownsville Ascend met the growth measure in ELA, posting mean growth percentiles that exceeded the state median of 50.

In 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16, Brownsville Ascend met SUNY’s accountability standard for science. The school exceeded both SUNY’s absolute target of 75 percent and the district’s proficiency rate in all three years. Notably, in 2015-16, 67% of the school’s 4th graders scored at Level 4 (the highest possible level), indicating performance above grade level expectations.

Brownsville Ascend has been in good standing according to the state’s NCLB accountability system, having never been identified as a focus or priority school.

Academic outcome data about the performance of students receiving special education services and ELLs appears below, although not tied to separate goals in the school’s formal Accountability Plan.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrollment (N) Receiving Mandated Academic Services	(59)	(83)	(113)
RESULTS			
Tested on State Exams (N)	(29)	(50)	(65)
Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	3.4	8.0	10.8
Percent Proficient Statewide	5.0	5.8	7.9

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
ELL Enrollment (N)	(1)	(8)	(11)
RESULTS			
Tested on NYSESLAT* Exam (N)	(1)	(8)	(11)
Percent ‘Commanding’ or Making Progress† on NYSESLAT	s‡	0.0	27.3

* New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, a standardized state exam.

† Defined as moving up at least one level of proficiency. Student scores fall into five categories/proficiency levels: Entering (formerly Beginning); Emerging (formerly Low Intermediate); Transitioning (formerly Intermediate); Expanding (formerly Advanced); and, Commanding (formerly Proficient).

‡ 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.

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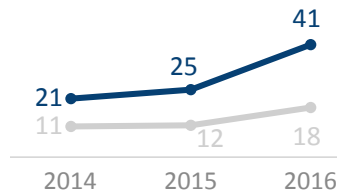
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

BROWNSVILLE ASCEND CHARTER SCHOOL

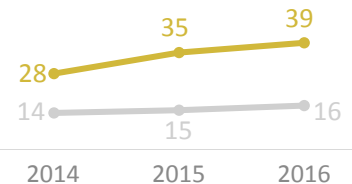
REQUIRED MEASURE DESCRIPTION

Comparative Measure: District Comparison. Each year, the percentage of students at Brownsville Ascend in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in **ELA** and **mathematics** will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in **CSD 23**.

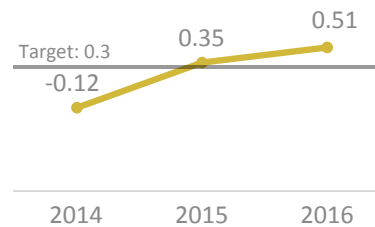
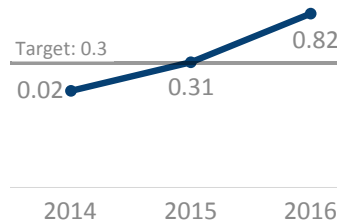
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL



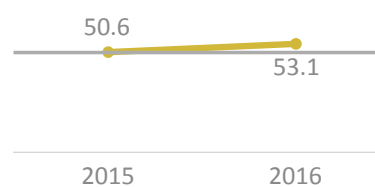
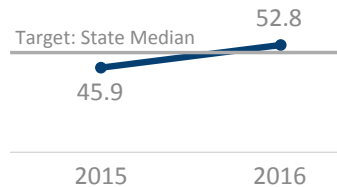
MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL



Comparative Measure: Effect Size. Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above in **ELA** and **mathematics** according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.

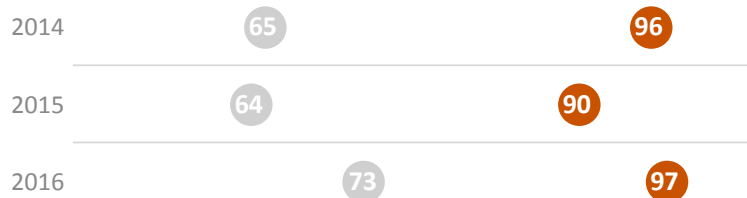


Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile in **ELA** and **mathematics**.



SCIENCE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

Science: Comparative Measure. Each year, the percentage of students at the school in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in **science** will exceed that of students in the same tested grades in the **district**.



SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1B

DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE AN ASSESSMENT SYSTEM THAT IMPROVES INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT LEARNING?

Brownsville Ascend has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning. Teachers access comprehensive data reports to identify trends in student performance and develop effective strategies to meet students' academic needs. School leaders use assessment results to evaluate teacher effectiveness.

- Brownsville Ascend has a strong assessment system aligned to the school's curriculum and state performance standards. The school administers the Foundations reading assessment in Kindergarten through 2nd grade and Lucy Calkins On-Demand writing assessments for Kindergarten through 3rd grade. Additionally, Brownsville Ascend administers a variety of network-developed unit tests and assessments in ELA, mathematics, and science in all grades.
- The school has an ongoing, valid, and reliable process for scoring and analyzing assessments. School leaders hold professional development sessions prior to the start of the year to train teachers in using rubrics to grade student work. Teachers meet in grade teams to norm standards using student work prior to analyzing benchmark assessments. Teachers use these rubrics to grade classwork as well.
- Teachers and school leaders access student performance data using an online repository for assessment data and student information. The network trains teachers and school leaders to access the database and generate data reports to inform instruction. The school reviews its students' performance and that of other network schools. Based on this data, the network sets ambitious performance goals for each grade.
- Teachers effectively use assessment results to meet students' needs by adjusting classroom instruction, grouping students by ability level and/or identifying students for academic intervention. Deans of instruction work with grade teams as a whole and with individual teachers during coaching sessions to develop action plans based on student performance. Teachers also administer daily and weekly exit tickets to identify gaps in students' knowledge and plan to reteach skills as appropriate.
- School leaders use student performance data to inform ongoing professional development plans. Specifically, leaders set aside a portion of each weekly professional

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

development session to cover content they develop based on their reviews of student performance. School leaders use assessment results to evaluate teacher effectiveness and to develop professional development and coaching strategies. Formal evaluations consider teachers' use of assessment data to plan and adjust instruction within the classroom as well as students' performance on school-wide assessments.

- The school regularly communicates with parents/guardians about students' progress during the semi-annual parent teacher conferences in addition to report cards sent home three times per year. Throughout the school year, teachers send home homework feedback, upcoming assignments, and performance reports detailing the standards students achieved and need to master. Teachers include worksheets, links to YouTube videos, and other resources parents can use to assist with homework. Teachers and school leaders also communicate with parents informally using phone calls, emails and notes attached to students' daily homework folders.

DOES THE SCHOOL'S CURRICULUM SUPPORT TEACHERS IN THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING?

Brownsville Ascend has a curriculum in place that supports teachers in instructional planning. Teachers and the network curriculum team work together continually to monitor the effectiveness of the academic program.

- Brownsville Ascend has a curriculum framework with student performance expectations that provides a fixed, underlying structure aligned to state standards and across grades. The curriculum team at the network developed a rigorous curriculum that includes significant opportunities to develop students' critical thinking skills in ELA, mathematics, social studies and science.
- Teachers access yearlong curriculum maps, pacing guides and unit overviews that provide a bridge between the curriculum framework and lesson plans. Teachers are fully aware of what to teach and when to teach it based on these documents. At the elementary grades, the school has a sufficient process for ensuring teachers develop high quality lesson plans. Teachers submit draft weekly lesson plans to school leaders one week before implementation. Leaders review the plans and provide feedback to planners, who then finalize and post the plans. Grade teams also review daily lesson plans prior to implementation. Deans of instruction ("DOIs") guide teachers in tailoring the lessons for individual classes during grade team professional development sessions.

- The school and network work together to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum and adjust its documents and resources for delivering the curriculum. Teachers speak with DOIs regarding issues they encounter during instruction and deans communicate these issues to the network during the same business day. For instance, when a teacher was concerned that an assigned text was too complex for her students, the deans worked with the network to select a new text by the afternoon. The school revises the curriculum based on teacher reports and student performance and adjusts it for the following year. The strong curriculum and systems for reviewing the curricular materials enable teachers to plan purposeful and focused lessons.

IS HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION EVIDENT THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL?

The Institute found high quality instruction, including substantial writing assignments, evident in Brownsville Ascend classrooms. Teachers embed academic vocabulary into thoughtful questioning that requires students to elaborate on and defend answers. Lessons build on students' previous knowledge, and teachers utilize effective checks of progress toward mastery. In upper grade classrooms, some teachers struggle to focus students on academic achievement. As shown in the chart below, during the renewal visit, Institute team members conducted 28 classroom observations using a defined protocol used in all renewal visits.

**SUNY
 RENEWAL
 BENCHMARK
 1D**

NUMBER OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

		GRADE									Total
		K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
CONTENT AREA	ELA				3	1	3	2	3		12
	Math		1	1		3	1	2	1	2	11
	Science			1		1				1	3
	Soc Stu				1				1		2
	Total		1	2	4	5	4	4	5	3	28

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- Teachers communicate clear learning objectives while delivering lessons that align to Brownsville Ascend's curriculum and build on students' previous skills and knowledge (24 of 28 classrooms observed). Teachers provide students with purposeful activities that are grade level appropriate and align to stated objectives. Teachers consistently use open-ended assignments that require students to develop extensive high quality work products such as two page personal narratives written in response to a shared text.
- Brownsville Ascend teachers conduct strong checks for understanding (24 of 28 classrooms observed) and frequently use the data collected to adjust instruction in order to support students with mastering lesson content. Notably, teachers conduct effective checks for understanding across classes by requiring 100 percent participation in universal checks such as thumbs up or down and cold calling students rather than relying solely on volunteers to answer questions. Teachers circulate and provide targeted feedback as students work independently.
- Teachers regularly challenge students with questions and activities that develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills (16 of 28 classrooms observed). Students frequently engage in rich peer-to-peer interactions such as a seminar style discussion of *The Crucible* in a 7th grade ELA lesson during which students questioned one another about their interpretations of theme and character development. This example notwithstanding, instructional rigor is inconsistent in upper grade classrooms.
- The majority of Brownsville Ascend classrooms establish and maintain classroom environments with a sense of urgency for learning and a consistent focus on academic achievement (19 of 28 classrooms observed). Some upper grade teachers struggle to establish and maintain students' consistent focus on lesson activities. In these instances, teachers do not redirect students engaged in off-task behavior and often allow students to opt out of instruction entirely. Management issues appear to be due, at least in part, to strain caused by vacancies and teachers taking on additional responsibilities.

DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE STRONG INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP?

Brownsville Ascend’s instructional leadership team supports teachers with intensive coaching and establishes clearly articulated school-wide expectations. At the time of the renewal visit, key personnel vacancies in the upper grades limited instructional leadership’s capacity to provide intense support for teachers.

- Brownsville Ascend’s instructional leadership supports the development of the teaching staff and addresses the school’s priorities. The lower grades have one school director who oversees four DOIs and two deans of students (“DOSs”) that comprise the leadership team. At the time of the renewal visit, two network leaders served as interim upper grade co-directors, overseeing two DOIs and two DOSs. Because of multiple teaching vacancies in the upper grades, one of the interim directors and three DOIs had teaching coverage responsibilities. Given the breadth of their responsibilities, leaders are unable to consistently provide necessary guidance to stronger teachers and deans to nurture a sufficient pipeline. Despite these vacancies and expanded responsibilities, Brownsville Ascend’s leadership establishes an environment of clear expectations for teacher and student performance. The school identifies strong priorities and leaders have clear responsibilities for improving instruction.
- Instructional leaders provide targeted and flexible coaching that adequately supports teacher development while remaining responsive to the unique strengths and challenges across the lower and upper grades. In the lower grades, the school director and DOIs observe teachers twice weekly. Following each observation, leaders provide electronic feedback with strengths and areas for growth in a standardized format. Teachers and coaches then discuss specific needs during an in-person follow-up meeting. School leaders provide opportunities for teachers with effective instructional practices to conduct observations and provide coaching to other teachers. In the upper grades, deans’ teaching responsibilities interfere with planned weekly observations and formal in-person debriefs with teachers. Leaders attempt to strategically differentiate the frequency and intensity of coaching based on need as determined by informal observations and student data. Coaches use a variety of strategies such as modeling during a lesson and using hand signals to teachers to indicate strategies to try in the moment. In order to improve coaching practices across the school, the school director for the lower grades and the interim leaders for the upper grades observe and coach the deans. Additionally, coaches observe teachers in each other’s caseload to compare findings and norm their practice.

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- School leaders in the lower grades deliver a comprehensive professional development program that addresses the competencies and skills of all teachers and directly relates to classroom instruction. The DOIs deliver weekly teacher planning and development (“TPD”) meetings that cover priority topics identified through informal observations and formative assessment data. The school director meets with the DOIs weekly to review the scope and sequence for each TPD and plan norming practices that include DOIs observing each other’s TPD. The leadership team also delivers an hour and a half of whole-school professional development each week on topics including co-teaching expectations and the writer’s workshop model. The school director leverages the substantial observational data collected by the school’s DOIs to ensure that whole-school professional development sessions and TPDs interrelate with classroom practice.
- School leaders in the upper grades do not consistently implement the network’s intended professional development program with fidelity due to capacity issues. While the leadership team nominally run TPDs once per week for each grade level content area, the delivery has been inconsistent throughout the year due to coverage responsibilities. Additionally, given the added responsibilities of the leadership team and management challenges in the upper grades at the time of the renewal visit, the school uses the weekly school-wide professional development time to practice school-wide procedures and routines. As such, the professional development program lacks explicit focus on student achievement.
- Instructional leaders in the lower grades provide shared planning time as part of TPDs, during weekly grade team meetings, and weekly content area meetings. Individual teachers own specific planning responsibilities and share their work with their team. For example, one teacher plans shared text lessons and disseminates lesson plans for feedback during one of the three weekly co-planning periods. Despite the lack of formal common planning time at the middle grades, teachers have adequate opportunities and support to plan and share lessons within teams. Leaders also delegate time during TPDs for common planning.
- Instructional leaders at Brownsville Ascend conduct formal mid-year and end-of-year teacher evaluations using a network-developed framework. The evaluation rubric includes qualitative measures on lesson planning, pedagogy, professionalism and use of data to drive instruction. School leaders use the same framework with informal observations, which allows teachers to understand the evaluation criteria. Prior to each evaluation, teachers conduct a self-evaluation and use this to identify discrepancies and areas of agreement with their DOI in a formal follow-up meeting. Teachers and leaders identify specific strengths and weaknesses through the formal evaluation process and tie them directly to student outcomes.

- Instructional leaders hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student progress. School leaders demonstrate a command of teachers’ pedagogical strengths and weakness, as well as formative assessment data. In addition to targeted coaching, leaders use a variety of tools to hold teachers accountable including moving classroom assignments, developing performance improvement plans and not re-hiring. For example, the school chose not to re-hire three teachers in the lower grades for the 2016-17 school year due to poor student performance data and lack of evidence of urgency for improving student performance.

DOES THE SCHOOL MEET THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF AT-RISK STUDENTS?

Brownsville Ascend uses clear procedures for identifying students with disabilities, ELLs, and students struggling academically. The school delivers a sufficient program to meet the academic needs of its students with disabilities and students struggling academically. However, the school lacks an adequate program to deliver English language acquisition instruction to its ELLs and does not systematically monitor ELLs’ progress towards English language proficiency.

- The school uses clear procedures for identifying students with disabilities, ELLs, and students struggling academically. The school administers the Home Language Identification Survey to all new entrants and subsequently administers the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (“NYSITELL”) to determine students’ ELL status. In order to provide support to students in need of targeted academic interventions, grade level teams meet during data days to analyze state test data and interim assessment data. Teachers identify the lowest performing cohort of students for intervention services. The dean of student services (“DOSS”) works with teachers during a follow-up session to identify any additional anecdotes or data trends to finalize a list of students. The school utilizes a clear referral process to evaluate students for special education services.
- The school implements adequate programs to meet the needs of its students with disabilities. The school meets the needs of students with Individualized Education Programs (“IEPs”) through integrated co-teaching (“ICT”) classrooms and with targeted special education teacher support services (“SETSS”). While the school’s program is generally effective for all students with disabilities, the school did not provide an appropriate setting as mandated in 11 students’ IEPs at the time of the visit.
- The school delivers a sufficient intervention program for students struggling academically. In the lower grades, ELA and mathematics intervention teachers provide push-in

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supports in ICT rooms and pull-out supports for students not receiving ICT. Intervention teachers deliver Leveled Literacy Intervention (“LLI”) in ELA and TERC Investigations in mathematics, supplementing instruction with content tailored to specific students. In the upper grades, general education teachers deliver daily intervention in ELA during independent reading time and two weekly pull-out sessions for mathematics.

- The school lacks an adequate program to deliver English language acquisition instruction to its 13 ELLs. The intervention teachers for the lower grades deliver LLI to the eight ELLs enrolled in Kindergarten through 5th grade. In the upper grades, the humanities teachers deliver LLI to the five enrolled ELLs. However, these supports do not constitute a comprehensive program to meet the specific needs of the schools’ ELLs.
- General education teachers, in addition to specialized at-risk program staff, use effective strategies to support students with IEPs and those receiving targeted interventions. General education teachers participate in the process of creating robust “IEP at a glance” documents that contain detailed modifications and intervention strategies. DOIs and at-risk program staff also use TPD time to support general education teachers in modifying their lesson plans to include adequate differentiation for at-risk students.
- Teachers are generally aware of their students’ progress toward meeting IEP goals and school-based goals for students struggling academically. ICT teachers and SETSS teachers use digitally shared spreadsheets to track and disseminate the progress of students with IEPs towards their goals. Teachers use a variety of data sources to monitor the progress of students receiving targeted academic interventions including daily exit tickets, STEP assessment results, and other formative assessment data. During professional development, the school shares disaggregated data snapshots on the performance of students with IEPs and students struggling academically to ensure that teachers have a general understanding of at-risk student performance relative to the school overall. The school neither formally nor effectively monitors the progress of ELLs towards English language proficiency other than the administration of the NYSESLAT.

- The school provides sufficient training and professional development to all teachers on identifying and supporting students with disabilities and students struggling academically. Teachers receive targeted opportunities that address meeting the needs of students with disabilities and students struggling academically, such as trainings on LLI, STEP assessment analysis, and differentiation. However, the school does not provide specific professional development training to teachers on supports for ELLs. Additionally, at the start of the 2016-17 school year, the interim DOSS's network responsibilities made it difficult to deliver professional development at the intended frequency.
- The school's at-risk program staff attends all grade team meetings and TPDs relevant to their student caseload. However, the school provides no additional formal collaboration time for at-risk program staff and general education teachers. Teachers electronically share instructional resources for supporting their at-risk students and meet informally on an ad hoc basis to share strategies. Co-teachers in ICT classrooms coordinate consistently during the day and have overlapping planning time.



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IS THE SCHOOL AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

Brownsville Ascend is an effective and viable organization that delivers a quality educational program. Network support supplements the school’s leadership capacity in the upper grades, and the education corporation board maintains focus on student outcomes.

IS THE SCHOOL FAITHFUL TO ITS MISSION AND DOES IT IMPLEMENT THE KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN ITS CHARTER?

Brownsville Ascend is faithful to its mission and key design elements. These can be found in the School Background section at the beginning of the report and Appendix A, respectively. In regard to the mission, Brownsville Ascend provides students with opportunities to develop critical thinking skills and strong academic habits.

ARE PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS SATISFIED WITH THE SCHOOL?

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 NYCDOE’s 2015-16 NYC School Survey. NYCDOE distributes the survey every year to compile data about school culture, instruction and systems for improvement. This year, 54% of families who received the survey responded. The majority of survey participants (91%) indicated very strong satisfaction with Brownsville Ascend’s program. The survey response rate is sufficiently high to be useful in framing the results as representative of the school community.

Parent Focus Group. The Institute asks all schools facing renewal to convene a representative set of parents for a focus group discussion. A representative set includes parents of students in attendance at the school for multiple years, parents of students new to the school, parents of students receiving general education services, parents of students with special needs and parents of ELLs. Among the 12 parents in attendance at the focus group, almost all expressed satisfaction with the frequency and depth of communication with school staff. Most parents noted that teachers and leaders demonstrated genuine commitment to the school community by being available at all hours to phone calls, texts or e-mails. Many parents indicated that the homework and curriculum at Brownsville Ascend are sufficiently rigorous for their children.

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While parents expressed great satisfaction with the school’s academic program, some noted that the school could improve by offering a more substantial after school program. Additionally, some parents indicated a preference for increased enrichment opportunities for high performing students.

Persistence in Enrollment. An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2015-16, 91% of Brownsville Ascend students returned from the previous year. Student persistence data from previous years of the charter term is available in Appendix A.

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 state wide context.

DOES THE SCHOOL’S ORGANIZATION WORK EFFECTIVELY TO DELIVER THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM?

The school organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program.

- Brownsville Ascend utilizes the network’s administrative structure and operational systems to deliver the educational program. The roles of various administrative positions are appropriate and clear. The lower grades and upper grades each have a school director, DOSS, DOI, DOS and a director of operations.
- The network’s human capital office supports each school in recruiting and developing quality staff. The office recruits, screens, and offers candidates to each school for its final hiring decisions. Each Ascend Learning school director may modify teaching loads and the staffing model as needed in order to retain and grow quality staff.
- Despite the human capital office’s supports, Ascend Charter Schools has a staff attrition rate of 25% for 2015-16. The network did not invite 18% of instructional staff back for the following school year. The remaining seven percent attrition rate is due to internal transfers or staff leaving on their own. The 25% staff attrition rate for Ascend Charter

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Schools is an improvement from the 31% attrition rate in 2014-15. At the time of the site visit, however, Brownsville Ascend had four teaching vacancies in the upper grades. School and network leaders provide temporary coverage for the vacant roles in order to provide the highest level of instruction to students. School leaders recognize filling the vacant positions as the highest priority in the upper grades.

- Brownsville Ascend has adequate resources to support the achievement of goals. Ascend Learning provides quality school facilities, adequate materials for students and funding for school-wide staffing, and supports from the network office. Schools operate on their per pupil funding with the goal of no outside philanthropy. The school meets its enrollment targets and demonstrates ongoing excess demand.
- The network provides adequate recruitment support for Brownsville Ascend. The network targets recruitment efforts in areas with high populations of ELLs and students eligible for FRPL, as well as with local programs that services students with disabilities. However, Brownsville Ascend's enrollment for economically disadvantaged students, ELLs and students with disabilities is lower than the local CSD. The network offers a website geared toward families, a family newsletter, and plans on utilizing more social media tools for direct recruitment of the sub-populations. The school meets retention targets with special sub-populations of students, with over 90% of students with disabilities, ELLs and economically disadvantaged students returning in 2015-16.
- Ascend Learning continually monitors each school's effectiveness through its back office staffing of managing directors, a chief schools officer and a robust curriculum and learning department. Network staff members visit the school frequently and attend regular meetings with school directors and other members of the school's teams. Network staff, including the highest levels of leadership, regularly review benchmarks assessments and standardized tests for each school location.
- Each school is attempting to implement a Responsive Classroom and positive reinforcement discipline methodology. Brownsville Ascend originally employed a "No Excuses" disciplinary system, but moved to Responsive Classroom in 2014-15 in order to build student agency. The school's lower grades are implementing the new discipline method with more consistency than the upper grades. Discipline in the upper grades varies considerably, with high levels of engagement evident in some classrooms, while students in other classrooms remain off task as the teacher struggles to implement any

disciplinary method. School leaders are aware of the inconsistencies with discipline, and identify that inconsistent discipline is likely due to the current vacancies, new faculty unfamiliar with the school's discipline and instructional methods, limited coaching opportunities due to leaders currently teaching, and backfilling students year round. In order to provide support for this situation, the network has provided DOSs in the upper grades with additional culture associates and expects to employ a dean of students at each grade in the upper grades.

- Deans provide additional training and coaching for newer teachers, including best practices for behavioral management of students with IEPs, on building relationships between faculty and students. The lower school has two social worker/counselors and the upper school has one who also has high school placement as a duty.

DOES THE SCHOOL BOARD WORK EFFECTIVELY TO ACHIEVE THE SCHOOL'S ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS?

The Ascend Charter Schools board works effectively to achieve the school's Accountability Plan goals. The board is knowledgeable of Brownsville Ascend's academic progress and areas for growth, and the board sets measurable goals to improve performance. In an effort to establish a strong leadership pipeline, the board developed an Ascend fellowship in residence program.

- All network schools have one board of trustees. The board provides adequate oversight over Brownsville Ascend. The board has seven members with a wide range of skills including law, finance, education, architecture/facilities and community engagement. The board plans to add more parents as well as more individuals from the local community as it grows. The board is clear about each school's Accountability Plan goals and receives a clear dashboard to monitor the performance of each school. The board notes that it reviews greatly detailed information (including color-coded metrics) regarding all educational matters as well as the basics regarding finance. The board and network are working to develop an aggregated, more simplified fiscal dashboard. The board is aware that the network's financial back office has been under-staffed and under-resourced, as it prioritized the academic side of the house over the past few years.
- The board utilizes a committee structure including finance, hiring, nominating, executive, academics and an ad hoc committee for facilities. The academic committee

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meets monthly, as does the full board. Other committees meet on an as-needed basis. For example, the hiring committee convenes to interview and assess school director candidates, and the nominating committee convenes to assess and recommend new board members. The board has many education reform experts in its membership and understands the schools’ successes and setbacks. For example, board members have realized that the lower grades doubling in enrollment size requires fewer staff than when the upper school grades double in size. The board is also cognizant that it must have a fully developed leadership pipeline at all times and that the schools need to open with adequate staffing to avoid problems such as those encountered with Brownsville Ascend’s upper grades. In response, the network and board have developed an Ascend fellowship in residence program to prepare school leaders in addition to a more carefully crafted staffing model.

- The board is pleased with the responsiveness to challenges by the network and updates its management contract each year. The board is aware that the growth of new school locations can be challenging to existing locations and is closely monitoring any ripple effects on quality.
- The board has several goals including: each school having a stronger cash position / reserve; building its own capacity as the number of schools grows; and, not repeating any mistakes as they grow.

DOES THE BOARD IMPLEMENT, MAINTAIN AND ABIDE BY APPROPRIATE POLICIES, SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES?

The board materially and substantially implements, maintains and abides by adequate and appropriate policies, systems and processes and procedures to ensure the effective governance and oversight of the school. The board demonstrates a clear understanding of its role in holding the school leadership and network accountable for both academic results but could provide better oversight over fiscal soundness.

- The board has materially complied with the terms of its by-laws and code of ethics.
- The board receives specific and extensive reports on each program including fiscal, academic performance and non-academic student and staffing trends.

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- Board minutes reflect an active education/accountability committee which is required under the bylaws. The bylaws also require a finance committee that does not appear as active. The board receives financial reports from the network in its monthly board package.
- The board provides common oversight of multiple charter schools with fidelity.
- The board does not adequately monitor charter compliance to ensure reporting deadlines are met, specifically financial reporting and ELL program compliance.

HAS THE SCHOOL SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLIED WITH APPLICABLE LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS, AND PROVISIONS OF ITS CHARTER?

The education corporation generally and substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of its charter.

- **Complaints.** The Institute received no formal complaints regarding the school.
- **Code of Ethics.** The education corporation’s code of ethics needs to be updated to comply with provisions of the New York General Municipal Law. The Institute will ensure this is updated prior to the start of a new charter term
- **ELL Program.** The school did not have in place an effective and functioning ELL program that is regularly reviewed and research based as required by federal law and regulations. The school will have to submit its plans for a compliant ELL program to the Institute for approval before the commencement of the new period of authority to operate the school.
- **Students with Disabilities.** The school was not appropriately implementing the IEPs of 11 students at the time of the visit in violation of the IDEA and the Act. The Institute will direct the school to immediately review the IEPs in question to determine whether or not they can be modified to a setting offered by the school. If so, the school must schedule a meeting with the parents and district Committee on Special Education (“CSE”) to modify the IEPs. If not, the school must notify the CSE that the NYCDOE must find a placement for the student in accordance with the IEP.

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9. 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 green – gray – red. 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.

IS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION FISCALLY SOUND?

Based on a review of the fiscal evidence collected through the renewal review, Ascend Charter Schools and Brownsville Ascend have demonstrated fiscal soundness. The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard presents color-coded tables and charts indicating that Brownsville Ascend and the education corporation have demonstrated fiscal soundness over the majority of the charter term.⁹

Brownsville Ascend had limited financial resources to ensure stable operations. Effective July 1, 2016, five schools merged together with Canarsie Ascend Charter School as the surviving entity. In addition to analyzing the soundness of the individual charter school, the Institute analyzed the soundness of the not-for-profit education corporation granted the authority to operate the school and finds it too has limited financial resources to ensure stable operations. The fiscal dashboards reflect the independent entity as fiscally adequate prior to the merger and in need of fiscal monitoring as a merged entity.

The merger allows the schools to realize efficiencies associated with operations and capacity to share programs and resources in the areas of academic program, fiscal management and operational support, human resources, technology and public relations. The financial model is intended to ensure that all fully enrolled schools are financially sustainable, operating the school's program solely through public funding.

The education corporation's management organization, Ascend Learning, supports Brownsville Ascend in the areas of academic program, fiscal management and operational support, human resources, technology and public relations under the terms of a management agreement. The education corporation pays a service fee of 13% for services provided to the school under the agreement.

DOES THE SCHOOL OPERATE PURSUANT TO A FISCAL PLAN IN WHICH IT CREATES REALISTIC BUDGETS THAT IT MONITORS AND ADJUSTS WHEN APPROPRIATE?

Brownsville Ascend has had minimally employed budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures throughout the charter term.

- On an annual basis, the school leadership and network staff coordinate the development of the annual and long-term budget preparation and present budgets to the board finance committee.

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- The projected five-year renewal budget reflects steady revenues and expenses associated with increasing enrollment as the school grows to full capacity with Kindergarten - 12th grade by the fourth year of the renewal term.
- Brownsville Ascend is located in leased space through 2032 and responsible for rent, repairs, utilities, insurance and janitorial costs. The space was renovated in phases and can now accommodate an entire Kindergarten - 12th grade program.
- Effective July 1, 2016, the merger allows for operating efficiencies and purchasing power, and shared expenses with four other schools related by common management.

DOES THE SCHOOL MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE INTERNAL CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES?

Brownsville Ascend and the merged education corporation, Ascend Charter Schools, have strained to maintain fiscal policies, procedures and practices and appropriate internal controls.

- The Financial Policies and Procedures Manual is a guide for all internal controls and procedures. The manual contains fiscal policies and procedures that need to be updated, board reviewed and approved. The most recent manual submitted to the Institute was dated 2009 and is outdated in many respects. It also needs to reflect the merger and related efficiencies.
- The Brownsville Ascend audit report for June 30, 2016 had no findings of material deficiencies but the report did identify a non-material finding regarding the general ledger maintenance and account analysis. The auditor included an advisory letter to management that identified that the general ledger accounts were not being reconciled throughout the year resulting in audit delays. The auditor recommended increasing the financial support throughout the year, which the network has done by hiring an additional fiscal person.

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DOES THE SCHOOL COMPLY WITH FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

Brownsville Ascend and the merged education corporation have minimally complied with financial reporting requirements.

- The Institute has noted to the board and the network that it received required quarterly financial reports that tend to be late and incomplete requiring revisions.

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- Independent audits of annual financial statements have received unqualified opinions with no material weaknesses or instances of non-compliance observed but the external auditor notes unnecessary delays in audit work due to Ascend Charter Schools not being ready for annual audits.
- The individual education corporation and merged entity have continually filed key reports late including: budgets, unaudited quarterly reports of revenue, expenses and enrollment.

DOES THE SCHOOL MAINTAIN ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO ENSURE STABLE OPERATIONS?

Brownsville Ascend and the merged education corporation have maintained limited financial resources to ensure stable operations.

- Brownsville Ascend opened in 2009 and generated deficits from school operations three out of the last four years as an independent education corporation. The most recent audit showed an operating surplus of \$689,614.
- Ascend Charter Schools had total net assets of approximately \$1.1 million and only 23 days of cash on hand to pay bills coming due shortly as reported in the most recent audit report. The benchmark is 30 days of cash on hand, and the network has put in place a plan to meet that standard going forward.
- The balance sheets for the schools contain deferred rent as a long term liability, which causes the negative net assets. All rental payments are recognized on a straight-line basis as an offset to rent expense with the difference being recorded as a deferred rent liability. As of June 30, 2016, the deferred rent liability for Brownsville Ascend was \$1,858,442.
- As a merged entity, the dissolution fund reserve is to be \$75,000 for the first two schools and \$25,000 for additional schools up to a maximum of \$350,000. Ascend Charter Schools has established dissolution reserve funds and complied with the minimum required balance of \$225,000 for the number of schools in the merged education corporation.

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Albany, New York

FUTURE PLANS



IF THE SUNY TRUSTEES RENEW THE EDUCATION CORPORATION'S AUTHORITY TO OPERATE THE SCHOOL, ARE ITS PLANS FOR THE SCHOOL REASONABLE, FEASIBLE AND ACHIEVABLE?

The Brownsville Ascend organization proves itself an academic success with the effective delivery of an educational program that produces positive student achievement results. The education corporation and school are fiscally sound. Therefore, the plans for Brownsville Ascend in the next charter term are reasonable, feasible and achievable.

Plans for the School's Structure. The education corporation has provided all of the key structural elements for a charter renewal and those elements are reasonable, feasible and achievable.

Plans for the Educational Program. Brownsville Ascend plans to implement the same core elements of its Kindergarten through 8th grade educational program that have enabled it to come close to meeting its key Accountability Plan goals in its initial charter term. Additionally, the school plans to adopt key elements of the existing high school program at Brooklyn Ascend Charter School while it adds one grade per year after one year of operating a merged 9th grade program in 2017-18. These core elements are likely to enable Brownsville Ascend to meet or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals as it grows to serve students in Kindergarten through 12th grade at the end of the next charter term.

Plans for Board Oversight & Governance. The trustees express interest in serving the education corporation in the next charter term. The board may add additional trustees in the future.

	CURRENT	END OF NEXT CHARTER TERM
Enrollment	1,004	1,377
Grade Span	K-8	K-12
Teaching Staff	76	118
Days of Instruction	182	182

Fiscal & Facility Plans. Based on evidence collected through the renewal review, including a review of the five-year financial plan, Ascend Charter Schools presents a reasonable and appropriate fiscal plan for the next charter term including education corporation and school budgets that are feasible and achievable with ongoing fiscal monitoring. The education corporation intends to maintain its contractual relationship with the network for the school. The Institute has reviewed the proposed terms of such contract and will review and approve the final contract, and any other network contracts, when executed.

The school intends to remain in the current leased facility in the next charter term though it might identify an alternative location for high school grades in 2018-19.

The school's Application for Charter Renewal contains all necessary elements as required by the Act. The proposed school calendar allots an appropriate amount of instructional time to meet or exceed instructional time requirements, and taken together with other academic and key design elements, should be sufficient to allow the school to meet its proposed Accountability Plan goals. The education corporation has amended or will amend other key aspects of the renewal application -- including by-laws and code of ethics -- to comply with various provisions of the New York Education Law, Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, Public Officers Law and the General Municipal Law, as appropriate.

Brownsville
Ascend

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APPENDICES

PAGES Ax 1-30

SO^A SCHOOL OVERVIEW	PS^B PERFORMANCE SUMMARIES	DC^C DISTRICT COMMENTS	FD^D FISCAL DASHBOARD	EO^E ED CORP OVERVIEW
PAGE Ax 1	PAGE Ax 7	PAGE Ax 9	PAGE Ax 11	PAGE Ax 15

APPENDIX A: School Overview

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CHAIR

Stephanie Mauterstock

TREASURER

Katya Levitan-Reiner

SECRETARY

Amanda Craft

TRUSTEES

Oral Walcott

Kwaku Andoh

Christine Schlendorf

Kathleen Quirk

SCHOOL LEADERS

PRINCIPAL

Keli Swearingen (2009-10 to November 2010)

Kelly Bowers, co-director (November 2010-11 to January 2013)

Angela Beal, co-director (November 2010-11 to October 2012)

Erin Swan-Potras (January 2013 to June 2013)

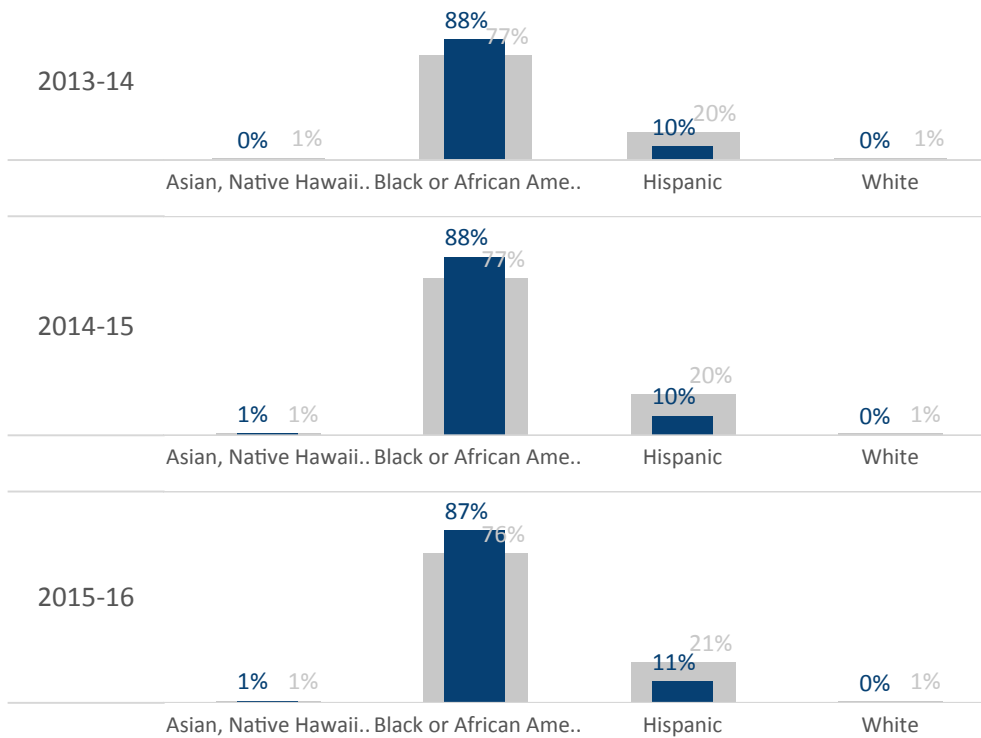
Erica Murphy, lower grades (2013-14 to present)

Emily Fernandez, middle school (2014-15 to present)

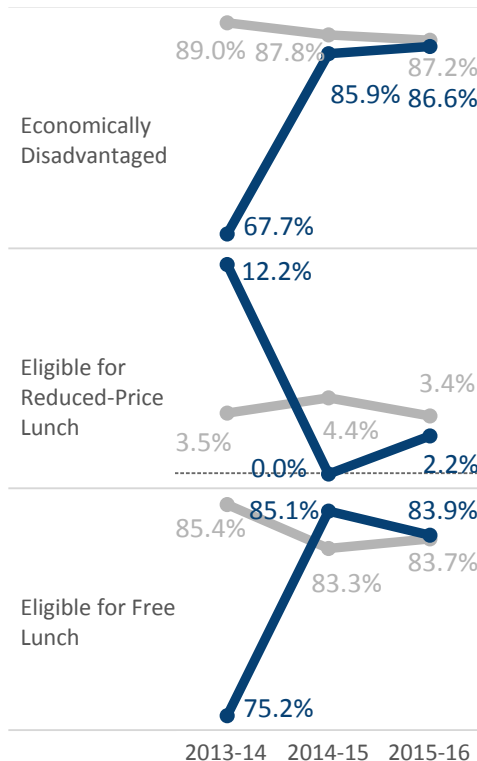
SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	PROPOSED GRADES	ACTUAL GRADES
2012-13	536	548	102%	K-4	K-4
2013-14	675	673	99%	K-5	K-5
2014-15	785	784	100%	K-6	K-6
2015-16	900	905	101%	K-7	K-7
2016-17	1,004	1,022	102%	K-8	K-8

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS: RACE/ETHNICITY

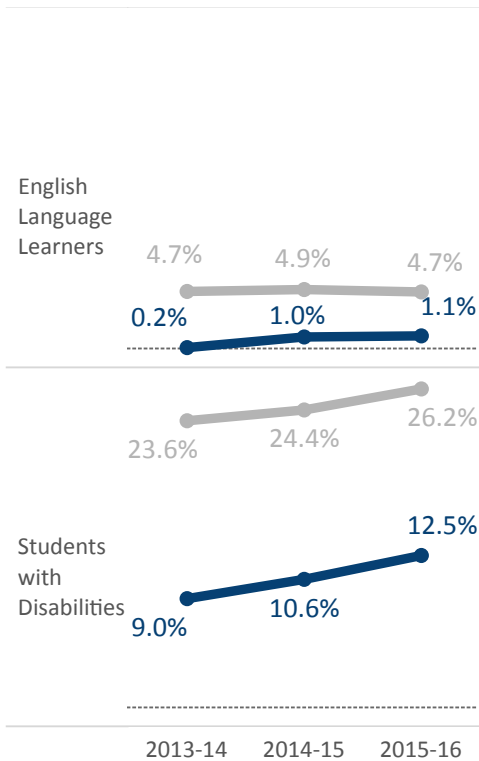


STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:
FREE/REDUCED LUNCH



The charts show the trends in enrollment in the **school** and the **district** for each subgroup. Economically disadvantaged includes those students eligible for Free and Reduced-Price lunch among other qualifying income assistance programs.

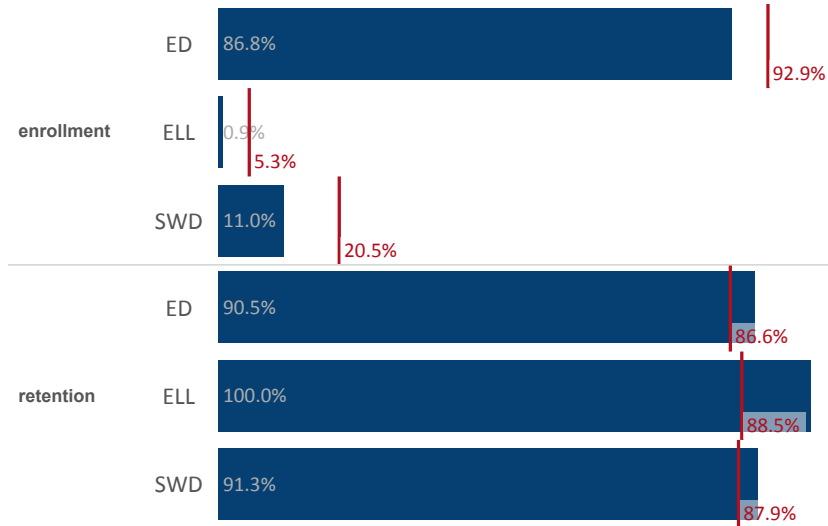
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:
SPECIAL POPULATIONS



The charts show trends in enrollment in the **school** and the **district** for each subgroup.

APPENDIX A: School Overview

ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION TARGETS



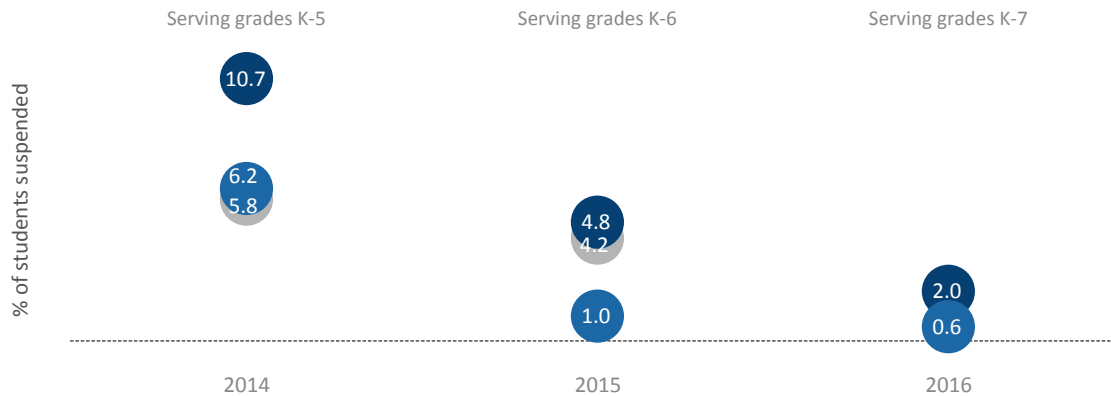
The chart illustrates the school's **current enrollment and retention percentages** against the **enrollment and retention targets**. As required by Education Law § 2851(4)(e), a school must include in its renewal application information regarding the efforts it has, and will, put in place to meet or exceed SUNY's enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, ELLs, and FRPL students. This analysis is based on the most recently available data provided by the school.

PERSISTENCE IN ENROLLMENT



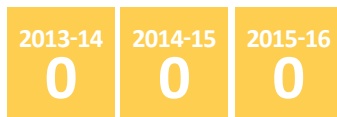
Persistence in enrollment illustrates the percentage of students not scheduled to age out of the school who re-enroll from the previous year. The Institute derived the statistical information on enrollment persistence from its database. No comparative data from NYCDOE or NYSED is available to the Institute to provide either district wide or by CSD context. As such, the information presented is for information purposes but does not allow for comparative analysis.

SUSPENSIONS: BROWNSVILLE ASCEND CHARTER SCHOOL'S OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION RATE, IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION RATE, AND THE DISTRICT OVERALL SUSPENSION RATE.



Although Community School District ("CSD") and school suspension rates are presented on the same graph, a direct comparison between the rates is not possible for three primary reasons. Available CSD data includes Kindergarten through 12th grades and school data includes only the grades served by the school. CSD data are not available that show multiple instances of suspension of a single student, the overall number of suspensions, the duration of suspensions, or the time of year when the school administered the suspension. CSD data showing the difference between in school and out of school suspensions are not available. The percentage rate shown here is calculated using the method employed by the New York City Department of Education: 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.

EXPULSIONS: THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS EXPELLED FROM THE SCHOOL EACH YEAR



PARENT SATISFACTION: SURVEY RESULTS



APPENDIX A: School Overview

TIMELINE OF CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL



SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY

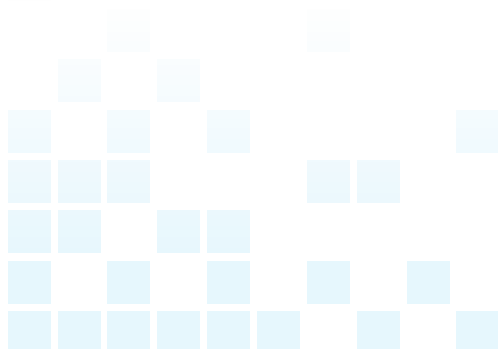
SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
2016-17	Initial Renewal	November 2-4, 2016

CONDUCT OF THE RENEWAL VISIT

DATE(S) OF VISIT	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
November 2-4, 2016	Natasha Howard, Ph.D	Managing Director of Program
	Sinnjinn Bucknell	Senior Performance and Systems Analyst
	Chastity McFarlan, Ph.D	School Evaluation Analyst
	Joey Gustafson	External Consultant

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

ELEMENT	EVIDENT?
A liberal arts education; and,	+
The Ascend culture, rooted in Responsive Classrooms.	+



APPENDIX B: Performance Summaries

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: English Language Arts Brownsville Ascend Charter School

	2013-14 Grades Served: K-5			2014-15 Grades Served: K-6			2015-16 Grades Served: K-7			MET
	Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)	Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)	Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)	
ABSOLUTE MEASURES 1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State exam.	3	28.1 (114)	25.8 (97)	3	28.1 (135)	27.9 (122)	3	54.4 (114)	55.2 (105)	NO
	4	24.0 (100)	24.7 (77)	4	29.8 (114)	30.5 (95)	4	57.3 (143)	62.2 (119)	
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Level Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	5	12.2 (82)	12.8 (78)	5	8.6 (105)	11.1 (81)	5	30.5 (105)	31.3 (96)	NO
	6	(0)	(0)	6	23.8 (84)	25.3 (75)	6	20.4 (108)	19.8 (91)	
COMPARATIVE MEASURES 3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	7	(0)	(0)	7	(0)	(0)	7	25.0 (84)	25.6 (78)	NO
	8	(0)	(0)	8	(0)	(0)	8	(0)	(0)	
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at proficiency on the state exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students.	All	22.3 (296)	21.4 (252)	All	23.1 (438)	24.4 (373)	All	39.5 (554)	40.9 (489)	YES
	Grades	PLI	AMO	Grades	PLI	AMO	Grades	PI	AMO	
GROWTH MEASURE 5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	3-5	94	89	3-6	93	97	3-7	119	104	YES
	Comparison: Brooklyn District 23	School	District	Comparison: Brooklyn District 23	School	District	Comparison: Brooklyn District 23	School	District	
	3-5	21.4	11.4	3-6	24.4	11.8	3-7	40.9	18.2	YES
	% ED	Actual	Predicted	% ED	Actual	Predicted	% ED	Actual	Predicted	
	82.0	22.3	21.9	83.6	23.1	19.4	86.4	39.5	24.8	YES
	Effect Size	0.02	NO	Effect Size	0.31	YES	Effect Size	0.82	YES	
	Grades	School	State	Grades	School	State	Grades	School	State	YES
	4			4	51.8		4	64.6		
	5			5	38.5		5	43.5		YES
	6			6	47.4		6	48.7		
	7			7	0.0		7	49.6		YES
	8			8	0.0		8	0.0		
	All			All	45.9	50.0	All	52.8	50.0	

As of the date of this report, the Institute has received no district comments in response to the renewal application.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Institute received two public comments regarding the renewal of Brownsville Ascend, both from parents in English and Spanish. Both comments speak very highly of the school, teachers, and the location, citing that the school really cares about the education it provides to the students.



APPENDIX D: Fiscal Dashboard

Brownsville Ascend Charter School

SCHOOL INFORMATION

BALANCE SHEET

Opened 2009-10

Assets

Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents - GRAPH 1
Grants and Contracts Receivable
Accounts Receivable
Prepaid Expenses
Contributions and Other Receivables

Total Current Assets - GRAPH 1

Property, Building and Equipment, net

Other Assets

Total Assets - GRAPH 1

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses
Accrued Payroll and Benefits
Deferred Revenue
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable
Other

Total Current Liabilities - GRAPH 1

L-T Debt and Notes Payable, net current maturities

Total Liabilities - GRAPH 1

Net Assets

Unrestricted
Temporarily restricted

Total Net Assets

Total Liabilities and Net Assets

ACTIVITIES

Operating Revenue

Resident Student Enrollment
Students with Disabilities
Grants and Contracts
State and local
Federal - Title and IDEA
Federal - Other
Other
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program

Total Operating Revenue

Expenses

Regular Education
SPED
Regular Education & SPED (combined)
Other

Total Program Services

Management and General
Fundraising

Total Expenses - GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4

Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations

Support and Other Revenue

Contributions
Fundraising
Miscellaneous Income
Net assets released from restriction

Total Support and Other Revenue

Total Unrestricted Revenue

Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue

Total Revenue - GRAPHS 2 & 3

Change in Net Assets

Net Assets - Beginning of Year - GRAPH 2

Prior Year Adjustment(s)

Net Assets - End of Year - GRAPH 2

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Cash and Cash Equivalents - GRAPH 1	-	-	254,418	313,776	433,148
Grants and Contracts Receivable	-	-	48,607	185,865	329,656
Accounts Receivable	-	-	303,025	-	-
Prepaid Expenses	-	-	132,859	82,095	19,967
Contributions and Other Receivables	-	-	656	-	372,220
Total Current Assets - GRAPH 1	-	-	739,565	581,736	1,154,991
Property, Building and Equipment, net	-	-	1,854,352	1,866,852	2,006,845
Other Assets	-	-	1,971,886	111,538	113,903
Total Assets - GRAPH 1	-	-	4,565,803	2,560,126	3,275,739
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	-	-	318,675	350,750	382,005
Accrued Payroll and Benefits	-	-	244,600	313,346	406,494
Deferred Revenue	-	-	8,871	-	-
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	-	-	-	-	-
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	2,246,197	85,047	77,201
Total Current Liabilities - GRAPH 1	-	-	2,818,343	749,143	865,700
L-T Debt and Notes Payable, net current maturities	-	-	500,000	1,169,013	1,663,650
Total Liabilities - GRAPH 1	-	-	3,318,343	1,918,156	2,529,350
Unrestricted	-	-	(909,917)	641,970	746,389
Temporarily restricted	-	-	-	-	-
Total Net Assets	-	-	(909,917)	641,970	746,389
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	-	-	2,408,426	2,560,126	3,275,739
Resident Student Enrollment	-	-	7,599,973	9,606,045	11,746,348
Students with Disabilities	-	-	-	-	-
State and local	-	-	42,999	50,662	73,272
Federal - Title and IDEA	-	-	305,393	753,125	883,013
Federal - Other	-	-	85,841	82,405	33,381
Other	-	-	-	-	232,142
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program	-	-	245,840	-	-
Total Operating Revenue	-	-	8,280,046	10,492,237	12,968,156
Regular Education	-	-	7,966,314	8,311,754	9,308,320
SPED	-	-	1,257,891	1,340,900	1,759,930
Regular Education & SPED (combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Program Services	-	-	9,224,205	9,652,654	11,068,250
Management and General	-	-	1,125,940	1,503,489	2,260,085
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses - GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4	-	-	10,350,145	11,156,143	13,328,335
Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations	-	-	(2,070,099)	(663,906)	(360,179)
Contributions	-	-	45,000	-	-
Fundraising	-	-	-	18,077	19,124
Miscellaneous Income	-	-	2,573	3,194	445,474
Net assets released from restriction	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support and Other Revenue	-	-	47,573	21,271	464,598
Total Unrestricted Revenue	-	-	8,282,619	10,513,508	13,432,754
Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue	-	-	45,000	-	-
Total Revenue - GRAPHS 2 & 3	-	-	8,327,619	10,513,508	13,432,754
Change in Net Assets	-	-	(2,022,526)	(642,635)	104,419
Net Assets - Beginning of Year - GRAPH 2	-	-	1,112,609	1,284,605	641,970
Prior Year Adjustment(s)	-	-	-	-	-
Net Assets - End of Year - GRAPH 2	-	-	(909,917)	641,970	746,389

Brownsville Ascend Charter School

SCHOOL INFORMATION - (Continued)

Functional Expense Breakdown

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Personnel Service					
Administrative Staff Personnel	-	-	-	-	-
Instructional Personnel	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Instructional Personnel	-	-	-	-	-
Personnel Services (Combined)	-	-	3,255,173	4,429,470	5,594,595
Total Salaries and Staff	-	-	3,255,173	4,429,470	5,594,595
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes	-	-	600,621	816,911	1,084,500
Retirement	-	-	-	-	-
Management Company Fees	-	-	-	866,887	1,443,377
Building and Land Rent / Lease	-	-	1,467,081	2,444,823	2,719,187
Staff Development	-	-	21,885	54,468	132,698
Professional Fees, Consultant & Purchased Services	-	-	867,460	865,319	134,686
Marketing / Recruitment	-	-	52,404	49,586	29,020
Student Supplies, Materials & Services	-	-	117,783	174,099	373,242
Depreciation	-	-	153,389	207,728	176,562
Other	-	-	1,051,711	1,246,852	1,640,468
Total Expenses	-	-	7,587,507	11,156,143	13,328,335

SCHOOL ANALYSIS

ENROLLMENT

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Chartered Enroll	-	-	543	640	784
Revised Enroll	-	-	-	-	-
Actual Enroll - GRAPH 4	-	-	545	679	795
Chartered Grades	-	-	K-4	K-5	K-6
Revised Grades	-	-	-	-	-

Primary School District: 0

Per Pupil Funding (Weighted Avg of All Districts)
Increase over prior year

-	-	13,527	13,527	13,777
0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	1.8%

PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

Revenue

Operating	-	-	15,193	15,452	16,312
Other Revenue and Support	-	-	87	31	584
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	-	15,280	15,484	16,897

Expenses

Program Services	-	-	16,925	14,216	13,922
Management and General, Fundraising	-	-	2,066	2,214	2,843
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	-	18,991	16,430	16,765

% of Program Services 0.0% 0.0% 89.1% 86.5% 83.0%

% of Management and Other 0.0% 0.0% 10.9% 13.5% 17.0%

% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses - GRAPH 5

0.0% 0.0% -19.5% -5.8% 0.8%

Student to Faculty Ratio

-	-	18.8	14.1	13.3
---	---	------	------	------

Faculty to Admin Ratio

-	-	3.2	3.4	3.3
---	---	-----	-----	-----

Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - GRAPH 6

Score	0.0	0.0	(1.0)	0.5	1.0
Fiscally Strong 1.5 - 3.0 / Fiscally Adequate 1.0 - 1.4 / Fiscally Needs Monitoring < 1.0	N/A	N/A	Fiscally Needs Monitoring	Fiscally Needs Monitoring	Fiscally Adequate

Working Capital - GRAPH 7

Net Working Capital	0	0	(2,078,778)	(167,407)	289,291
As % of Unrestricted Revenue	0.0%	0.0%	-25.1%	-1.6%	2.2%
Working Capital (Current) Ratio Score	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.8	1.3
Risk (Low ≥ 3.0 / Medium 1.4 - 2.9 / High < 1.4)	N/A	N/A	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Rating (Excellent ≥ 3.0 / Good 1.4 - 2.9 / Poor < 1.4)	N/A	N/A	Poor	Poor	Poor

Quick (Acid Test) Ratio

Score	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.7	1.3
Risk (Low ≥ 2.5 / Medium 1.0 - 2.4 / High < 1.0)	N/A	N/A	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM
Rating (Excellent ≥ 2.5 / Good 1.0 - 2.4 / Poor < 1.0)	N/A	N/A	Poor	Poor	Good

Debt to Asset Ratio - GRAPH 7

Score	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.8
Risk (Low < 0.50 / Medium 0.51 - .95 / High > 1.0)	N/A	N/A	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Rating (Excellent < 0.50 / Good 0.51 - .95 / Poor > 1.0)	N/A	N/A	Good	Good	Good

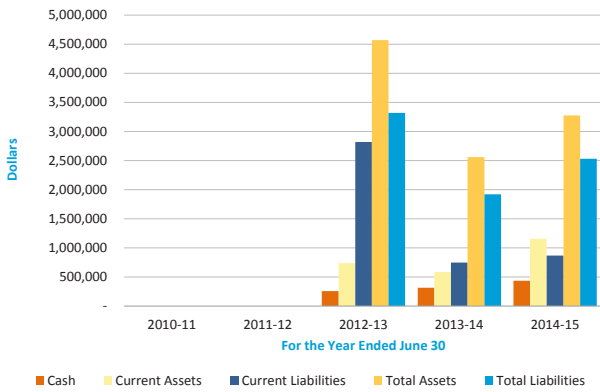
Months of Cash - GRAPH 8

Score	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.4
Risk (Low > 3 mo. / Medium 1 - 3 mo. / High < 1 mo.)	N/A	N/A	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Rating (Excellent > 3 mo. / Good 1 - 3 mo. / Poor < 1 mo.)	N/A	N/A	Poor	Poor	Poor

APPENDIX D: Fiscal Dashboard

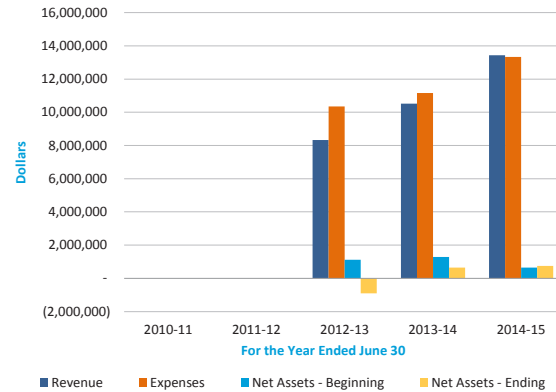
Brownsville Ascend Charter School

GRAPH 1 Cash, Assets and Liabilities



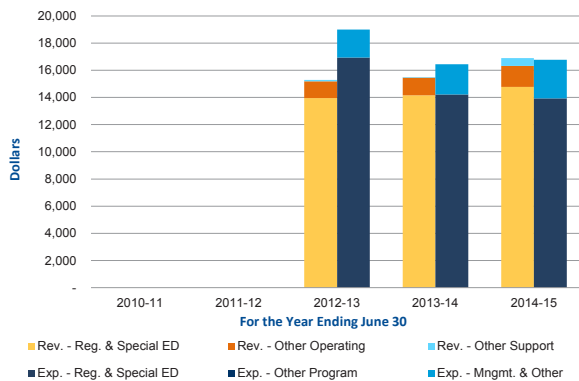
This chart illustrates the relationship between assets and liabilities and to what extent cash reserves makes up current assets. Ideally for each subset, subsets 2 thru 4, (i.e. current assets vs. current liabilities), the column on the left is taller than the immediate column on the right; and, generally speaking, the bigger that gap, the better.

GRAPH 2 Revenue, Expenses and Net Assets



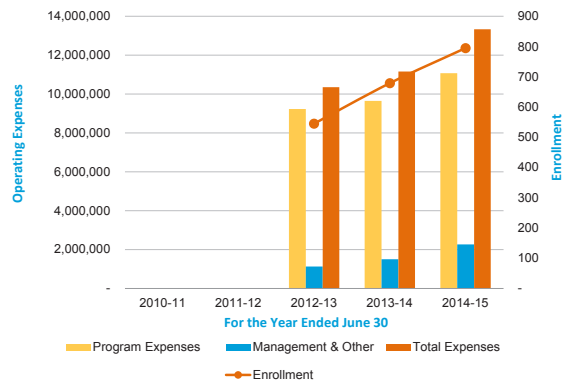
This chart illustrates total revenue and expenses each year and the relationship those subsets have on the increase/decrease of net assets on a year-to-year basis. Ideally subset 1, revenue, will be taller than subset 2, expenses, and as a result subset 3, net assets - beginning, will increase each year building a more fiscally viable school.

GRAPH 3 Revenue & Expenses Per Pupil



This chart illustrates the breakdown of revenue and expenses on a per pupil basis. Caution should be exercised in making school-by-school comparisons since schools serving different missions or student populations are likely to have substantially different educational cost bases. Comparisons with similar schools with similar dynamics are most valid.

GRAPH 4 Enrollment vs. Operating Expenses

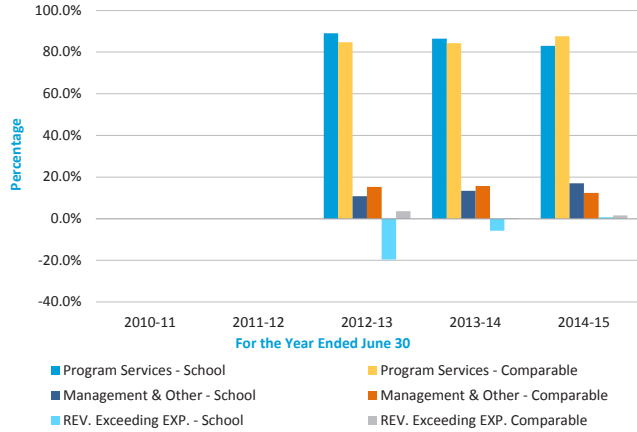


This chart illustrates to what extent the school's operating expenses have followed its student enrollment pattern. A baseline assumption that this data tests is that operating expenses increase with each additional student served. This chart also compares and contrasts growth trends of both, giving insight into what a reasonable expectation might be in terms of economies of scale.

Brownsville Ascend Charter School

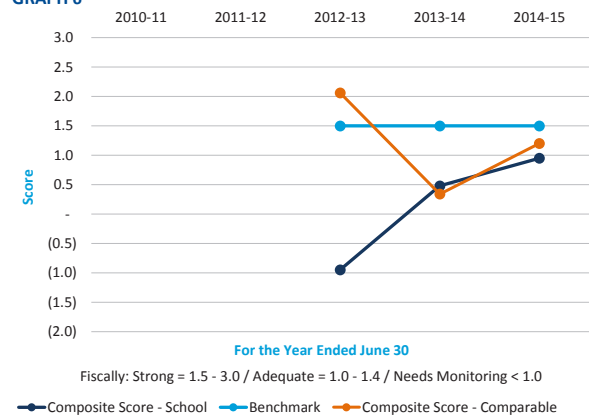
Comparable School, Region or Network: New York City & Long Island Schools (Excluding Closed Schools)

GRAPH 5 % Breakdown of Expenses



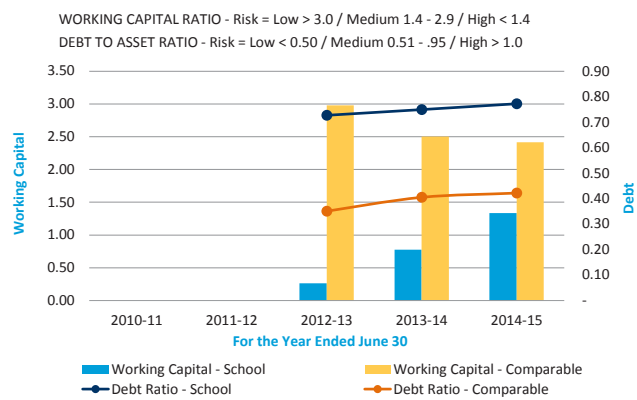
This chart illustrates the percentage expense breakdown between program services and management & others as well as the percentage of revenues exceeding expenses. Ideally the percentage expense for program services will far exceed that of the management & other expense. The percentage of revenues exceeding expenses should not be negative. Similar caution, as mentioned on GRAPH 3, should be used in comparing schools.

GRAPH 6 Composite Score



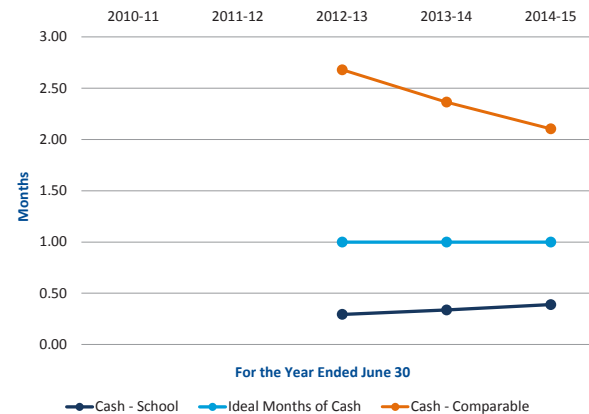
This chart illustrates a school's composite score based on the methodology developed by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) to determine whether private not-for-profit colleges and universities are financially strong enough to participate in federal loan programs. These scores can be valid for observing the fiscal trends of a particular school and used as a tool to compare the results of different schools.

GRAPH 7 Working Capital & Debt to Asset Ratios



This chart illustrates Working Capital and Debt to Asset Ratios. The Working Capital ratio indicates if a school has enough short-term assets to cover its immediate liabilities/short term debt. The Debt to Asset ratio indicates what proportion of debt a school has relative to its assets. The measure gives an idea to the leverage of the school along with the potential risks the school faces in terms of its debt-load.

GRAPH 8 Months of Cash



This chart illustrates how many months of cash the school has in reserves. This metric is to measure solvency – the school's ability to pay debts and claims as they come due. This gives some idea of how long a school could continue its ongoing operating costs without tapping into some other, non-cash form of financing in the event that revenues were to cease flowing to the school.

APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

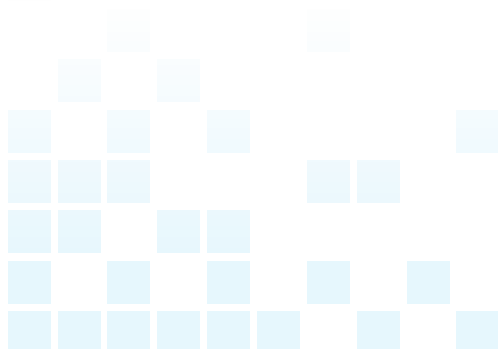
EDUCATION CORPORATION TIMELINE OF CHARTER RENEWAL

● School Opening ■ Initial Renewal Recommendation - Full Term ◆ Renewal by Original Authorizer



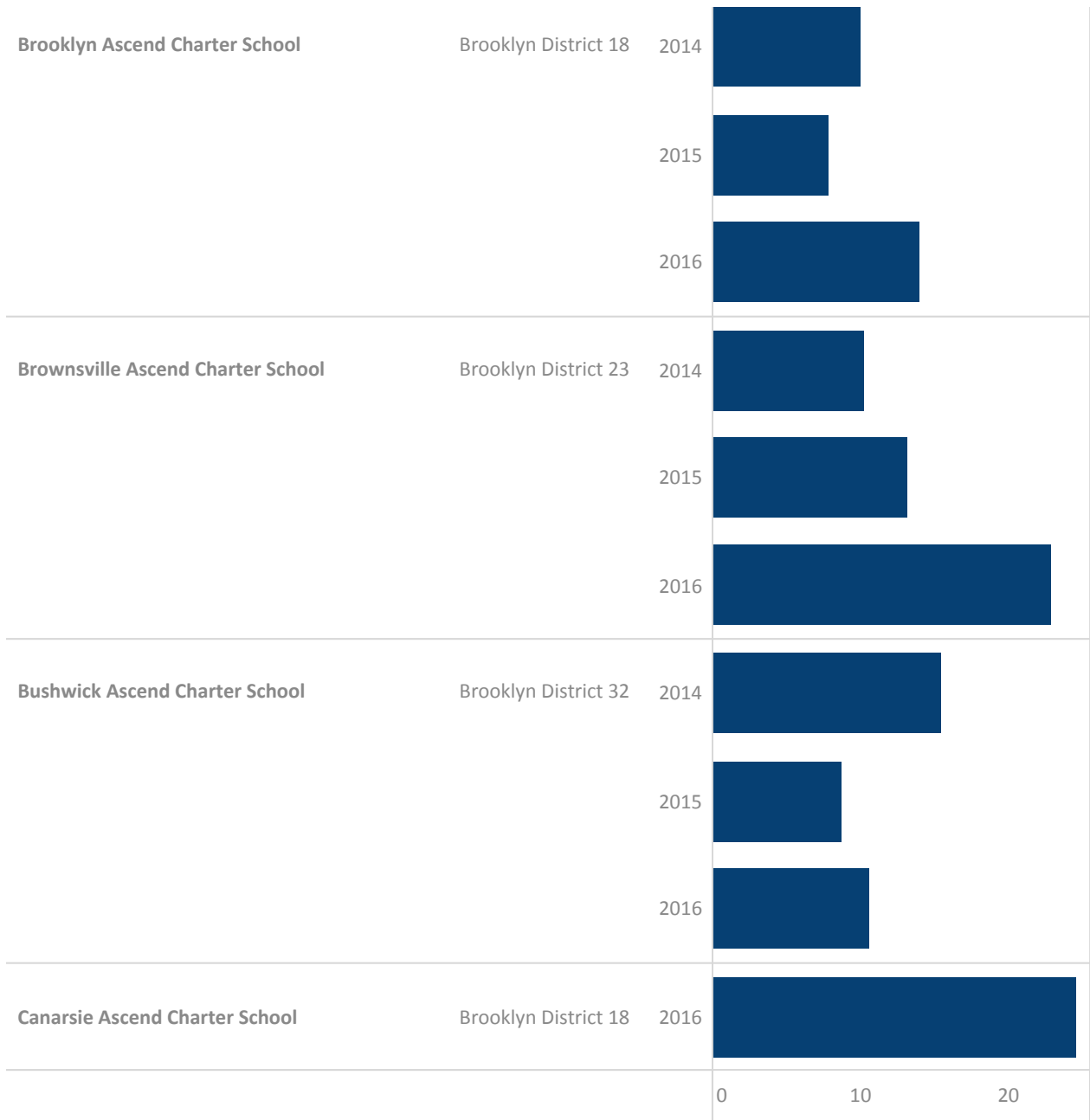
EDUCATION CORPORATION SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

School	Local District	Co-located?	Chartered Enrollment	Grade Span
Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	CSD 18	No	1269	K-10
Brownsville Ascend Charter School	CSD 23	No	1004	K-8
Bushwick Ascend Charter School	CSD 32	No	860	K-7
Canarsie Ascend Charter School	CSD 18	No	548	K-4
Central Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	CSD 22	No	436	K-3



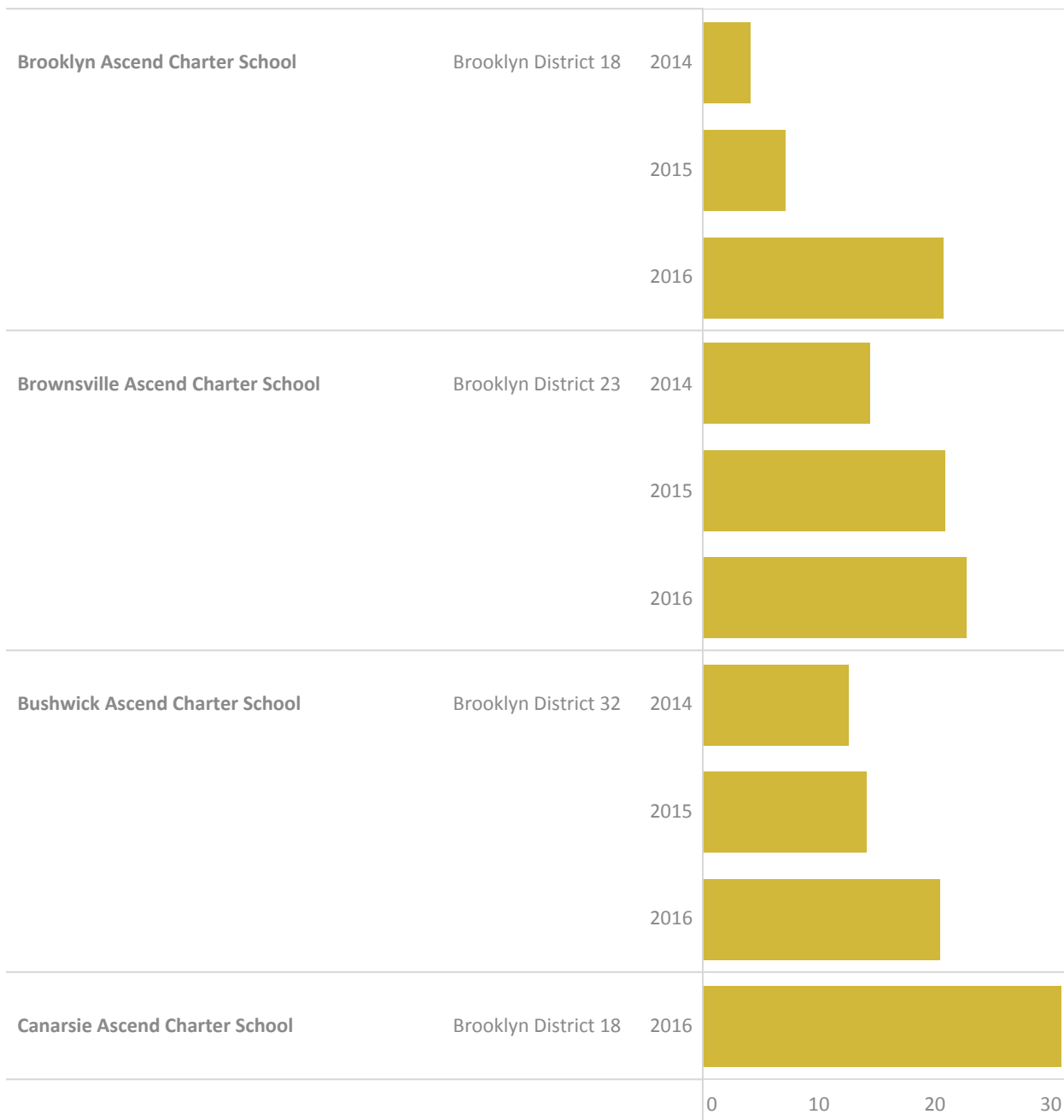
APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND DISTRICT SCORES: ELA

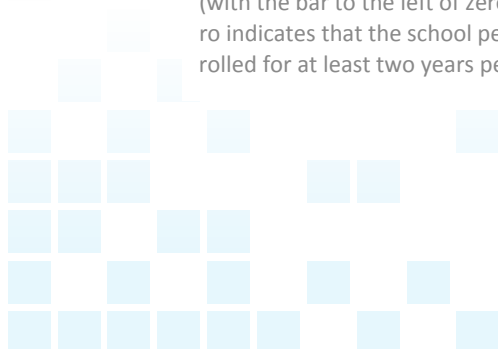


District Difference for each year broken down by school and district. These charts compare a school's performance to that of the district. Each bar represents the difference between the school's performance and the district's. A positive result (showing the bar to the right of zero) indicates the amount by which the school outscored the district. A negative result (with the bar to the left of zero) illustrates the amount by which the school performed lower than the district. A score of zero indicates that the school performed exactly even with the district. School scores reflect the achievement of students enrolled for at least two years per the schools' Accountability Plans.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND DISTRICT SCORES: MATH

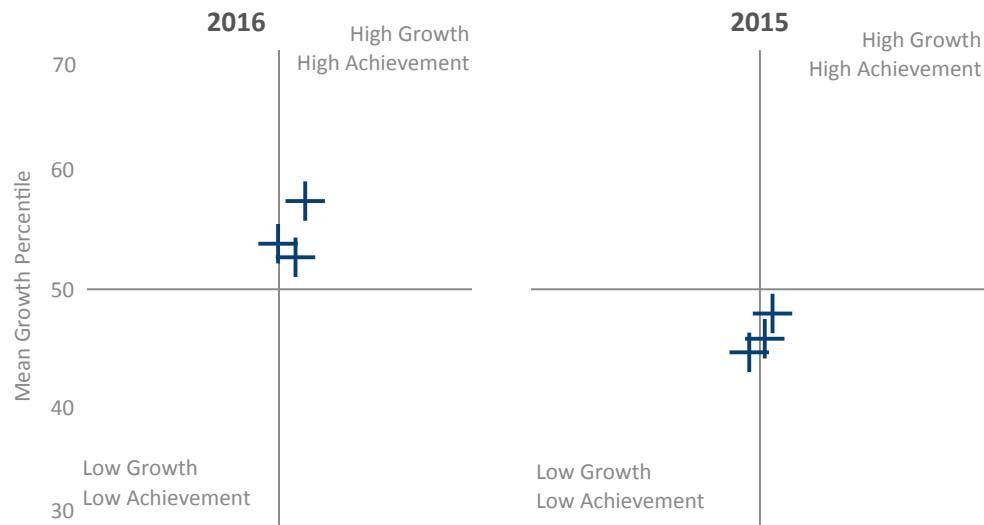


District Difference for each year broken down by school and district. These charts compare a school's performance to that of the district. Each bar represents the difference between the school's performance and the district's. A positive result (showing the bar to the right of zero) indicates the amount by which the school outscored the district. A negative result (with the bar to the left of zero) illustrates the amount by which the school performed lower than the district. A score of zero indicates that the school performed exactly even with the district. School scores reflect the achievement of students enrolled for at least two years per the schools' Accountability Plans.



APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

ELA GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT: 2012-13 THROUGH 2015-16

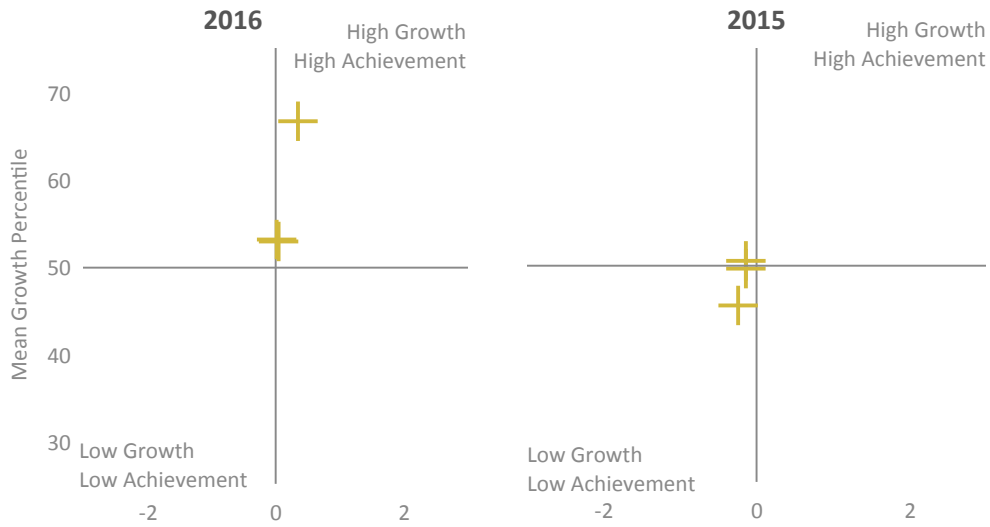


These charts compare a school's ability to grow student achievement with a school's absolute student performance. Schools located in the upper right hand quadrant of each chart show strong results in helping students make learning gains while at the same time helping students achieve strong absolute scores on state assessments. Schools in the lower right hand quadrant show strong absolute scores but lower growth. Because the student growth percentile uses the previous year's scale score as a baseline, it becomes more difficult for a school to maintain strong overall growth scores when students already post high absolute scores.

These charts are produced by comparing growth as measured by the state's student growth percentile to its overall achievement as measured by scale score standardized to the statewide grade level mean over each year for which data are available during the charter term. The growth axis (labeled Mean Growth Percentile) represents the statewide median growth score. The achievement axis (labeled Standardized Mean Scale Score) represents the statewide mean-centered achievement level for each grade served by each school.

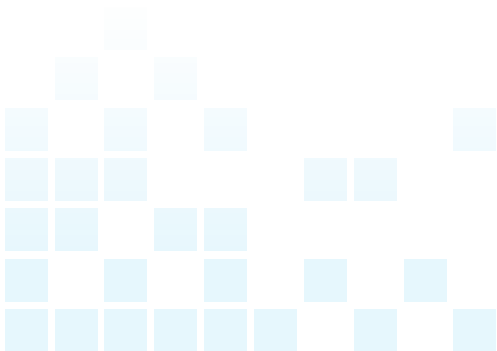


MATH GROWTH AND ACHEIVEMENT: 2012-13 THROUGH 2015-16



These charts compare a school’s ability to grow student achievement with a school’s absolute student performance. Schools located in the upper right hand quadrant of each chart show strong results in helping students make learning gains while at the same time helping students achieve strong absolute scores on state assessments. Schools in the lower right hand quadrant show strong absolute scores but lower growth. Because the student growth percentile uses the previous year’s scale score as a baseline, it becomes more difficult for a school to maintain strong overall growth scores when students already post high absolute scores.

These charts are produced by comparing growth as measured by the state’s student growth percentile to its overall achievement as measured by scale score standardized to the statewide grade level mean over each year for which data are available during the charter term. The growth axis (labeled Mean Growth Percentile) represents the statewide median growth score. The achievement axis (labeled Standardized Mean Scale Score) represents the statewide mean-centered achievement level for each grade served by each school.





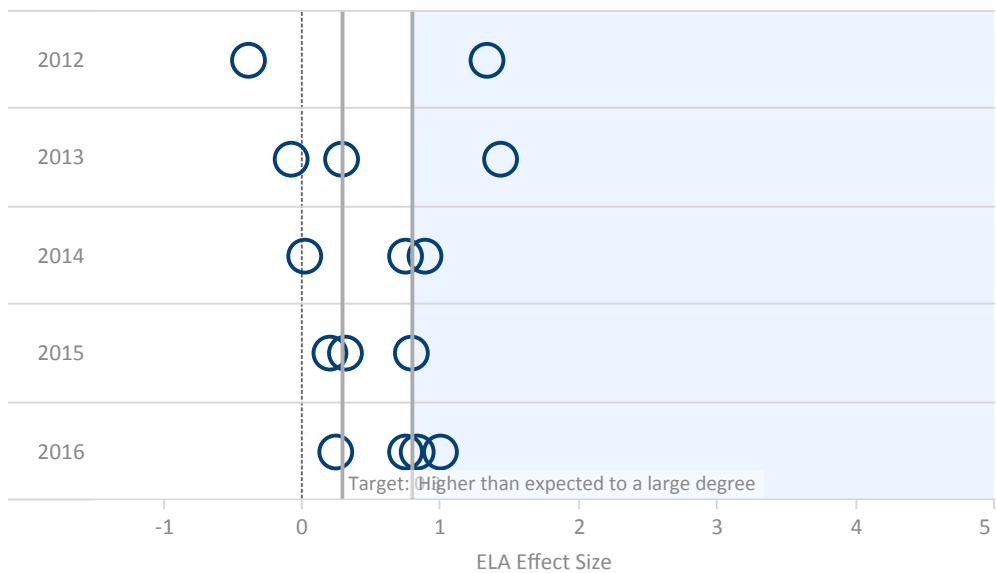
28

31

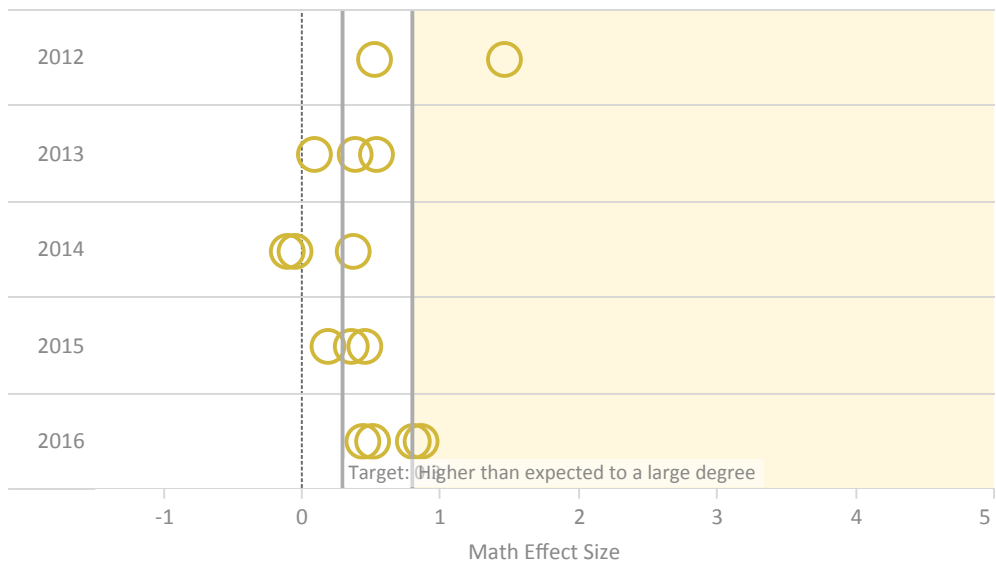
32

ELA AND MATH EFFECT SIZE DOT PLOTS: 2011-12 THROUGH 2015-16

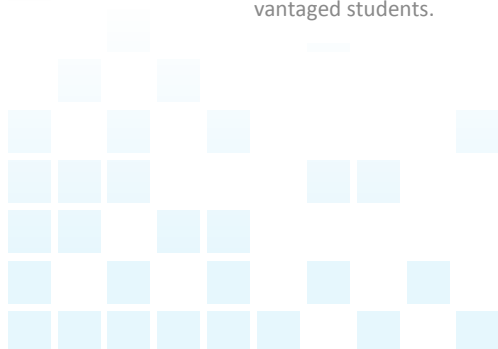
ELA Effect Size by Year and School



Math Effect Size by Year and School

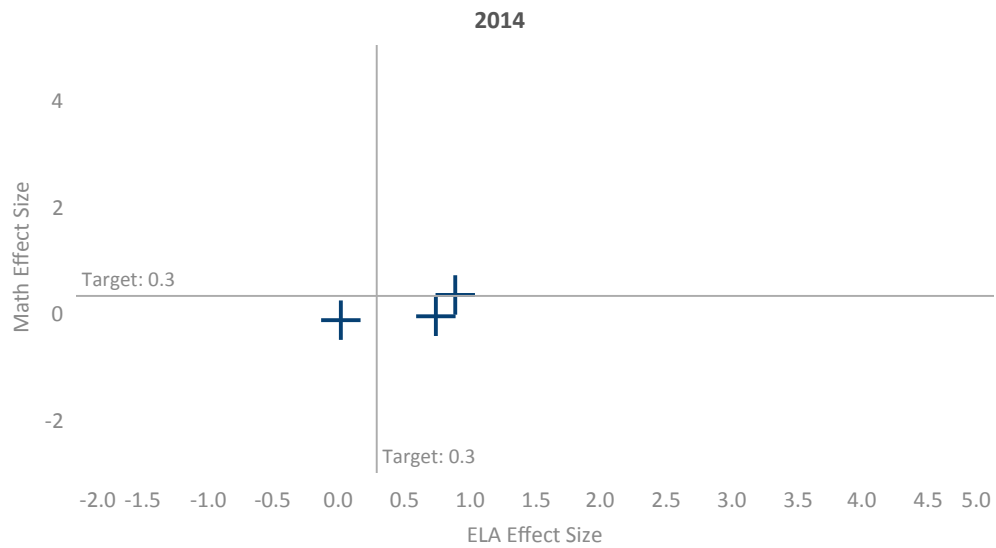
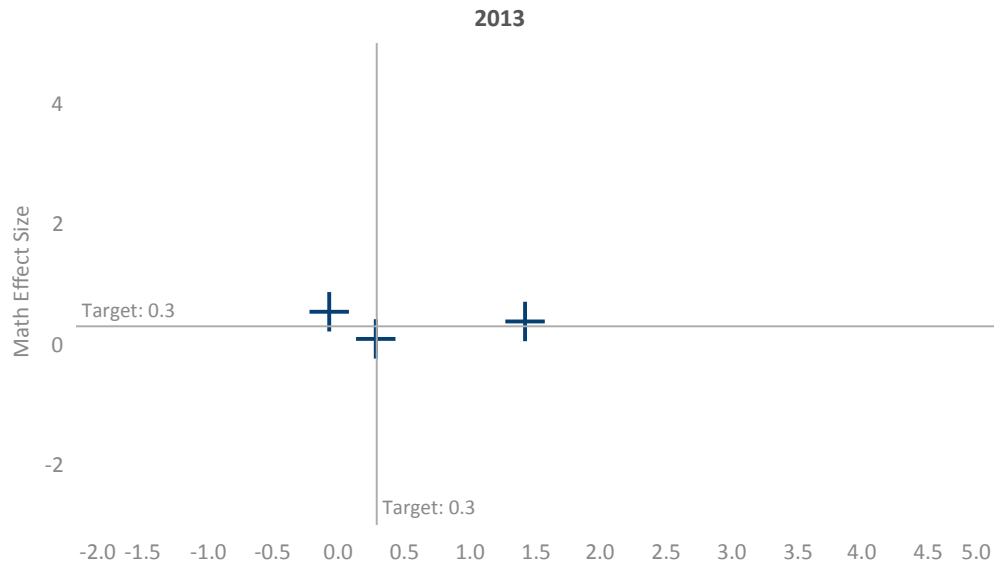


The charts illustrate the comparative Effect Size performance at each school across the ed corp by each year for which data are available throughout the charter term. Schools performing at or above 0.3 are meeting SUNY's benchmark for the measure. Schools performing at or above 0.8 are performing higher than expected to a large degree in comparison to schools enrolling similar levels of economically disadvantaged students.



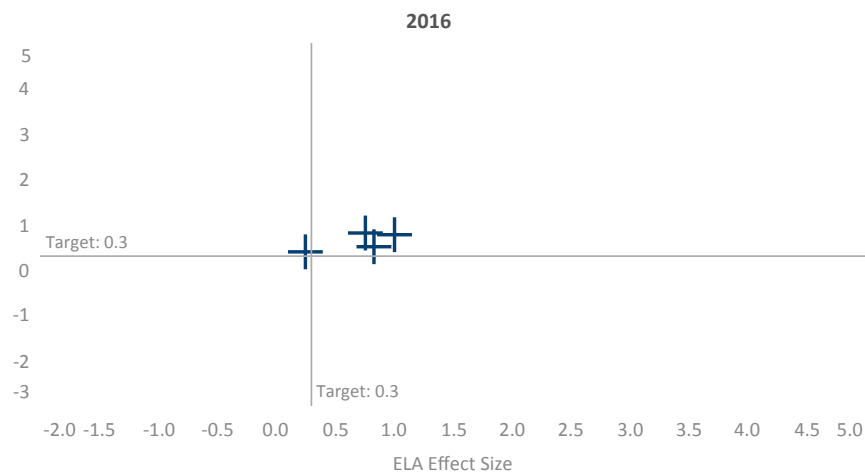
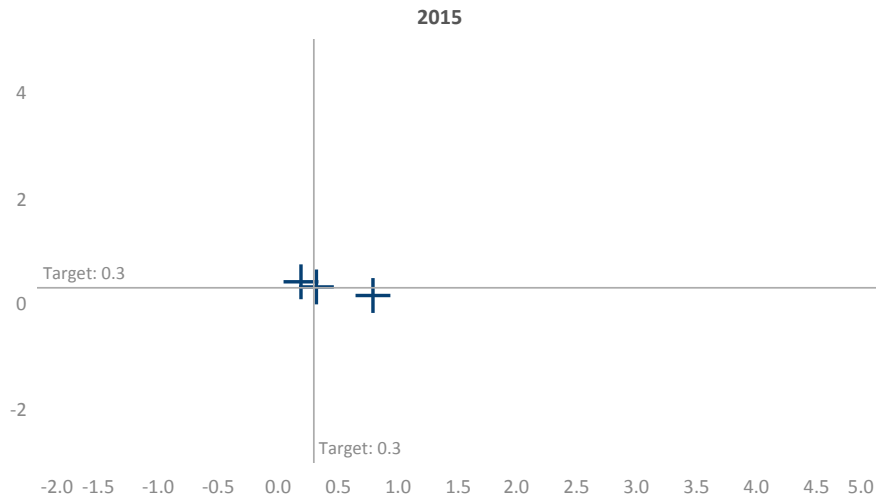
APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

ELA AND MATH EFFECT SIZE SCATTER PLOTS 2012-13 THROUGH 2013-14



The charts compare a school's ELA and math Effect Sizes over each year for which data are available during the charter term. An effect size measures school performance in comparison to other schools statewide enrolling students with similar proportions of economic disadvantage. Schools with an ELA or math effect size that is less than 0 performed lower than expected based on the economic disadvantage statistic. Schools posting an effect size greater than 0 but less than 0.3 perform about the same as the comparison schools. Schools with an ELA or math effect size greater than 0.3 (SUNY's performance target for the measure) outperformed similar schools statewide to a meaningful degree, while schools with effect sizes greater than 0.8 perform higher than expected to a large degree.

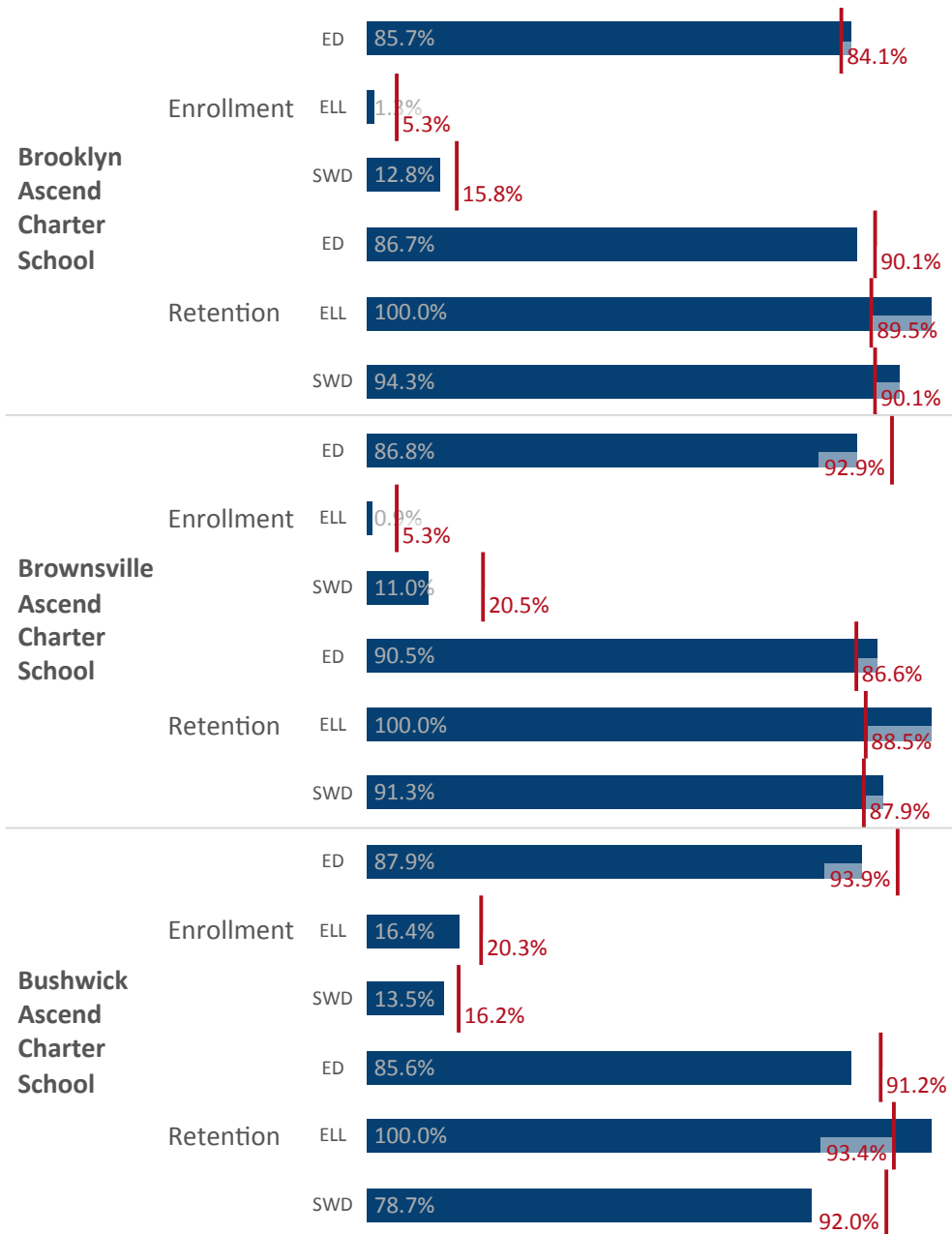
ELA AND MATH EFFECT SIZE SCATTER PLOTS 2014-15 THROUGH 2015-16



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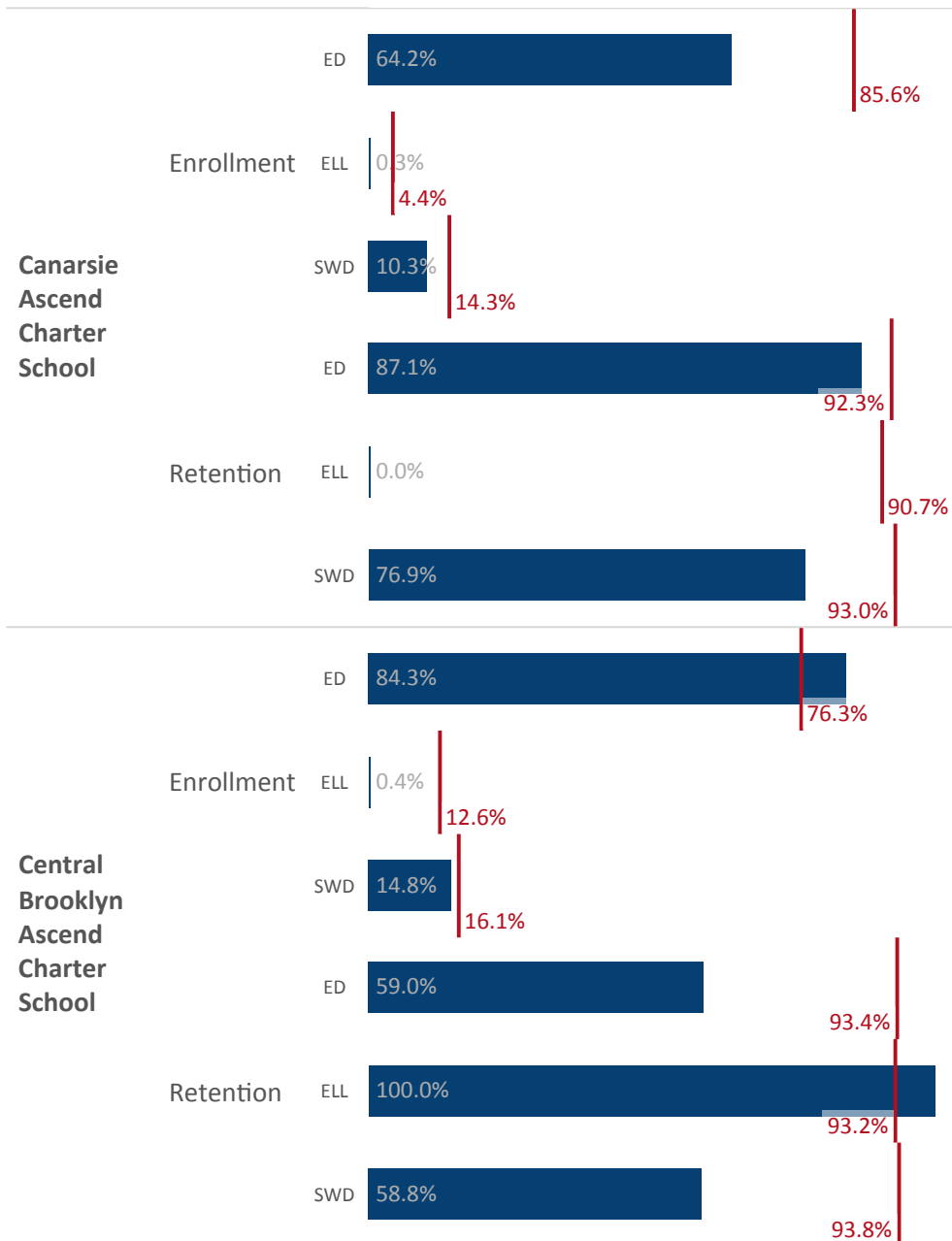
APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION TARGETS



The chart illustrates the **current enrollment and retention percentages** against the **enrollment and retention targets** for each operating school in the ed corp. As required by Education Law § 2851(4)(e), a school must include in its renewal application information regarding the efforts it has, and will, put in place to meet or exceed SUNY's enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, ELL, and FRPL students. This analysis is based on the 2015-16 enrollment and retention data supplied to the Institute by the network.

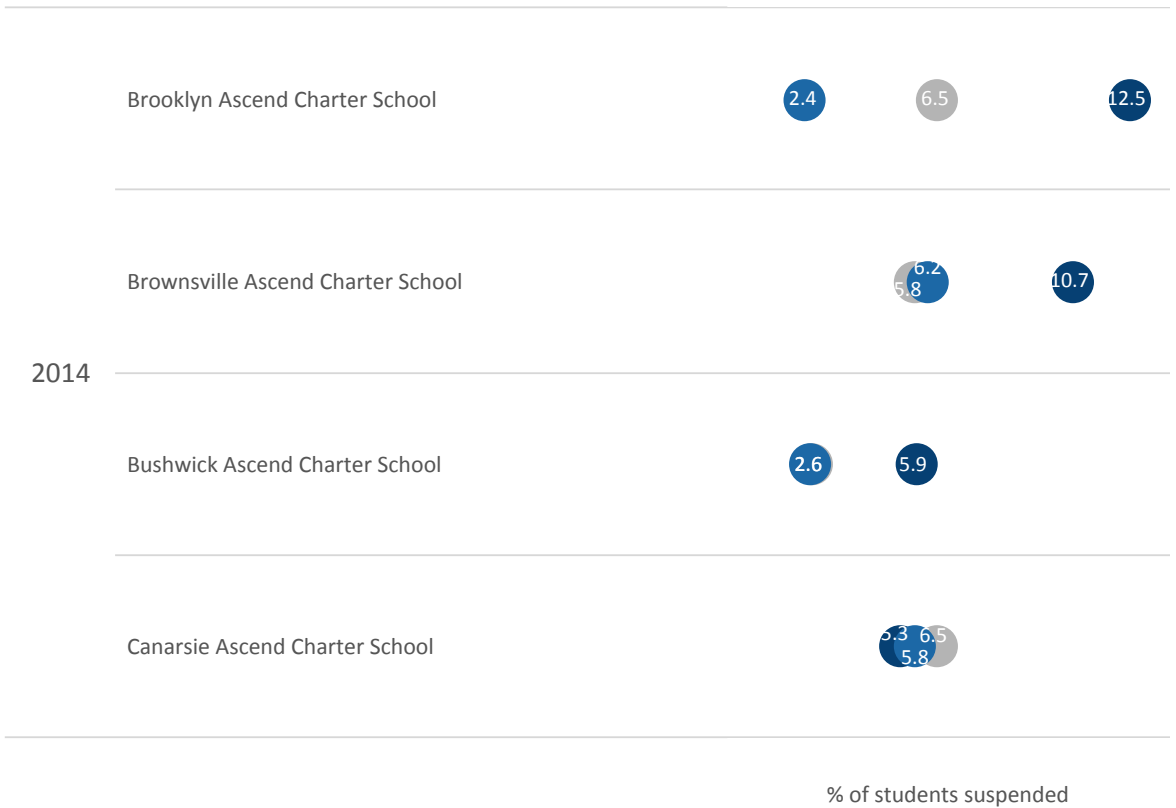
ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION TARGETS



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APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

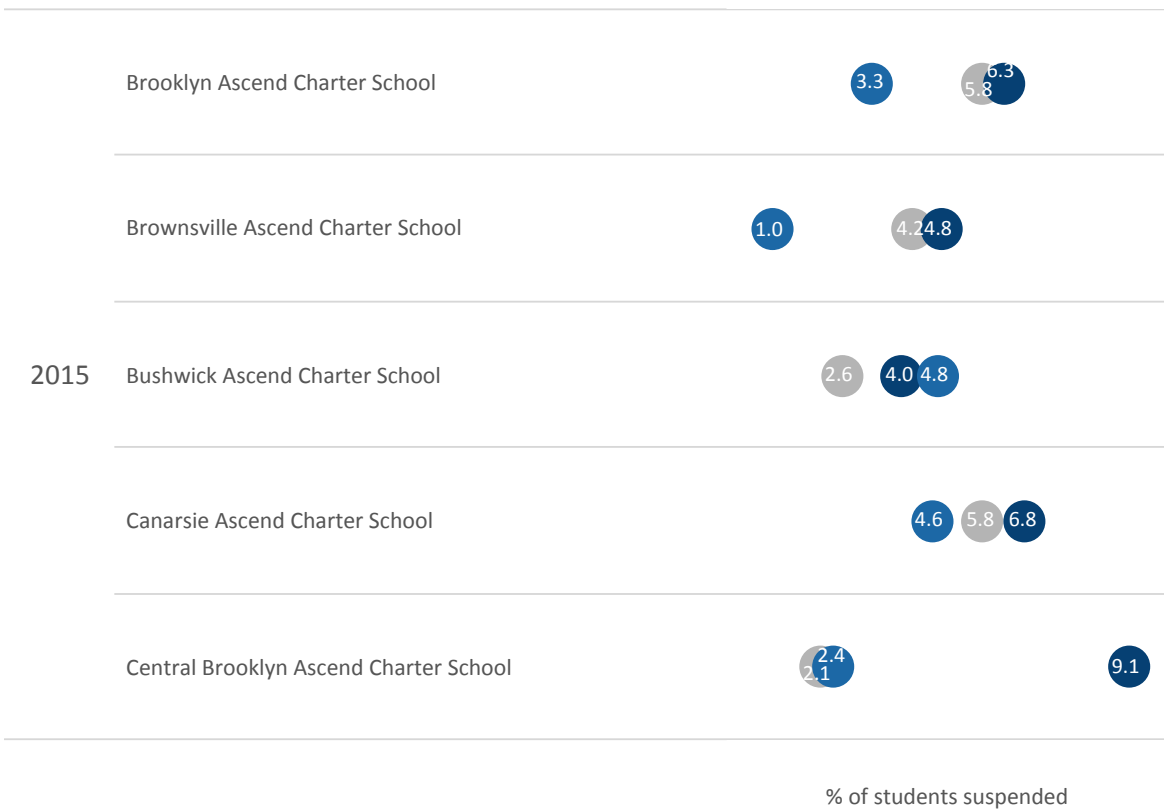
Suspensions: Ascend Charter Schools' out of school suspension rate, in school suspension rate, and the district overall suspension rate.



ALTHOUGH COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT (“CSD”) AND SCHOOL SUSPENSION RATES ARE PRESENTED ON THE SAME GRAPH, A DIRECT COMPARISON BETWEEN THE RATES IS NOT POSSIBLE BECAUSE AVAILABLE CSD DATA INCLUDES KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 12TH GRADES AND SCHOOL DATA INCLUDES ONLY THE GRADES SERVED BY THE SCHOOL. THE PERCENTAGE RATE SHOWN HERE IS CALCULATED USING THE METHOD EMPLOYED BY THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: THE TOTAL THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS RECEIVING AN OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION AT ANY TIME DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR IS DIVIDED BY THE TOTAL ENROLLMENT, THEN MULTIPLIED BY 100.

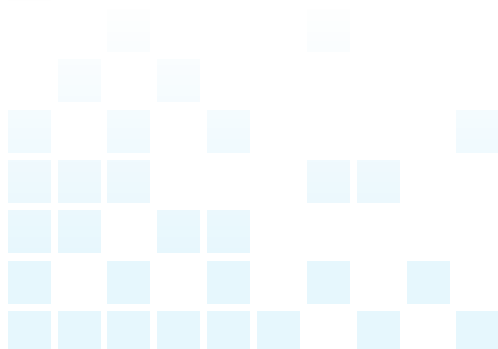
During the school year ending in 2014, Ascend Charter Schools schools expelled 0 students.

Suspensions: Ascend Charter Schools' out of school suspension rate, in school suspension rate, and the district overall suspension rate.



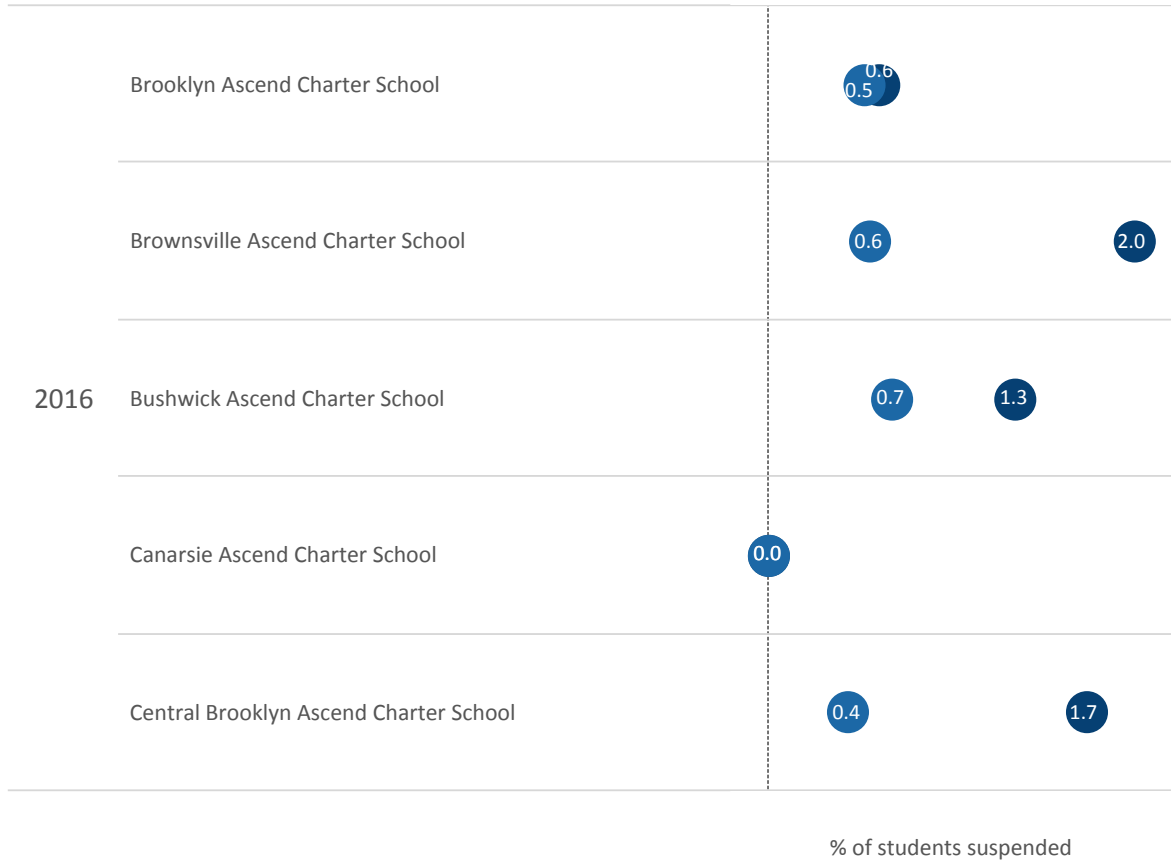
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During the school year ending in 2015, Ascend Charter Schools schools expelled 0 students.



APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

Suspensions: Ascend Charter Schools' out of school suspension rate, in school suspension rate, and the district overall suspension rate.



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During the school year ending in 2016, Ascend Charter Schools schools expelled 0 students.

PERSISTENCE IN ENROLLMENT



Persistence in enrollment illustrates the percentage of students not scheduled to age out of the schools who re-enroll from the previous year. The Institute derived the statistical information on enrollment persistence from its database. No comparative data from NYCDOE or NYSED is available to the Institute to provide either district wide or by CSD context. As such, the information presented is for information purposes but does not allow for comparative analysis.

