



THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS
INSTITUTE

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT
FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA
CHARTER SCHOOL*

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The State University of New York

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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

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/.

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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?

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/.

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.



RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

Short-Term Renewal The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School for a period of three years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten – 6th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal, with a projected total enrollment of 399 students.

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



have compiled a mixed or limited record of educational achievement in meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals, but have in place and in operation at the time of the renewal inspection visit (i) an academic program of sufficient strength and effectiveness, as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks,³ which is likely to result in the charter school's being able to meet or come close to meeting those goals with the additional time that renewal would permit, and (ii) a governing board and organizational structures both in the charter school and its education corporation with a demonstrated capacity to meet the charter school's academic Accountability Plan goals and to operate the charter school in an educationally and fiscally sound fashion; or



have compiled an overall record of meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals but, at the time of the renewal inspection visit, have in place an educational program that, as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, is inadequate in multiple material respects.⁴

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;

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

4. SUNY Renewal Policies (p. 12).

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,

3: 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

Enrollment and retention targets apply to all operating charter schools. Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School (“Finn Academy”) was approved on June 4, 2014 and the school has not previously applied for renewal. The Act requires charter schools 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. SUNY and the New York State Board of Regents (the “Board of Regents”) approved 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.

Finn Academy made progress throughout the charter term to grow its enrollment of students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged (including FRPL) students, and ELLs. Overall, the school’s enrollment of economically disadvantaged students grew from 26% in its first year of operation to 50% in 2018-19. The school met its enrollment target for ELLs and came very close to meeting its enrollment target for students with disabilities. The school also met its retention target for ELLs and students with disabilities. Although the school fell short of its enrollment and retention target for economically disadvantaged students, it is proactive in its efforts with this population. Finn Academy uses the following strategies to make good faith efforts toward meeting its targets:

- visiting local day centers and preschools to provide information to potential families about the range of services the school provides to students with disabilities and ELLs;
- building and strengthening partnerships with local agencies and organizations that serve families with economic and other needs;

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

- printing resources, school communications, and recruiting materials in languages other than English;
- maintaining strong relationships with parent and partner organizations to disseminate “word of mouth” information and recommendations about the school;
- participating in the community eligibility program to ensure that every eligible enrolled student receives free meals;
- outlining in recruitment materials all special education services provided by the school (including contracted related services);
- recruiting at early learning programs that serve students with special needs, and providing information to the staff to ensure they are aware of the school’s capacity to serve scholars with special education needs.;
- sending the coordinator of special education and intervention to student recruitment events to speak directly to families of students with disabilities;
- continuing to build partnerships with local agencies and organizations servicing families with special needs (i.e., The ARC of Chemung, Comprehensive Interdisciplinary Developmental Services – C.I.D.S., Pathways, AIM Independent Living Center) and distributing enrollment information to families; and,
- facilitating recruitment and enrollment sessions on-site at local special needs agencies.

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

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 not received district comments in response to the renewal application.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL

BACKGROUND

The SUNY Board of Trustees granted Finn Academy its original charter on June 4, 2014. The school opened its doors in the fall of 2015 initially serving 180 students in Kindergarten – 3rd grade. The school is authorized to serve 396 students in Kindergarten – 7th grade during the 2019-20 school year. If renewed, the school is requesting to serve 399 students in Kindergarten – 6th grade, removing its 7th grade to concentrate on building its Kindergarten – 6th programming. The school will focus on its Kindergarten – 6th program in the next charter term in order to develop the strength of the existing academic program and to align with the district’s enrollment patterns with a projected total enrollment of 399 students.

The current charter term expires on July 31, 2020. A subsequent charter term would enable the school to operate through July 31, 2023. The school is located in privately leased space located at 610 Lake Street, Elmira, NY in the Elmira City School District (the “district”).

The mission of Finn Academy will be:



At Finn Academy, a Kindergarten – 6th charter school, we promote an inclusive, rigorous and nurturing environment to best prepare our children for their future and to cultivate a community of scholars, leaders, and friends.

During Finn Academy’s second year of operation, the board terminated the founding head of school and promoted the Director of Academics and Culture, Primary to interim head of school. The unexpected disruption to leadership prompted the school to try different leadership structures and in October 2018, the fourth year of the initial charter term, the school hired a chief academic officer (“CAO”) to bring the school’s leadership to full capacity. The current three member leadership team consists of the chief operations officer (“COO”), who formerly served on the school’s founding board, the CAO, and the dean of scholars.

In addition to general start up challenges, the board dedicated much of its time to ensuring the school had a quality leadership team in place after the founding head of school’s departure, which took significant time away from restructuring the school’s academic program and systems. In the fourth year of its initial charter term, the school began to establish systems to support teaching and learning. With the implementation of new supports and coaching for teachers, the school has improved the quality of instruction and overall teaching and learning. Leaders and the board plan to continue implementing a strong Kindergarten – 6th grade program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During its initial charter term, Finn Academy posted a mixed record of academic success. However, the program in place at the time of renewal is of sufficient strength and effectiveness, as assessed by the Institute using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks, that the school will likely be able to meet or come close to meeting its future academic goals with the additional time that the renewal will provide.

- From 2015-16 to 2018-19, Finn Academy increased its absolute proficiency in English language arts (“ELA”) by 20 percentage points. The school also outperformed the local district in every year of its initial charter term in ELA. Finn Academy posted mean growth percentiles that exceeded the target in the final two years of the Accountability Period.
- Although the school posted low effect sizes that indicate lower performance compared to similar schools statewide, Finn Academy’s economically disadvantaged students doubled the performance of their district peers in ELA in 2018-19.
- In mathematics, Finn Academy exceeded its district comparison and growth targets in the final two years of its Accountability Period. From 2015-16 to 2018-19, the school more than doubled its proficiency rate, with 30% of its students scoring at or above proficiency in 2018-19. Over the same period, the school increased its growth score by 12 percentile points.
- The school posted high science scores over the majority of the term. With 93% of its 4th grade students scoring at or above proficiency, the school outperformed the absolute target by 18 points in 2018-19.

Finn Academy’s academic achievement and the strength of its educational program at the time of renewal demonstrate that the school’s performance has significantly improved. During the charter term, the board has strategically adjusted the school’s leadership structure and continues to revise its processes for evaluating the performance of the leadership team and its own ability to effectively oversee the day to day management of the school. Given the extra time that a short term renewal would allow and the school’s demonstrated programmatic improvements, Finn Academy will likely continue to grow the strength of its program and improve academic outcomes.

Based on the Institute’s review of the school’s performance as posted over the charter term; a review of the Application for Charter Renewal submitted by the school; a review of academic, organizational, governance and financial documentation; and a renewal visit to the school, the Institute finds that the school meets the required criteria for a short-term initial charter renewal.

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The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees grant an Initial Short-Term Renewal of three years to Finn Academy.

NOTEWORTHY

Since its inception, Finn Academy has partnered with the Chemung River Friends. Members of the Chemung River Friends visit the school throughout the year to make connections with classroom teachers on assigned Expeditionary Learning (“EL”) unit topics and provide environmental stewardship. Throughout the summer and the school year, Finn Academy students participate in field projects with Chemung River Friends staffers that align to the school’s curriculum and embody one of the school’s Key Design Elements. The school also partnered with Chemung River Friends to secure grant funds to install a camera on the Chemung River that is accessible to the public to study and learn about the migration pattern of the osprey.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE



IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

Finn Academy came close to meeting its key academic Accountability Plan goals in 2018-19. The school has improved its academic performance from the start of the charter term.

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 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 statewide 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?

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. For a school in an initial charter term, the Accountability Period covers the first four years the school provides instruction to students. In this renewal report, the Institute uses “charter term” and “Accountability Period” interchangeably.

Every SUNY authorized charter school has the opportunity to propose additional measures of success when crafting its Accountability Plan. Finn Academy did not include any additional measures of success in the Accountability Plan it adopted. In a subsequent charter term, if granted, Finn Academy proposes incorporating additional measures of student growth into both its ELA and mathematics goals.

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. Since 2009, the Institute has examined but consistently de-emphasized the two absolute measures under each goal in elementary and middle schools’ Accountability Plans because of changes to

7. Education Law § 2850(2)(f).

8. Education Law § 2854(1)(d).

the state's assessment system. The analysis of elementary and middle school performance continues to focus primarily on the two comparative measures and the growth measure while also considering the two required absolute measures and any additional evidence the school presents using additional measures identified in its Accountability Plan. The Institute identifies the required measures (absolute proficiency, absolute Measure of Interim Progress ("MIP") attainment⁹, comparison to local district, comparison to demographically similar schools, student growth, and high school graduation and college going rates) in the Performance Summaries appearing in Appendix B.

The Institute analyzes all measures under the school's ELA and mathematics goals (and high school graduation and college preparation goals for enrolling students in high school grades) 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 Finn Academy relative to all public schools statewide that serve the same grade levels and that enroll similar concentrations of economically disadvantaged students. 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 Finn Academy's demonstrated student learning compared to other schools' demonstrated student learning.

The Institute uses the state's growth percentile analysis as a measure of Finn Academy'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 grow student achievement at the same rate as schools serving similar students across the state 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.

The Accountability Plan also includes science and Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA") goals, which replaced the No Child Left Behind Act ("NCLB") goals.

9. During the 2017-18 school year, the state finalized and approved its Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA") plan. As such, the Institute established changes to required goals and measures in order to align with the new accountability system. The Institute now requires schools to report a Performance Index ("PI") with the target of meeting or exceeding the state's MIP.

**SUNY
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1A****HAS THE SCHOOL MET OR COME CLOSE TO MEETING
ITS ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS?**

Over its initial charter term, Finn Academy posted mixed results on its key academic Accountability Plan goals in ELA and mathematics. The school enrolls a relatively small percentage of economically disadvantaged students and posted low effect size results over the term in both subjects. However, Finn Academy demonstrated increased student growth and comparative achievement by the end of the term. The school nearly doubled its absolute proficiency rate in both subjects from 2015-16 to 2018-19. Finn also met its science and ESSA goals.

Finn Academy posted mixed results on the five measures included under its ELA Accountability Plan goal over the charter term. In 2016-17, the first year during which all the required measures included under its goal were applicable, the school's students enrolled for at least two years narrowly outperformed the district's students by three percentage points. The school increased its overall proficiency by 16 percentage points in 2017-18 and grew the gap between the district and school to 17 points. The school continued to outperform the district in 2018-19 when it improved its proficiency rate to 40%. In contrast, Finn Academy posted effect sizes that fell far below the target of 0.3 over its term. From 2015-16 through 2018-19, the school performed lower than expected in comparison to schools across the state enrolling similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students. After posting a growth score below the target in 2016-17, Finn Academy increased its mean growth percentile by 21 points in 2017-18, exceeding the target of 50 by eight points. In 2018-19, the school continued to exceed the target when it posted a mean growth score of 55.

In mathematics, Finn Academy posted similar performance to that of ELA during the charter term. In 2016-17, the school did not meet any of the targets included under its mathematics goal. The school's students enrolled for at least two years posted a proficiency rate that fell below the district performance and the absolute target of 75%. In comparison to schools across New York State with similar proportions of economically disadvantaged students, Finn Academy performed lower than expected. The school also posted its first mean growth percentile in mathematics below the target of 50. In 2017-18, the school increased its proficiency rate by 13 percentage points and outperformed the district by two points. Concomitant with its increased absolute proficiency, the school posted a mean growth percentile five points above the target of 50. The school continued to post a negative effect size, indicating lower than expected performance. In 2018-19, the school continued to outperform the district and exceed the growth target despite continuing to post a negative effect size.

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Finn Academy met its science goal over the majority of its charter term, increasing its absolute proficiency on the 4th grade science exam by 27 percentage points from 2016-17 to 2018-19. The school failed to meet its goal in 2016-17 when its performance fell below the absolute target of 75% and that of the district. In 2017-18 and 2018-19, the school outperformed the district and posted scores above the absolute target. Notably in 2018-19, 42% of the school's tested students scored at Level 4, indicating that they exceeded grade level expectations.

Finn Academy met its NCLB and ESSA goals, remaining in good standing under the state's accountability system.

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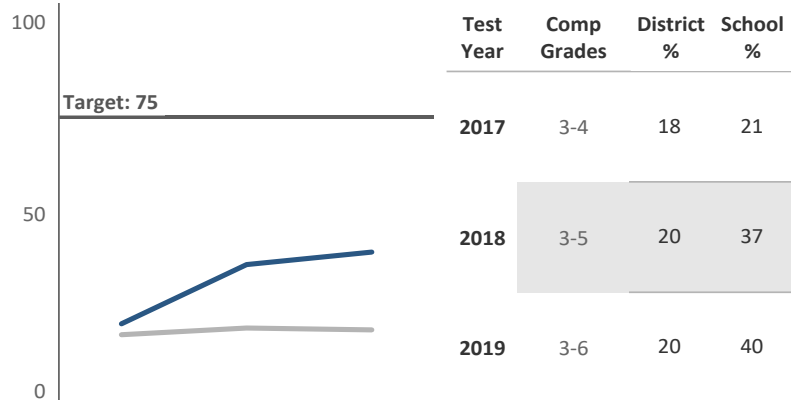
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

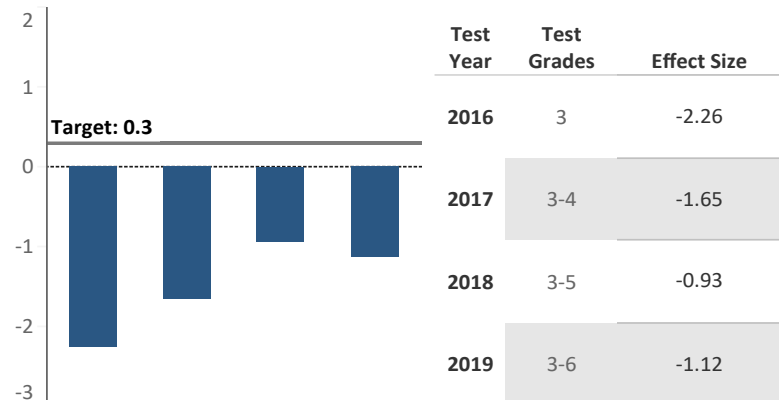
Comparative Measure:

District Comparison. Each year, the percentage of students at **the school** in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in ELA will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in **the district**.



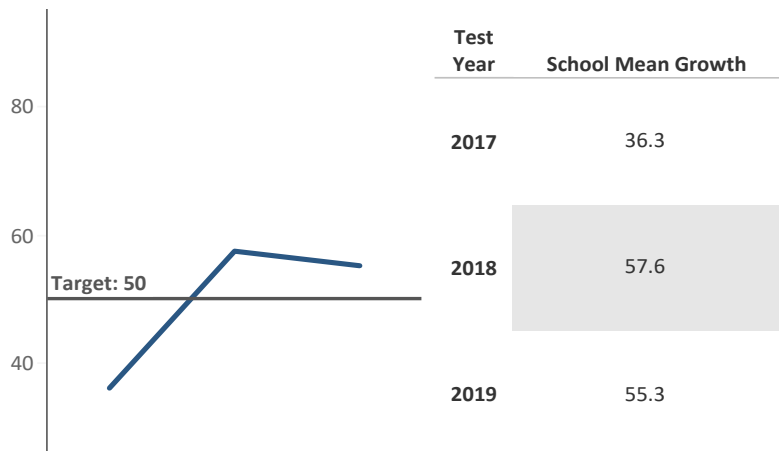
Comparative Measure:

Effect Size. Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance by an effect size of 0.3 or above in **ELA** 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 target of 50 in **ELA**.



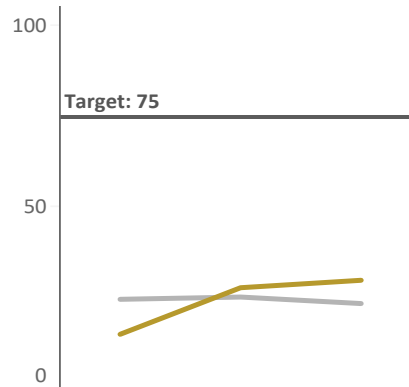
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ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL

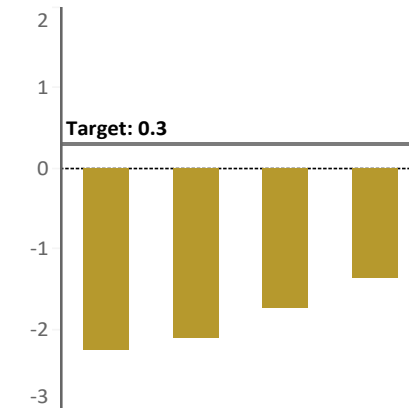
MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

Comparative Measure: District Comparison. Each year, the percentage of students at **the school** in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in Mathematics will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in **the district**.



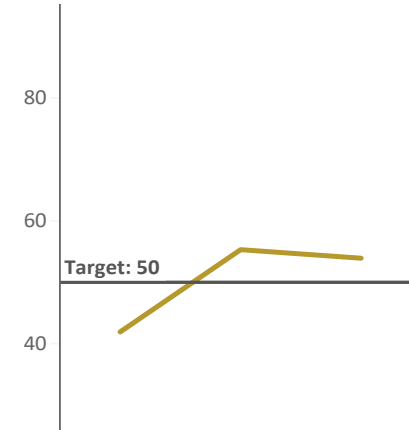
Test Year	Comp Grades	District %	School %
2017	3-4	25	15
2018	3-5	26	28
2019	3-6	24	30

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 **mathematics** according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.



Test Year	Test Grades	Effect Size
2016	3	-2.26
2017	3-4	-2.12
2018	3-5	-1.74
2019	3-6	-1.37

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 target of 50 in **mathematics**.



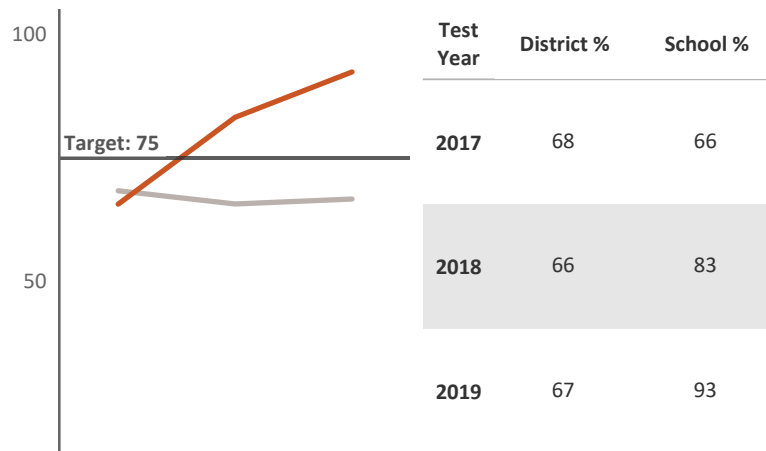
Test Year	School Mean Growth
2017	41.9
2018	55.3
2019	53.9

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL

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**.



SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE

	2017	2018	2019
Enrollment Receiving Mandated Academic Services	35	38	42
Tested on State Exam	16	22	25
School Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	0.0	0.0	0.0
District Percent Proficient	3.6	4.0	3.2
	2017	2018	2019
ELL Enrollment	2	2	1
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam	1	2	1
School Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress on NYSESLAT	s	s	s

The academic outcome data about the performance of students receiving special education services and ELLs above is not tied to separate goals in the school's formal Accountability Plan.

The NYSESLAT, the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, is a standardized state exam.

"Making Progress" is defined as moving up at least one level of proficiency. Student scores fall into five categories/proficiency levels: Entering; Emerging; Transitioning; Expanding; and, Commanding.

In order to comply with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act regulations on reporting education outcome data, the Institute does not report assessment results for groups containing five or fewer students and indicates this with an "s."

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1B**

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

Finn Academy is developing its systems for assessments and data analysis. School leaders collect, review, and use student data to drive instructional decisions. Progress leading up to the final year of its initial charter term supported improvements in the school's student achievement results.

- The school administers valid and reliable assessments aligned to the school's curriculum and state performance standards. Finn Academy uses the Northwest Evaluation Association MAP ("MAP"), the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System ("F&P"), Expeditionary Learning ("EL"), GOMath!, and commercial curricular assessments for teachers and leaders to collect specific information about students academic achievement and progress. The school administers the MAP and F&P three times per year in ELA to all students and uses the progress monitoring data to assess student growth and performance. Teachers also administer internally developed benchmark assessments and unit or chapter tests between the mid and end of year assessments, and adjust their instruction based on the outcomes.
- Finn Academy has a valid and reliable process for scoring and analyzing assessments. Grade level teams meet regularly to norm scoring processes based on the criteria provided with the ELA and mathematics curricula, discuss and analyze data, and develop effective instructional strategies. Teachers use rubrics to score assessments and use the resulting data to group students for small group instruction and reteaching. Teachers use a template to plan reteaching and progress monitoring for students struggling academically. Teachers also review assessments and pacing in each subject area as part of the grade level team meeting and record their notes in the meeting minutes. Coaches review and analyze data during weekly coaching meetings as part of the teacher learning plan and goal review.
- The school makes assessment data accessible to teachers, leaders, and board members. Since the 2017-18 school year, the school has established robust data trackers to store previous state test data, schoolwide assessment data, and items broken down by standards for teachers to analyze. Leaders and teachers access assessment data regularly during common planning time, grade level team and data meetings via a spreadsheet, and analyze and use this data regularly to improve instruction. Leaders organize data by student subgroups and share monthly updates on student data with the board. Although this system is new, it has the components necessary to assist the school in meeting its Accountability Plan goals for the 2019-20 school year.

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- The school is establishing systems to effectively use assessment results to meet students' needs. For 2019-20, grade level teams meet twice weekly with a planned agenda to review student data and analyze assessment results to group students for reteaching concepts and standards. The teams now include interventionists and special education teachers who collaborate to coordinate intervention supports for students. Leaders attend these weekly meetings, review meeting minutes and provide feedback to teachers on a shared drive to assist them in making adjustments to instruction for the subsequent week's review.
- School leaders have developed structures to use assessment results to evaluate teacher effectiveness and develop professional development ("PD") and coaching strategies in this school year, an improvement over the Institute's last visit in spring 2019. Leaders are just beginning to corroborate classroom observation data with assessment outcome data to better understand each teacher's growth areas, set smart goals and strategically monitor progress toward those goals, and evaluate teacher performance.
- Finn Academy regularly communicates student achievement results with families. The school schedules parent-teacher conferences three times per year to review student progress and academic achievement with families. Teachers regularly communicate with families and work with students and families to develop specific goals based on the current levels of achievement.

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

Finn Academy has a curriculum in place that supports teachers in their instructional planning. The school leverages a number of commercial curricular products to develop lessons aligned to state standards and content expectations. School leaders collaborate with teachers to review curriculum pacing guides and ensure that the curricular materials meet the learning needs of the students.

- The school's curriculum is aligned to the rigor of state standards. Finn Academy uses the GOMath! curriculum for Kindergarten – 7th grade mathematics, and EL for Kindergarten – 4th grade ELA and to support science and social studies instruction. In 5th – 7th grade, Finn Academy uses Reading Reconsidered¹⁰ for ELA, TCI History Alive for social studies, and the Full Option Science System (FOSS) for science. These curricula provide teachers with resources and tools to ensure students are prepared for state assessments and to meet the state standards.

10. Reading Reconsidered provides a set of approaches and curriculum resources to inform reading instruction. For more information please visit: <https://teachlikeachampion.com/books/reading-reconsidered/>.

- Teachers use time during summer professional development to prepare pacing guides for the year. These guides identify the length of each unit and allow teachers to plan and modify lessons in collaboration with other teachers. This method of planning allows teachers to focus on developing more targeted lessons. Teachers also use formative classroom-based assessments such as do now's and exit tickets as quick checks of student learning and determine whether to reteach a specific skill, modify differentiated learning groups, or spend more time on a particular content area.
- The commercial curricular resources and guides enable teachers to plan weekly lessons using an electronic platform. The EL and GOMath! curricula provide teachers with pacing guides and scope and sequence documents that they modify as needed to meet the needs of students. Based on these documents, teachers know what to teach and when to teach it.
- Teachers plan purposeful lessons and submit lesson plans weekly through the online portal for instructional leaders' review and feedback. This school year, the school implemented Planbook, a web based lesson planning system, that allows teachers to plan and submit their lessons online and collaborate with other teachers on modifications or increasing the rigor of lessons. Leaders provide comments and feedback to teachers using a template, as well as review standards covered in each lesson. Leaders also hold teachers accountable by reviewing and following up on agenda items in the minutes posted on a shared drive that is accessible to leaders and teachers. Although there is a clear process in place for lesson plan development and review and teachers are aware of this process, the Institute did not find clear evidence that instructional leaders consistently review and provide feedback on the lesson plans before teachers implement them.

SUNY
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BENCHMARK
1DIS HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION EVIDENT
THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL?

Finn Academy is developing systems and structures to support learning and teaching; however, high-quality instruction is not yet consistently evident at the school. While the school is highly focused on developing specific instructional priorities, the Institute did not find evidence that teachers consistently deliver purposeful lessons aligned to the curriculum. At the time of the Institute's visit, there was evidence to suggest that teachers do not challenge students in every lesson with higher order thinking questions and strategies. During the renewal visit, Institute team members conducted 24 classroom observations following a defined protocol used in all school renewal visits. The Institute focused fewer classroom observations in 7th grade due to scheduling availability.

NUMBER OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

		GRADE								Total
		K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CONTENT AREA	ELA	1	2	3	1	1		2		10
	Math	1	1	1	2	1	2			8
	Science					1	1	1	1	4
	Social Studies							1		1
	Specials	1								1
	Total	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	1	24

- Half of teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the standards and the school curriculum (12 of 24 lessons observed). In those lessons where learning objectives were not clear, objectives did not align with activities and assessments. For instance, some lessons contained activities for final checks for student understanding that produced no data useful for adjusting future instruction. In classrooms where this was done effectively, teachers aligned lesson content to developmentally appropriate objectives and students made connections between previous skills or knowledge and that lesson's objective.
- Most teachers regularly use techniques to check for student understanding (16 of 24 lessons observed). In most lessons, teachers checked for student understanding using visual checks such as thumbs up and down. In successful checks, teachers effectively used the data they collected in real time to appropriately move ahead in the lesson

or to circle back to address students' misconceptions. However, some lessons did not include opportunities for these crucial checks for understanding leaving teachers unable to modify or adjust their instruction in the moment in order to meet the needs of the students.

- As part of Finn Academy's ongoing improvement and development, leaders recognize a need to improve opportunities during lessons for teachers to develop students' higher order thinking and problem solving skills (9 of 24 lessons observed). In lessons that demonstrated student engagement in problem solving, teachers asked higher order thinking questions and required students to explain their thinking or justify their responses with evidence. In lessons where few students engaged in higher order thinking, teachers missed opportunities for students to extend their thinking through student led discussions, or to make connections relevant to everyday lived experiences.
- Finn Academy teachers effectively manage classrooms and maximize learning time with clear lesson focus and expectations for students (22 out of 24 lessons observed). Teachers prepare lesson materials in advance allowing them to move students quickly through lesson activities. The school's learning culture across classrooms supports clear routines and student engagement during lessons. Teachers are able to successfully redirect students if they exhibit off task behavior and apply the school's new cultural expectations and consequences consistently across classrooms.

DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE STRONG INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP?

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1E

In its fifth year of operation, Finn Academy has made investments in building its capacity through the support of external consultants. The leadership team is working on consistently building its capacity and that of the teaching staff to effectively align all instructional practices to longer term schoolwide strategic priorities. For 2019-20, the board is examining the structure of the leadership team to ensure it develops the capacity to effectively support the delivery of the academic program and demonstrate the potential to improve teaching and learning.

- This school year, Finn Academy's leaders establish an environment of high expectations for student achievement and teacher practice. Teachers and instructional leaders identify opportunities for higher order thinking and checks for understanding as high priority instructional strategies, and work strategically with coaches to ensure these are implemented across classrooms. Leaders and teachers articulate these priorities consistently across all levels of the school.

- Finn has the opportunity in a future charter term to increase the instructional supports provided to teachers to assist them in building and consistently delivering high quality instruction across all content areas. Leaders will benefit from focusing time, resources and talent toward the intellectual preparation necessary for teachers to plan for and practice delivery of high level instruction. In the current leadership configuration, the instructional leader's time to assist teachers in the planning, delivery, and review of instruction competes with other responsibilities and may indicate the need for additional positions to ensure there is capacity and dedicated time to focus solely supporting teachers in building their instructional skills. The current plan for weekly coaching meetings wherein coaches provide feedback on lesson plans and instructional strategies are not occurring with consistency and fidelity. The CAO rightly identifies the need to observe and coach in classrooms more often and has prioritized a weekly goal to ensure teachers receive the feedback needed to improve instruction. The board might be well served to ensure it receives data, information and feedback on the successful use of the coaching meetings on a consistent basis.
- At the time of the Institute's visit, it is not clear that the instructional leadership at Finn Academy is adequately supporting the development of the teaching staff. The CAO remains the primary leader of the school's academic program. The dean of students whose primary focus is discipline and school culture, and two additional coaches also support the CAO with coaching responsibilities. The CAO coaches multiple grades, while the other coaches take on similar heavy loads. Although the description of each leadership role is distinct and clear, in practice, responsibilities overlap among the three leaders, particularly when providing instructional coaching to teachers. Leaders are aware that the existing structure may not be sufficient to support the coaching and other responsibilities, and are reviewing the current structure to better delineate these defined roles and alignment of activities on the ground.
- In its fifth year of operation, Finn Academy is developing a sustained and systemic coaching model to ensure effective coaching and improve instructional effectiveness. The CAO coaches 3rd – 7th grade and STEM teachers; the dean of students provides coaching to Kindergarten – 1st grade; and the special education and intervention coordinator and an intervention teacher provide coaching to the special education and intervention teachers. Given the significant number of teachers new to the teaching profession, coaches new to the coaching role, and the implementation of multiple new systems, leaders indicate that scheduled coaching meetings need to be consistent and aligned more consistently to the coaching plan overview, so that leaders are able to monitor and ensure the progress of effective coaching and development for instructional staff.

- Compared to the spring evaluation visit, leaders have now implemented an agenda system for weekly grade team meetings to provide oversight and shape the agenda to allow teachers across grade levels and content areas to meet to plan and improve curriculum and instruction. The CAO attends these meetings on a weekly basis and uses a template to provide feedback to teachers. Leaders also hold teachers accountable by reviewing and following up on agenda items in the minutes posted on a shared drive that is accessible to leaders and teachers. This year, the school implemented Planbook, a web based lesson planning system, that allows teachers to plan and submit their lessons online and collaborate with other teachers on modifications or increasing the rigor of lessons. Despite the implementation of this system, leaders report that they have not been able to consistently review lesson plans weekly due to the challenges of implementing a new system, the time it takes to review each lesson plan, and the learning curve associated with mastering the system. As a result, leaders have included lesson plan checks on the coaching meeting agenda to monitor this area more closely.
- For 2019-20, school leaders implement a professional development framework that closely aligns with the competencies and skills of teachers. The school worked with an external consultant to develop a yearlong professional development plan focusing on instructional and behavioral strategies, and collaborative planning time for teachers to do long-term planning, and outlines how each area will be addressed. The school has a weeklong professional development session in August for new and returning staff, in addition to weekly Wednesday sessions for all staff. This year, the school set specific priority focus areas around improving checks for understanding and higher order thinking and this is included in the weekly professional development session agenda. Teachers share that professional development is more valuable this year because it focuses on priorities that require schoolwide focus, and aligns to the new coaching structure. This school year professional development activities also align to classroom practice. As part of the yearlong professional development plan, teachers received a higher order thinking rubric and set goals for checks for understanding and higher order thinking based on this rubric.
- School leaders align professional development activities with classroom practice. Finn Academy's 2019-20 professional development plan is aligned with their four priority areas: vision of excellence, data-driven instruction and content development, instructional strategy development, and principles of classroom culture: classroom management, which directly influence classroom planning and activities. For example, the school's coaching spot check focuses on evidence of checks for understanding and higher order thinking questions based on a previous professional development session. The school also delivered a professional development session at the start of the school year on inclusion and at-risk teaching strategies to address the needs of their at-risk population.

- For 2019-20, the school continues to use the Danielson framework to conduct teacher evaluations and have communicated schoolwide expectations for all staff members to have at least two formal evaluations with a pre and post meeting. At the time of the Institute visit, leaders shared that they plan to complete the first round of evaluations by the end of November. Teachers report that their first formal observation would take place in early November by their assigned coaches.
- In its fifth year of operation, Finn Academy holds teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement. Teachers are aware of schoolwide student achievement goals and set yearlong benchmarks as part of their development goals. With the recent implementation of observation, feedback, and coaching systems, leaders are increasingly holding teachers accountable for set priorities and goals, and anticipate significant improvement in teaching and learning, and student achievement.

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

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 1F

Finn Academy is developing the capacity to meet the educational needs of at-risk students. In its fifth year of operation, the school is implementing several new structures for identifying and supporting at-risk students including students struggling academically, students with disabilities, and ELLs. Given that no students with disabilities reached proficiency on state assessments during the school's charter term, the school has the opportunity to more effectively oversee the implementation and coordination of interventions across classes and grade levels in order to ensure at-risk students meet grade level standards.

- Finn Academy uses clear procedures for identifying at-risk students. The school identifies students struggling academically based on interim assessment scores, phonics and reading comprehension screeners, and performance on curriculum-based assessments. Within the school's response to intervention ("RTI") process, students whose reading scores are one or more grade levels behind receive academic interventions according to their level of need. If after two six-week RTI cycles students have not shown appropriate growth, the RTI team, which includes the CAO, director of special education, literacy specialists, general education teachers, special education teachers, and parents, meets to determine if referral to the district Committee on Special Education ("CSE") for formal evaluation for special education services is necessary. The school uses the Home Language Identification Survey to identify families who speak languages other than English, then, for eligible students, administers the New York State English Identification Test for English Language Learners ("NYSITELL").

- The school has appropriate intervention programs to meet the needs of at-risk students but has the opportunity to oversee and coordinate more effectively the efficacy of these interventions across classrooms and grade levels. While teachers implement a variety of interventions to support at-risk students, the performance of students with disabilities on state assessments indicates that more rigorous oversight of the effectiveness of interventions is necessary. Literacy specialists provide pullout reading support to students struggling academically using a variety of curriculum-based and online resources, and at the time of the Institute’s visit were in the process of transitioning some supports to general education teachers by modeling effective guided reading practices with the goal of improving Tier 1 instruction in classrooms. Special education teachers provide academic services in accordance with student individualized education programs (“IEPs”), which include push-in supports and resource room. The school coordinates with the district to provide related services such as speech and language and occupational therapy as mandated by student IEPs. The school counselor also provides support to students as needed and as indicated by student IEPs. One of the school’s literacy specialists provides language acquisition support to the school’s two ELLs; the literacy specialist pushes into ELLs’ ELA classes for 30 minutes daily to provide assistance with classroom activities.
- General education teachers, special education teachers, and literacy specialists use some curriculum-based strategies to support students within the EL portion of the school’s academic program. However, the school has the opportunity to implement more effective strategies within other components of the academic program. General education teachers use prompts and suggested accommodations within the EL curriculum such as graphic organizers to support students in mastering content area standards.
- In its fifth year of operation, Finn Academy has developed structures to monitor the progress and success of at-risk students, which at the time of the Institute’s visit were in the early stages of implementation. Teachers set specific goals for students struggling academically based on their areas of growth at the beginning of each RTI cycle and monitor student progress toward their goals over the course of six weeks. Literacy specialists monitor students using phonics, reading comprehension, and sight word screeners every month or every other week depending on individual student’s level of need. Special education teachers use a variety of progress monitoring methods to track the progress of students toward meeting IEP goals including classroom observations and daily note-taking. Every 10 weeks, special education teachers enter student growth data into an online system provided by the district, which enables teachers to see student progress over time and share it with school leaders. Teachers are aware of the progress of students struggling academically and students with disabilities toward meeting their goals.

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- The school provides training and professional development to identify at-risk students and help teachers meet student needs. The school provided professional development specific to supporting at-risk students during its weeklong summer training prior to the start of the school year. At the time of the Institute's visit, teachers had also recently participated in after school professional development on supporting students in an inclusion setting. Throughout the school year literacy specialists and special education teachers provide ongoing professional development on topics such as utilizing running records. Literacy specialists also support teachers in implementing effective guided reading groups by pushing into classrooms and modeling how to group students and facilitate student groups.
- The school provides opportunities for coordination between general education teachers, literacy specialists, and special education teachers. Special education teachers have weekly planning meetings with general education teachers during which they discuss the progress of students with disabilities and teaching plans for the upcoming week. Special education teachers also use this time to model classroom accommodations for general education teachers. Special education teachers are likewise in regular communication with the school counselor.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE



IS THE SCHOOL AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

At the time of renewal, Finn Academy is achieving its mission and is faithful to its key design elements. School leaders have improved the school’s curriculum and instruction in mathematics and science during the initial charter term. Finn Academy’s partnerships with the Chemung River Friends and its dedicated space for a STEM lab and a maker space embody its STEM focus and community connections key design elements. The school’s instructional, operational, and cultural leaders have established a teacher professional development program that aligns to the school’s stated priorities and mission.

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

Finn Academy 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.

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 Finn Academy’s 2018-19 family survey. Finn Academy administers a family survey each year to compile data about school culture, instruction, and systems for improvement. This year, 53% of families who received the survey responded. The majority of survey responses (94%) indicate high satisfaction with the school. The response rate is high enough to be useful in framing the results as representative of the school community.

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 2A

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 2B

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. The 18 family members in attendance expressed a high level of satisfaction with effective and responsive school leadership, strong family and community involvement, and trust level among parents and school staff. Parents appreciate that leaders and teachers establish a welcoming culture that values high academic expectations while preparing students to be good citizens. Parents shared that they would like to see the development of a computer lab and more technology in use at the school, as well as more options for students like an athletics program so more students choose to stay at the school.

Persistence in Enrollment. An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2018-19, 86% of Finn Academy 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 NYSED is available to the Institute to provide either district or statewide context.

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

SUNY RENEWAL BENCHMARK 20

This year, Finn Academy implemented strategic changes in order to continue strengthening its academic program and cultural expectations. The school retained its triad leadership model and its leadership personnel although it experienced high staff turnover. The school made investments in building its capacity through external consulting. The Institute found evidence for some effects of that coaching are already observable in lessons on the ground.

- Last year, Finn implemented a revised leadership model that included a CAO, a COO, and a dean of students. This year, the school retained the same leadership structure and retained the personnel in each position. Even with its consistent approach this year, the school continues to thoughtfully monitor the efficacy of the leadership structure. Although the description of each leadership role is distinct and clear, in practice, responsibilities overlap among the three leaders, particularly when providing instructional coaching to teachers. Finn Academy's leaders developed and clearly articulated procedures and practices for analyzing assessment and social and emotional data this year. As a result, teachers report that the school has clearer systems for identifying students who require extra academic support and extra social and emotional support.

- Teachers, school leaders, and the board at Finn Academy describe a clear organizational structure with distinct lines of accountability. In practice, the school's co-equal leadership arrangement between the dean of students, the COO, and the CAO lacks a focused, strategic approach to academic coaching for teachers. Notwithstanding, teachers are clear about who provides academic coaching to them. Teachers also consistently report which staff members support them in operational areas and in supporting students with disabilities.
- This year, the dean of students implemented clearer structures around cultural expectations for students. In the lower school grades, classrooms display charts that include positive and negative consequence charts. Both sets of consequences escalate with the frequency and severity of both pro-social and undesired behaviors. Although school leaders provided professional development this summer to norm teachers on cultural expectations, leaders have not followed up with classroom observations to ensure teachers' consistent application of the expectations. Without the observational data, leaders are unclear about which parts of the new behavioral system are effective and which parts may require revision. In the upper grades, behavioral and cultural expectations are not clear. Teachers in the upper grades also do not implement positive or negative behavioral consequences with fidelity and consistency.
- Finn Academy retained personnel in most key staff positions but experienced some turnover among the school's faculty. Every member of the school leadership returned this year, marking the school's first year during the charter term with a complete and permanent leadership team in place. Of 34 faculty members employed at Finn Academy at the end of the previous school year, seven did not return. Despite this, the school's new faculty members report experiencing a comprehensive onboarding program during the summer and sufficient support in their classrooms during the school year. The school filled one teaching position in 7th grade with a permanent substitute at the time of the visit.
- Finn Academy worked with its external consulting group to identify smoother pathways to collect funds from the district in a timely manner. Despite the significant burden of paying for transportation costs, the school's access to cash is easier this year. As a result, the school stocked classrooms with new technology and curriculum resources. Although access to capital caused barriers during the charter term, the staffing needs of the school are met. This year, the board informed families that the school would continue to serve grades Kindergarten through 6 in any subsequent charter term. The board is examining its class size and number of sections at each grade level in order to ensure revenue is adequate under the new grade configuration.

- Although enrollment of students with disabilities continues to grow in the lower grades, the school enrolls a lower percentage of economically disadvantaged students than reside in the district. School leaders continue their thoughtful approach of marketing to community organizations serving families with financial and other needs. The school has made progress toward the enrollment goal, moving from 33% to 50% enrollment of economically disadvantaged students during the first charter term, but continues to encounter instances of misinformation among potential families who do not understand that free education is available at Finn Academy. The school’s enrollment of ELLs is comparable to the district’s given the number of resident families in Elmira whose native language is different than English. Although the school’s retention of economically disadvantaged families is lower than its target, the school adequately retains students overall and meets its retention targets for students with disabilities and ELLs.
- The school and the board continue to thoughtfully revise processes for data analysis and evaluation of its program. Instructional leaders worked over the summer to develop robust data analysis procedures that are still in the nascent stages but provide precise and timely information about the effectiveness of the school’s academic programs. These analyses are available to school leaders who report the information to the board. School leaders and the board engaged with an external consultant to use the data to analyze the efficacy of the school program. The board is also working with the consultants to strengthen its self-evaluation process.

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

The board at Finn Academy is thoughtfully developing its oversight and governance capacity. This year, the board invested in its own development and in the development of the school’s leadership. In the absence of a comprehensive strategic plan, Finn Academy’s board defined priorities that all members of the school community consistently identify. Committees of the board operate effectively to monitor the school’s operations and academic program and report information that the board uses to gauge the effectiveness of the school’s program and of its leaders.

- During the charter term, Finn Academy’s board added to its membership to bolster its public relations expertise. Although the board already includes members with some academic experience, the board seeks to add a member with background in K-12 schooling. These desired additions notwithstanding, board members possess adequate skills and experience and have put in place structures to effectively govern and oversee day-to-day management and operations of the school.

- The board effectively uses its committee structure to receive data and information to provide oversight of the school's program and finances. The school's COO and the finance committee provide information about the school's fiscal health that the board uses to ensure the school's viability. Late in the charter term, the board effectively addressed the school's ability to access reimbursement from sending districts in a timely manner. This year, the board receives updates about the school's internal assessments in order to provide more precise oversight to the academic program.
- This year, the board is working on developing a school wide culture of data based decision making. Starting with its own processes, the board invested in the school's infrastructure for data storage and expects school leaders to use it to develop insight about the strengths and weaknesses of the academic program, and accurately report those to the board. In addition, the board has identified other priorities in its run up to renewal that address classroom instruction, school culture, and developing ancillary streams of revenue, all of which the board designed to strengthen the efficacy of the school's program and improve student learning outcomes.
- This year, the school retained all of its leaders. With help from an external consultant the board invested in developing its own processes and in the professional development of the leadership team. Having established goals for each leader at the school the board will use data to gauge the performance of each individual and also the efficacy of the school's distributed leadership model.
- The board overcame its initial facility hurdles by approving an unconventional transaction where the education corporation had to prepay a full year of rent at a time when the corporation had little in the way of cash or assets. The board has since recovered the education corporation's financial position such that it has adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations.
- The board effectively communicates with the entire school community. After making the difficult decision to reconfigure the grade enrollment pattern at the school, the board held several town meetings to discuss the benefits and perceived drawbacks of the decision with families. Board members regularly participate in school functions and visit the school during instructional time.

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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 to ensure the effective governance and oversight of the school. The board demonstrates a clear understanding of its role in holding the school leadership accountable for both academic results and fiscal soundness.

- The board makes clear its policies and priorities. Leadership and staff members coalesce around culture and academic achievement demonstrating clear vision from the board.
- The board receives an organizational dashboard at each meeting that includes enrollment, attendance, disciplinary, support services, overall budget figures, assessment results and reporting dates as well as the overall professional development calendar, that provides a big picture snapshot of the school each month.
- During the first two years of the charter term, the board was quick to investigate feedback regarding the founding school leader. The board appropriately utilized legal counsel during this process and acted swiftly to handle the situation, which ultimately resulted in separation, while trying to stabilize the school keeping focus on the students in the building.
- Starting in the third year of the current charter term, the board worked to revamp leadership structures while being thoughtful about how it will monitor the success of those structures. The board now has in place individual and team goals for the leadership team which will be used to analyze the effectiveness of the current leadership structure and develop alternative plans if necessary.
- The board demonstrates mission alignment by being thoughtful concerning growth ensuring current programming meets a certain standard before expanding grade levels.
- The board appropriately seeks legal counsel where appropriate.
- The board has complied with its by-laws and code of ethics.
- The board supports school leadership providing for outside supports to lift leadership as it continues to develop.

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

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

- **Complaints.** The Institute received no formal complaints regarding the school.
- **Compliance.** The Institute issued no violation letters during the charter term.
- **Annual Reports.** While Finn Academy properly submitted its annual reports to the Institute and NYSED, the school has not posted recent annual reports on its website in accordance with the Act at the time of the renewal visit. The school made the reports available on their website as of January 1, 2020.
- **Freedom of Information Law.** While the school has an appropriate policy under the New York Freedom of Information Law, the school did not post on its website required information on its website including the contact information for the person from whom records may be obtained, the times and places such records are available, information on how to request records, and a link to the website of the Committee on Open Government at the time of the renewal visit. As of January 1, 2020, Finn Academy made this required information available on its website.

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FISCAL PERFORMANCE



11. 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.

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3A**

IS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION FISCALLY SOUND?

Based on a review of the fiscal evidence collected through the renewal review, Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School is fiscally sound. The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard presents color-coded tables and charts indicating that the education corporation has demonstrated fiscal soundness over the majority of the charter term.¹¹

Finn Academy was the subject of a New York State Comptroller’s audit resulting in a report dated November 2018. The audit began with a broad scope over all financial and operational controls, then narrowed to focus on the Information Technology (“IT”) controls. The audit findings revealed the board didn’t have adequate IT policies and procedures in place and school officials didn’t provide IT security awareness training to employees. The audit also found that there was no disaster recovery plan in place. The school has responded to these audit findings, indicating it has or are in the process of addressing each of the concerns.

Finn Academy has also identified several financial areas where controls could be strengthened. The school is actively reviewing and updating all financial policies and procedures to ensure strong internal controls safeguard all procedures necessary to ensure a successful business operation.

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

Finn Academy has adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. Finn Academy has employed clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures throughout the charter term.

- The budget process applies the financial expertise of key board members, as well as experience gained as a charter operator, to a bottoms-up analysis and approach to determine the required resources needed for achieving the school’s educational goals and outcomes.
- Finn Academy’s COO works collaboratively with the board’s finance committee and external financial service provider, to prepare the school’s annual budget. The board finance committee conducts a comprehensive review process prior to a full board vote to adopt the budget for the next fiscal year.

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- The projected five-year renewal budget projects 2.0% increases per year to per pupil revenue.
- Finn Academy currently serves 396 students in grades K-7 in a leased former district school facility owned by the district. During the next charter term, Finn Academy is proposing to only serve grades K-6 while still serving 399 students. The school plans to continue operations in its current facility during the next charter term.

DOES THE SCHOOL MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE INTERNAL CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES?

Finn Academy has a history of sound fiscal policies, procedures and, practices and maintains appropriate internal controls.

- The Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual serves as the guide to all financial internal controls and procedures. The manual undergoes ongoing reviews and updates. Finn Academy has recently identified several areas where controls can be strengthened and is actively updating the manual to reflect stronger internal controls.
- The most recent Finn Academy audit report for June 30, 2019 had no material findings or deficiencies.

DOES THE SCHOOL COMPLY WITH FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

Finn Academy has complied with financial reporting requirements.

- The Institute and NYSED have received the required financial reports on time, complete and follow generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).
- Independent audits of annual financial statements have received unqualified opinions with no material advisory or management letter findings to report.
- The school has generally filed key reports timely and accurately including audit reports, budgets, and unaudited quarterly reports of revenue, expenses, and enrollment.
- The June 30, 2019 annual audit was received by the Institute by the due date of November 1, 2019 and reported continued fiscal strength.

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

Finn Academy has maintained adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations.

- Since the school opened in 2015-16, the education corporation has reported operating surpluses in each year of operation.
- Finn Academy's fiscal dashboard in Appendix D reflects fiscally strong with 1.9 months of cash on hand to pay liabilities coming due shortly.
- Finn Academy had total net assets of approximately \$1.6 million as of June 30, 2019.
- After a pre-opening period of very little cash and almost no assets, Finn Academy has continued an upward financial trajectory to solidify a fiscally strong financial position.
- As a requirement of its charter agreement, Finn Academy has established a separate dissolution reserve fund account of \$75,000.

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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?

Finn Academy's plans for the future, if renewed, are reasonable, feasible, and achievable. The school plans to continue to develop its academic program in Kindergarten through 6th grade. The board will focus on developing its capacity to oversee the school's day to day operations and academic achievement.

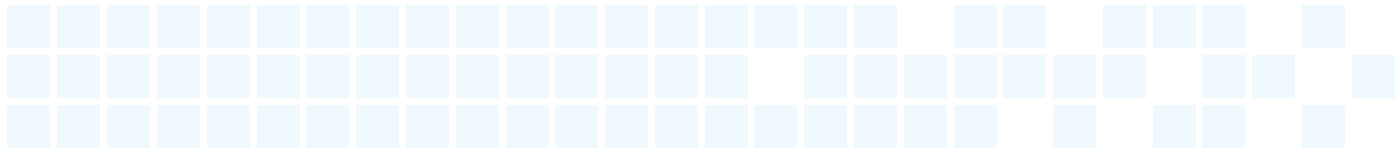
Plans for the School's Structure. The education corporation has provided all of the key structural elements for a charter renewal and those elements are reasonable, feasible, and achievable.

Plans for the Educational Program. In a subsequent charter term, Finn Academy will discontinue enrolling 7th graders in order to maintain its capacity to continue to develop the elementary academic program. The school's consistent leadership will continue to drive the improvements realized during the initial charter term in order to realize academic success for all students.

Plans for Board Oversight & Governance. Most board members express an interest in continuing to serve Finn Academy. Should any board members choose to step down, the board has a clear succession plan in place. The board is interested in adding members who have academic experience in primary grades education.

Fiscal & Facility Plans. Based on evidence collected through the renewal visit review, including a review of the financial plan projections, Finn Academy presents a reasonable and appropriate fiscal plan for the next charter term including school budgets that are feasible and achievable.

	CURRENT	END OF NEXT CHARTER TERM
Enrollment	396	399
Grade Span	K-7	K-6
Teaching Staff	44	38
Days of Instruction	193	193



SUNY Charter Schools Institute
SUNY Plaza
353 Broadway
Albany, NY 12246

Finn Academy plans to continue operations in its current facility throughout the next charter term.

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.



Finn Academy

Ax

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A: School Overview

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CHAIR

Alice R. Sutton

VICE CHAIR

Cynthia H. Raj

TREASURER

Jill Koski

SECRETARY

Dr. Maya Patel

TRUSTEES

Lynn H. Winner

Katie (Anna Catherine) Stowell

Kathryn E. Coletta

SCHOOL LEADERS

PRINCIPAL

Aimee Ciarlo, Dean of Scholars (January 2017 - Present)

Jeremy Wheeler, Chief Academic Officer (October 2018 - Present)

Martina Baker, Chief Operations Officer (July 2017 - Present)

Kaitlin Woods, Dean of Academics (August 2017 - October 2018)

Maggie Thurber, Principal (2015-16 - January 2017)

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

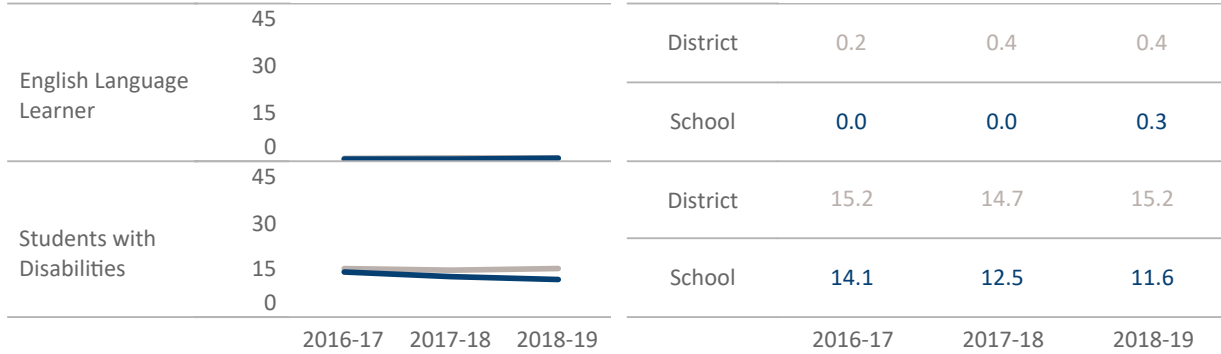
SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	PROPOSED GRADES	ACTUAL GRADES
2015-16	180	215	119%	K-3	K-3
2016-17	234	248	106%	K-4	K-4
2017-18	290	299	103%	K-5	K-5
2018-19	344	356	104%	K-6	K-6
2019-20	396	385	97%	K-7	K-7

APPENDIX A: School Overview

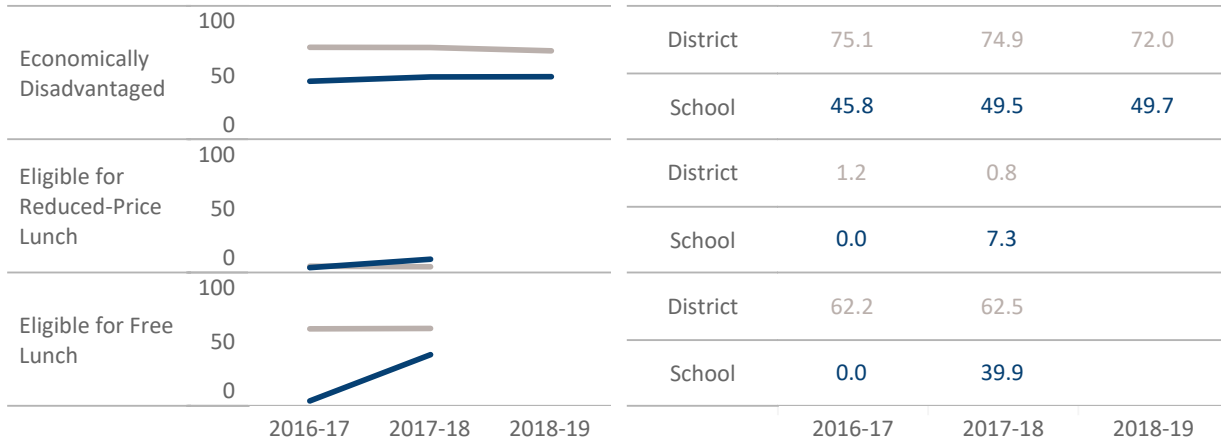
Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School

Elmira City School District

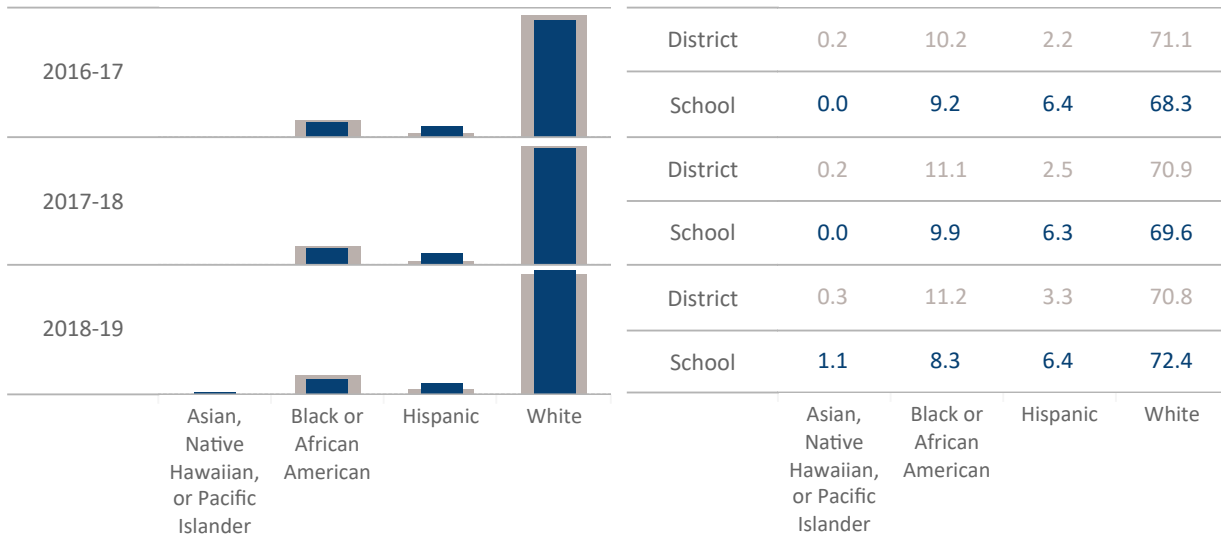
Student Demographics: Special Populations



Student Demographics: Free/Reduced Lunch



Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

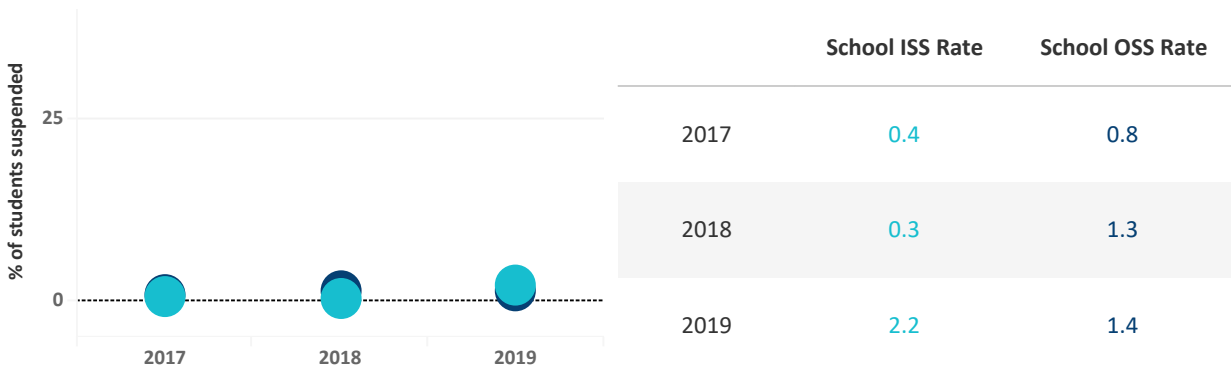


Data reported in these charts reflect BEDS day enrollment counts as reported by the New York State Education Department

APPENDIX A: School Overview

Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School

Elmira City School District



District data suitable for comparison are not available. The percentage rate shown here is calculated using the method employed by the New York City Department of Education ("NYCDOE"): the total number of students receiving an in school or out of school suspension at any time during the school year is divided by the total enrollment, then multiplied by 100.

Persistence in Enrollment: The percentage of students eligible to return from previous year who did return



Expulsions: The number of students expelled from the school each year

Year	2017	2018	2019
Expulsions	0	0	0

Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2018-19

		District Target	School
Enrollment	economically disadvantaged	65.9	49.3
	English language learners	0.3	0.6
	students with disabilities	11.2	11.1
Retention	economically disadvantaged	95.0	86.0
	English language learners	85.9	100.0
	students with disabilities	93.7	94.4

Data reported in these charts reflect information reported by the school and validated by the Institute.

APPENDIX A: School Overview

PARENT SATISFACTION: SURVEY RESULTS

RESPONSE RATE 53%	OVERALL SATISFACTION 94%	TRUST 72%	EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP 85%	STRONG FAMILY COMMUNITY TIES 90%
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TIMELINE OF CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL



SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY

SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
2015-16	First Year Visit	April 21, 2016
2016-17	Evaluation Visit	April 5-6, 2017
2019-20	Initial Renewal Visit	October 17-18, 2019

CONDUCT OF THE RENEWAL VISIT

DATE(S) OF VISIT	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
October 17-18, 2019	Jeff Wasbes	Executive Deputy Director for Accountability
	Denise Gaffor	School Evaluation Analyst
	Maureen Foley	Director for New Charters
	Jennifer Lee	External Consultant

APPENDIX A: School Overview

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS:

ELEMENT	EVIDENT?
Community Connections through planned projects and field studies;	+
A class for Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (“STEM”) instruction at all grades;	+
All scholars are college and career ready;	-
Scholars are physically, socially, and emotionally well; and,	+
Consistent professional development that focuses on the school’s stated priorities.	+

APPENDIX B: Performance Summaries

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Finn Academy: An Elmira Charter School

		2016-17 Grades Served K-4				2017-18 Grades Served K-5				2018-19 Grades Served K-6							
Grades	All % (N)	2+ Years % (N)	MET	Grades	All % (N)	2+ Years % (N)	MET	Grades	All % (N)	2+ Years % (N)	MET	Grades	All % (N)	2+ Years % (N)	MET		
1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above proficiency on the New York State exam.		3	25.5 (47)	30.6 (36)	3	47.2 (53)	53.5 (43)	3	34.3 (70)	37.3 (59)	3	34.3 (70)	37.3 (59)	37.3 (59)	37.3 (59)		
		4	10.9 (46)	12.8 (39)	4	30.8 (52)	32.4 (37)	4	54.2 (48)	63.4 (41)	4	54.2 (48)	63.4 (41)	63.4 (41)	63.4 (41)		
		5	(0)	(0)	5	25.0 (44)	20.6 (34)	5	25.5 (47)	27.9 (43)	5	25.5 (47)	27.9 (43)	27.9 (43)	27.9 (43)		
		6	(0)	(0)	6	(0)	(0)	6	28.2 (39)	32.4 (34)	6	28.2 (39)	32.4 (34)	32.4 (34)	32.4 (34)		
		7	(0)	(0)	7	(0)	(0)	7	(0)	(0)	7	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)		
		8	(0)	(0)	8	(0)	(0)	8	(0)	(0)	8	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)		
All	18.3 (93)	21.3 (75)	NO	All	34.9 (149)	36.8 (114)	NO	All	35.8 (204)	40.1 (177)	NO	All	35.8 (204)	40.1 (177)	NO		
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State exam will meet the state Measure of Interim Progress set forth in the State's ESSA accountability system.		Grades	PI	MIP	Grades	PI	MIP	Grades	PI	MIP	Grades	PI	MIP	Grades	PI	MIP	
		3-4	65	111	NO	104	101	3-6	109	105	YES	3-6	109	105	YES	YES	
3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at or above proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.		Comparison: Elmira City School District				Comparison: Elmira City School District				Comparison: Elmira City School District							
		Grades	School	District	Grades	School	District	Grades	School	District	Grades	School	District	Grades	School	District	
		3-4	21.3	18.5	YES	36.8	20.2	3-5	36.8	20.2	YES	3-6	40.1	19.7	3-6	40.1	19.7
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted performance on the state exam by an effect size of 0.3 or above based on a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students statewide.		Grade	% ED	Actual	Predicted	ES	Grade	% ED	Actual	Predicted	ES	Grade	% ED	Actual	Predicted	ES	
		3	48.9	25.5	47.0	-1.44	3	33.3	47.2	62.3	-1.01	3	47.1	591	601.8	-1.63	
		4	58.3	10.9	40.4	-1.88	4	57.4	30.8	48.2	-0.98	4	37.7	601	602.7	-0.26	
		5					5	56.8	25.0	37.3	-0.77	5	44.9	595	602.7	-1.14	
		6					6					6	60.5	588	597.8	-1.26	
		7					7					7					
		8					8					8					
		All	53.6	18.3	43.7	-1.65	All	48.7	34.9	50.0	-0.93	All	47.0	593.7	601.5	-1.12	
5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the target of 50.		Grades	School	State	Grades	School	State	Grades	School	State	Grades	School	State	Grades	School	State	
		4	36.3	50	NO	50.2	50	4	50.2	50	NO	50.2	50	56.9	50	50	
		5	0.0	50	NO	66.9	50	5	66.9	50	NO	66.9	50	58.3	50	50	
		6	0.0	50	NO	0.0	50	6	0.0	50	NO	0.0	50	49.7	50	50	
		7	0.0	50	NO	0.0	50	7	0.0	50	NO	0.0	50	0.0	50	50	
		8	0.0	50	NO	0.0	50	8	0.0	50	NO	0.0	50	0.0	50	50	
		All	36.3	50	NO	57.6	50	All	57.6	50	YES	57.6	50	55.3	50	50	

APPENDIX C: District Comments

NO COMMENTS RECEIVED

APPENDIX D: Fiscal Dashboard

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL

SCHOOL INFORMATION

BALANCE SHEET

Opened 2015-16

Assets

Current Assets

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Cash and Cash Equivalents - GRAPH 1	-	7,376	572,213	429,621	673,140
Grants and Contracts Receivable	-	460,465	368,796	397,271	208,139
Accounts Receivable	-	-	-	-	-
Prepaid Expenses	-	7,671	14,799	120,162	81,223
Contributions and Other Receivables	-	-	-	-	-
Total Current Assets - GRAPH 1	-	475,512	955,808	947,054	962,502
Property, Building and Equipment, net	-	333,872	328,607	461,660	674,246
Other Assets	-	84,799	145,945	75,000	75,000
Total Assets - GRAPH 1	-	894,183	1,430,360	1,483,714	1,711,748

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	-	308,691	358,699	253,757	128,132
Accrued Payroll and Benefits	-	77,540	-	7,844	-
Deferred Revenue	-	1,650	544,380	1,650	-
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	-	274,604	49,736	-	4,243
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable	-	-	-	200,000	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Current Liabilities - GRAPH 1	-	662,485	952,815	463,251	132,375
Deferred Rent/Lease Liability	-	-	-	-	-
All other L-T debt and notes payable, net current maturities	-	-	-	-	7,863
Total Liabilities - GRAPH 1	-	662,485	952,815	463,251	140,238

Net Assets

Unrestricted	-	231,698	477,545	1,020,463	1,571,510
Temporarily restricted	-	-	-	-	-
Total Net Assets	-	231,698	477,545	1,020,463	1,571,510
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	-	894,183	1,430,360	1,483,714	1,711,748

ACTIVITIES

Operating Revenue

Resident Student Enrollment	-	2,356,355	2,909,241	3,595,533	4,362,520
Students with Disabilities	-	71,602	126,104	178,564	237,090
Grants and Contracts					
State and local	-	43,025	-	134,650	119,612
Federal - Title and IDEA	-	750,000	208,128	157,974	92,040
Federal - Other	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
NYC DoE Rental Assistance	-	-	-	-	-
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program	-	-	-	-	89,847
Total Operating Revenue	-	3,220,982	3,243,473	4,066,721	4,901,109

Expenses

Regular Education	-	1,740,433	1,838,773	2,190,304	2,688,107
SPED	-	253,686	229,862	215,321	342,991
Other	-	159,176	315,410	408,446	526,238
Total Program Services	-	2,153,295	2,384,045	2,814,071	3,557,336
Management and General	-	868,359	628,792	772,798	854,325
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses - GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4	-	3,021,654	3,012,837	3,586,869	4,411,661
Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations	-	199,328	230,636	479,852	489,448

Support and Other Revenue

Contributions	-	9,041	370	36,718	21,498
Fundraising	-	13,873	5,940	6,861	22,036
Miscellaneous Income	-	9,456	8,901	19,487	18,065
Net assets released from restriction	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support and Other Revenue	-	32,370	15,211	63,066	61,599

Total Unrestricted Revenue	-	3,253,352	3,258,684	4,129,787	4,962,708
Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
Total Revenue - GRAPHS 2 & 3	-	3,253,352	3,258,684	4,129,787	4,962,708

Change in Net Assets

Net Assets - Beginning of Year - GRAPH 2	-	231,698	245,847	542,918	551,047
Prior Year Adjustment(s)	-	-	-	-	-
Net Assets - End of Year - GRAPH 2	-	231,698	477,545	1,020,463	1,571,510

APPENDIX D: Fiscal Dashboard

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL

SCHOOL INFORMATION - (Continued)

Functional Expense Breakdown

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Personnel Service					
Administrative Staff Personnel	-	567,751	369,117	474,509	457,211
Instructional Personnel	-	1,033,715	1,248,605	1,387,995	1,901,130
Non-Instructional Personnel	-	-	8,645	62,475	87,512
Personnel Services (Combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Salaries and Staff	-	1,601,466	1,626,367	1,924,979	2,445,853
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes	-	235,183	271,327	406,392	496,458
Retirement	-	-	-	2,179	-
Management Company Fees	-	-	-	-	-
Building and Land Rent / Lease	-	135,711	240,000	240,000	242,380
Staff Development	-	110,423	33,974	34,654	35,477
Professional Fees, Consultant & Purchased Services	-	184,637	152,430	106,480	139,515
Marketing / Recruitment	-	65,998	4,422	26,904	18,850
Student Supplies, Materials & Services	-	266,218	205,434	339,640	388,963
Depreciation	-	31,824	50,067	55,504	82,434
Other	-	390,194	428,816	450,137	561,731
Total Expenses	-	3,021,654	3,012,837	3,586,869	4,411,661

SCHOOL ANALYSIS

ENROLLMENT

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Original Chartered Enrollment	-	180	234	290	344
Final Chartered Enrollment (includes any revisions)	-	180	234	290	344
Actual Enrollment - GRAPH 4	-	215	248	299	356
Chartered Grades	-	K-3	K-4	K-5	K-6
Final Chartered Grades (includes any revisions)	-	-	-	-	-

Primary School District: **ELMIRA CITY SD**
 Per Pupil Funding (Weighted Avg of All Districts)
 Increase over prior year

-	10,815	11,497	11,961	12,203
0.0%	100.0%	5.9%	3.9%	2.0%

PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

Revenue

Operating	-	15,011	13,079	13,595	13,784
Other Revenue and Support	-	151	61	211	173
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	15,162	13,140	13,806	13,957

Expenses

Program Services	-	10,035	9,613	9,408	10,004
Management and General, Fundraising	-	4,047	2,535	2,584	2,403
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	14,082	12,149	11,991	12,407
% of Program Services	0.0%	71.3%	79.1%	78.5%	80.6%
% of Management and Other	0.0%	28.7%	20.9%	21.5%	19.4%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses - GRAPH 5	0.0%	7.7%	8.2%	15.1%	12.5%

Student to Faculty Ratio

-	8.3	8.0	8.1	7.1
---	-----	-----	-----	-----

Faculty to Admin Ratio

-	3.7	5.6	4.1	5.6
---	-----	-----	-----	-----

Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - GRAPH 6

Score
 Fiscally Strong 1.5 - 3.0 / Fiscally Adequate 1.0 - 1.4 /
 Fiscally Needs Monitoring < 1.0

0.0	1.5	1.7	2.6	2.6
N/A	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong

Working Capital - GRAPH 7

Net Working Capital
 As % of Unrestricted Revenue
 Working Capital (Current) Ratio Score
 Risk (Low ≥ 3.0 / Medium 1.4 - 2.9 / High < 1.4)
 Rating (Excellent ≥ 3.0 / Good 1.4 - 2.9 / Poor < 1.4)

0	(186,973)	2,993	483,803	830,127
0.0%	-5.7%	0.1%	11.7%	16.7%
0.0	0.7	1.0	2.0	7.3
N/A	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
N/A	Poor	Poor	Good	Excellent

Quick (Acid Test) Ratio

Score
 Risk (Low ≥ 2.5 / Medium 1.0 - 2.4 / High < 1.0)
 Rating (Excellent ≥ 2.5 / Good 1.0 - 2.4 / Poor < 1.0)

0.0	0.7	1.0	1.8	6.7
N/A	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW
N/A	Poor	Good	Good	Excellent

Debt to Asset Ratio - GRAPH 7

Score
 Risk (Low < 0.50 / Medium 0.51 - .95 / High > 1.0)
 Rating (Excellent < 0.50 / Good 0.51 - .95 / Poor > 1.0)

0.0	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.1
N/A	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW
N/A	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent

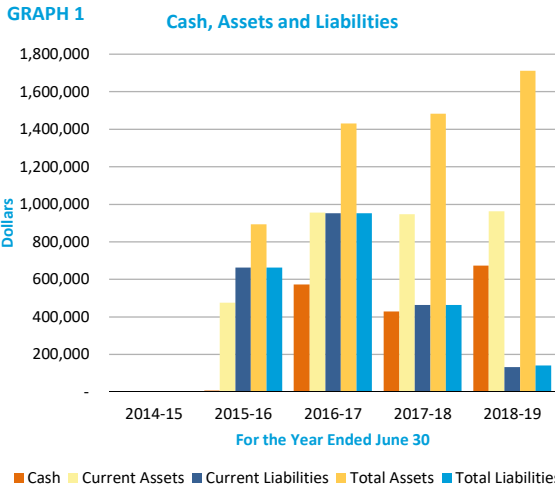
Months of Cash - GRAPH 8

Score
 Risk (Low > 3 mo. / Medium 1 - 3 mo. / High < 1 mo.)
 Rating (Excellent > 3 mo. / Good 1 - 3 mo. / Poor < 1 mo.)

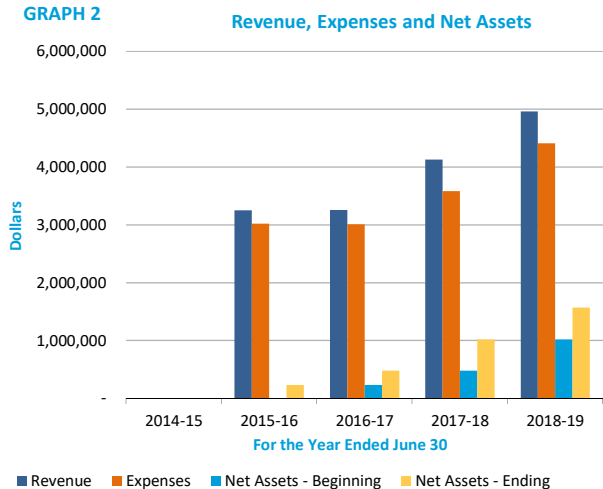
0.0	0.0	2.3	1.4	1.8
N/A	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
N/A	Poor	Good	Good	Good

APPENDIX D: Fiscal Dashboard

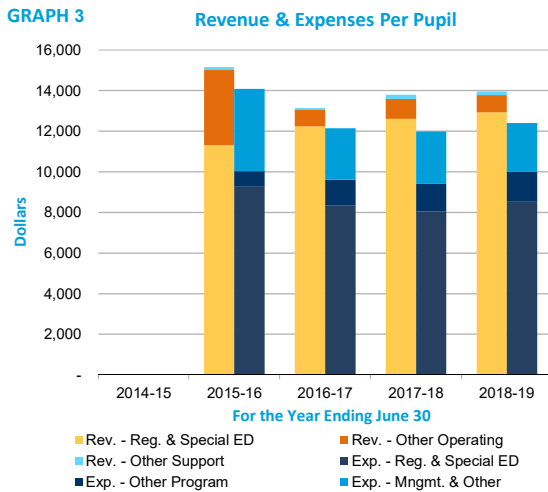
FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL



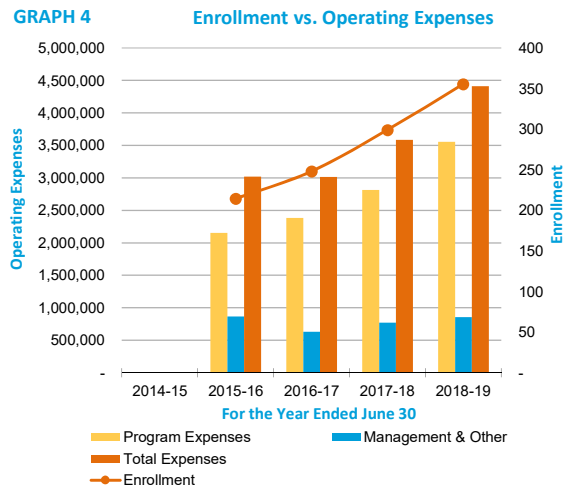
This chart illustrates the relationship between assets and liabilities and to what extent cash reserves makes up current assets. Ideally for each subset, subsets 2 through 4, (i.e. current assets vs. current liabilities), the column on the left is taller than the immediate column on the right; and, generally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



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.



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.

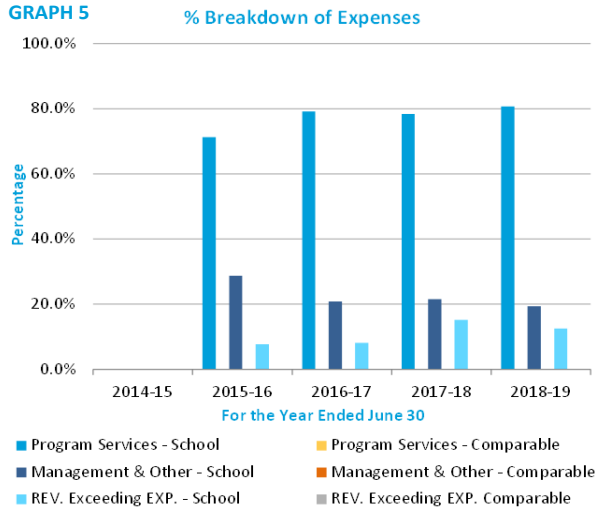


This chart illustrates to what extent the school's operating expenses have followed its student enrollment pattern. A baseline assumption that this data tests is that operating expenses increase with each additional student served. This chart also compares and contrasts growth trends of both, giving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

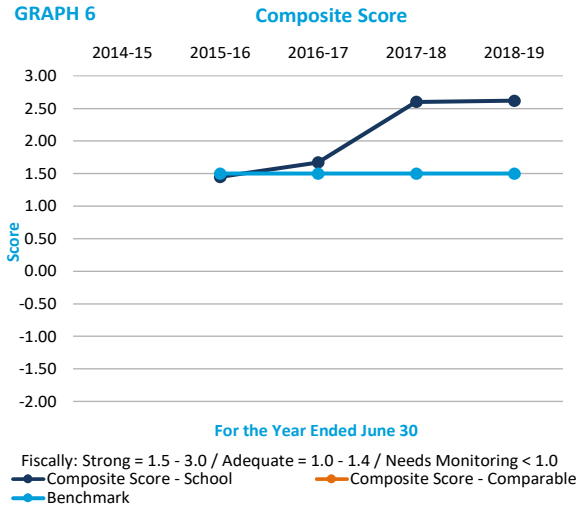
APPENDIX D: Fiscal Dashboard

FINN ACADEMY: AN ELMIRA CHARTER SCHOOL

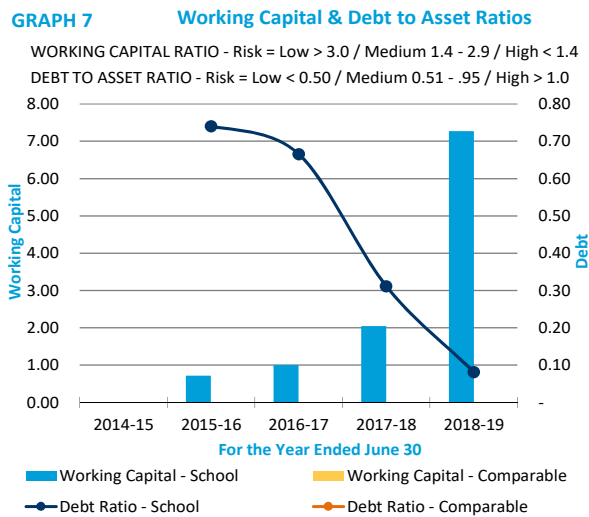
Comparable School, Region or Network: -



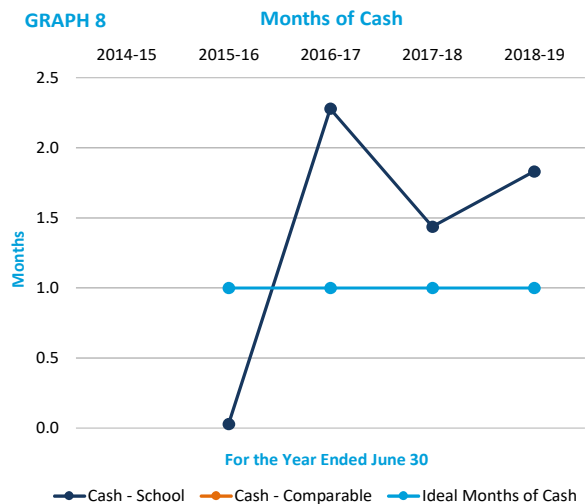
This chart illustrates the percentage expense breakdown between program services and management & others as well as the percentage of revenues exceeding expenses. Ideally the percentage expense for program services will far exceed that of the management & other expense. The percentage of revenues exceeding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



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.



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.



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.

