



Renewal Recommendation Report

Merrick Academy-Queens

Public Charter School

Report Date: January 23, 2015

Visit Date: November 13, 2014

State University of New York
41 State Street, Suite 700
Albany, New York 12207

518-445-4250
518-427-6510 (fax)
www.newyorkcharters.org



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION	4
REQUIRED FINDINGS	4
CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMENTS	5
RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS	7
APPENDIX	
SCHOOL OVERVIEW	27
FISCAL DASHBOARD	30
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARIES	34

INTRODUCTION

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”) (revised September 4, 2013 and available at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Policies.pdf>).

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: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/operate/existing-schools/renewal/>.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MERRICK ACADEMY-QUEENS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

BACKGROUND

Opened in September 2000, Merrick Academy-Queens Public Charter School (“Merrick”) is now in its fifteenth year of operation. The school’s mission states:

The mission of the Merrick Academy-Queens Public Charter School is to create one of the finest public schools in America through use of the charter school process; to serve “at risk” children of Springfield Gardens and Jamaica, Queens; and to create a model for charter public school design that can be replicated in disadvantaged neighborhoods everywhere.

Merrick partnered with Victory Schools Inc. (“Victory”), a national educational services provider based in New York, in the implementation of its academic program. In the most recent years of the current charter term, however, the school and Victory have moved to a limited services contract model rather than a full service contract. The school is governed by a board of trustees authorized by the SUNY Trustees to operate a charter school in New York and remains an independent not-for-profit education corporation.

Merrick currently serves 494 students in grades K-6 in a private facility at 136-25 218th Street, Springfield Garden, Queens, in New York City Community School District (“CSD”) 29.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the course of this charter term, Merrick has met or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals and has in place an education program that is likely to improve student learning.

This year, Merrick has a sound program on the ground supported by new instructional leaders and a clear direction and added academic strength on the part of the school’s board. Merrick’s K-5 instructional program is sufficient to warrant renewal. The school has rightly identified challenges with serving students in the 6th grade that include struggling academic results and a misalignment with grade level enrollments and configurations at surrounding schools. As a result, the school has sought a revision to its renewal application to request Merrick serve only students in grades K-5 in a future charter term as the school has not succeeded in supporting 6th grade students. The Institute concurs with the school’s analysis and recommends, as an additional assurance and term of the proposed renewal charter agreement, that Merrick not be allowed to instruct students in 6th or any other middle school grade during the proposed renewal term.

Prior to the current charter term, Merrick lost its long-time leader and struggled to find effective instructional leadership. In the fourth year of the charter term, Merrick’s board of trustees (the

SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“board”) engaged in ineffective governance that exacerbated challenges associated with the leadership transition. In the final year of its charter term, Merrick put in place a new leadership team and significantly improved its ability to provide strong governance for the school. The board elected new trustees to aid governance including, significantly, a trustee with deep charter school academic experience as well as a strong understanding of good governance practices. In order to help ensure that the school does not return to weaker governance, the Institute will add terms to the proposed renewal charter ensuring that Merrick be required to always have academic expertise on the board, maintain an odd number of trustees and fill vacancies on the board in a timely manner.

RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

FULL-TERM RENEWAL

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Merrick Academy-Queens Public Charter School and renew its charter for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students only in Kindergarten through 5th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal, with a projected total enrollment of 475 students.

To earn a Subsequent Full-Term Renewal, a school must demonstrate that it has met or come close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals.¹

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:

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

As required by Education Law § 2851(4)(e), a school must include in its renewal application information regarding the efforts it has, and will, put in place to meet or exceed SUNY's enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners ("ELLs"), and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch ("FRPL") program. SUNY³ and the New York State Board of Regents (the "Board of Regents") finalized the methodology for setting targets in October 2012, and the Institute communicated specific targets or proposed targets for each school in July 2013.

Given the date the school was originally chartered, it does not have statutory targets. However, in accordance with the Act, the Institute, acting on behalf of the SUNY Trustees, considered the school's plans for meeting its future enrollment and retention targets during the next charter term prior to recommending the renewal application for approval. The Institute found the plans to meet or exceed the targets, and the plans to educate students with disabilities, ELLs and FRPL

¹ SUNY Renewal Policies at page 14.

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

³ SUNY Trustees' Charter Schools Committee resolution dated October 2, 2012.

RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

students, satisfactory. The Institute also found the school to be making good faith efforts to attract and retain such students in accordance with the Act.

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. As of the date of this report, the Institute has received no district comments in response. The Institute did receive a letter of support from a parent of a Merrick student who indicates confidence in the school and its leadership.

RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

REPORT FORMAT

The Institute makes the foregoing renewal recommendation based on the school's Application for Charter Renewal, evaluation visits conducted and information gathered during the charter term and a renewal evaluation visit conducted near the end of the current charter term. Additionally, the Institute has reviewed the strength and fiscal health of the not for profit education corporation with the authority to operate the school. 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. This renewal recommendation report compiles the evidence below using the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, 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.

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?

The report's Appendix provides a School Overview, copies of any school district comments on the Application for Charter Renewal, the SUNY Fiscal Dashboard information for the school, and, if applicable, its education corporation and additional evidence on student achievement contained in the School Performance Summaries.

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

Merrick is an academic success based on its record of meeting or coming close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals, and its educationally sound academic program.

At the beginning of the Accountability Period,⁴ the school developed and adopted an Accountability Plan that set academic goals in the key subjects of ELA and mathematics. The Institute examines results for five required Accountability Plan measures to determine each ELA and math goal attainment. Because the Act requires charters be held “accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results”⁵ and states the educational programs at a charter school must “meet or exceed the student performance standards adopted by the board of regents”⁶ for other public schools, SUNY’s required accountability measures rest on performance as measured by state wide assessments. Historically, SUNY’s required measures include measures that present schools’:

- absolute performance, i.e., what percentage of students score at a certain proficiency on state exams?;
- comparative performance, i.e., how did the school do as compared to schools in the district and schools that serve similar populations of economically disadvantaged students?; and,
- growth performance, i.e., how well did the school do in catching students up – and then keeping them up to grade level proficiency?

Every SUNY authorized charter school has the opportunity to propose additional measures of success when crafting its Accountability Plan. Merrick did not propose or include any additional measures of success in the Accountability Plan it adopted.

Because of testing changes made by the state, the Institute has since 2009 consistently de-emphasized the two absolute measures under each goal in schools’ Accountability Plans. The Institute continues to focus primarily on the two comparative measures and the growth measure while also considering any additional evidence the school presents using additional measures identified in its Accountability Plan. The Institute identifies the required measures (absolute proficiency, absolute Annual Measurable Objective attainment,⁷ comparison to local district, comparison to demographically similar schools, and student growth) in the Performance Summaries appearing in the Appendix at the end of the report.

⁴ Because the SUNY Trustees make a renewal decision before student achievement results for the final year of a charter term become available, the Accountability Period ends with the school year prior to the final year of the charter term. In the case of subsequent renewal, the Accountability Period covers the last year of the previous charter term through the second to last year of the charter term under review.

⁵ Education Law § 2850(2)(f).

⁶ Education Law § 2854(1)(d).

⁷ While the state has recalibrated the absolute Annual Measurable Objective, the Institute only considers and reports on the 2013-14 results, not on those for 2012-13.

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

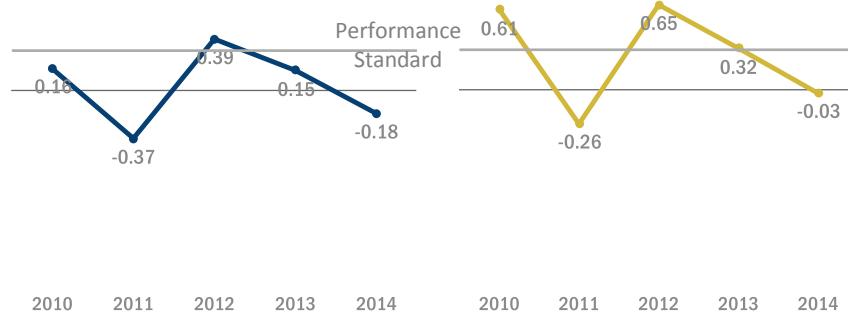
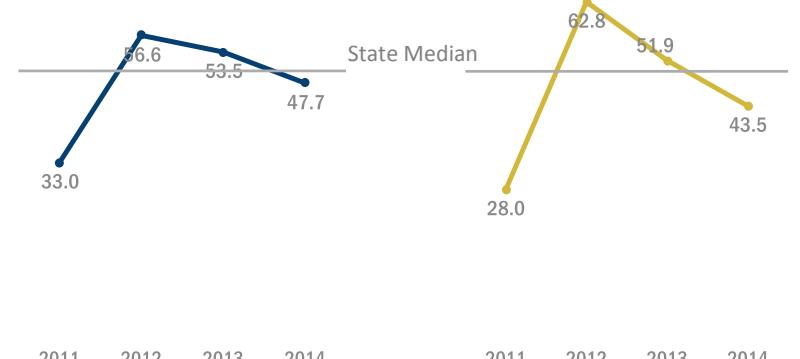
Academic Attainment.

Merrick has posted a record of meeting or coming close to meeting its key Accountability Plan goals in English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics during most years in its five-year Accountability Period. During 2009-10, the first year of the Accountability Period, the school met its goals in both ELA and mathematics. The school’s performance declined during 2010-11 when it did not meet its goals in either subject. Merrick’s performance improved in 2011-12 when it met its goals in both subjects and posted strong performance on the required measures under each goal. The school sustained its performance throughout 2012-13 when it met its mathematics goal and came close to meeting its ELA goal. In contrast to the two previous years, the school did not meet its ELA and mathematics goals during 2013-14. Merrick met both its science goal and its NCLB goal throughout the Accountability Period.

Based on the comparative and growth measures in its Accountability Plan, Merrick met its ELA goal during 2009-10 when its results were higher than the local school district and it outperformed demographically similar schools to a small degree as measured by the Institute’s effect size. The school’s performance on each of its comparative and growth measures declined during 2010-11 and the school did not meet its ELA goal. In contrast to the previous year, the school’s ELA results during 2011-12 were quite strong when it widened the gap between its proficiency rate and the local district’s proficiency rate to 12 percentage points. The school also performed higher than expected to a meaningful degree posting an effect size of 0.39 and exceeding the target for this measure. The school maintained strong ELA results during 2012-13 such that it came close to meeting its ELA goal. During that year, the school’s performance declined relative to the local school district and in comparison to demographically similar schools statewide. During 2013-14, the final year of the school’s Accountability Period, it did not meet its ELA goal, posting results below the local district and lower than expected according to the Institute’s effect size analysis.

Merrick’s mathematics results follow a similar trajectory to that of its ELA results throughout the Accountability Period. During 2009-10, the school posted strong mathematics results based on its comparative and growth measures. During 2010-11, the school’s mathematics performance declined and it did not meet its goal although it continued to outperform its local school district by seven percentage points. During 2011-12, the school once again posted strong results in mathematics when it outperformed its local district, performed higher than expected in comparison to demographically similar school according to the Institute’s effect size, and it concomitantly posted a mean growth percentile that exceeded the state median of 50. The school continued to meet its mathematics goal during 2012-13, once again exceeding its targets in each of its comparative and growth measures. During 2013-14, the school’s performance declined and it did not meet its mathematics goal, notwithstanding outperforming its local school district.

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

DESCRIPTION	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL	MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL
<p>Comparative Measure: District Comparison. Each year, the percent of students enrolled at Merrick in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in ELA and mathematics will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in the local school district.</p> 		
<p>Comparative Measure: Effect Size. Each year, Merrick will exceed its predicted level of performance by an Effect Size of 0.3 or above in ELA and mathematics according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.</p> 		
<p>Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile. Each year, Merrick's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all tested students in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile in ELA and mathematics.</p> 		

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

Instructional Leadership. Merrick has in place two new instructional leaders that have established strong instructional practice that promotes student achievement and fosters improved teacher performance. Instructional leaders have established clear criteria for teacher evaluation and improving the quality of instructional coaching.

- The principal and an assistant principal comprise the core instructional leadership team. To ensure consistency, Merrick's leaders conduct all instruction-related duties jointly supporting all grade levels and all content areas together to impress upon teachers a consistent focus on improving instructional delivery in the classroom. While functionally halving the opportunities for observation and coaching of teachers, the decision to work jointly rather than separate these duties, according to the principal, reflects the leadership's desire to calibrate tightly their expectations for teacher performance and assessment of high quality instruction. At the time of the renewal visit, leaders focused on identifying teachers' pedagogical strengths and areas of weakness had plans to create tailored plans to boost instructional effectiveness.
- In contrast and improvement to previous years when teacher requests drove Merrick's coaching system, the principal coordinates coaching such that all teachers receive a weekly classroom observation and feedback in grade team meetings. Merrick continues to utilize contracted consultants to supplement its instructional leadership with coaching in ELA and math instruction, special education services and Title I supports. The frequency of coaching does not change based on skill level or experience, but coaches' individualize the foci of classroom observations based on teacher need as assessed by instructional leaders.
- While making progress, Merrick leaders have yet to inculcate in teachers universally high expectations for student achievement. Teachers understand the criteria used in formal evaluations, but are unable to articulate leaders' expectations for their day-to-day instructional practices. Leaders recently introduced "Proficiency and Beyond" as the school's achievement motto but have not yet distilled a clear plan for accelerating student growth.

Curriculum and Assessment. Early in their tenure, school leaders have made changes to the school's assessment system and curriculum as means of improving instructional effectiveness and accelerating student learning. The school gathers a variety of valid assessment data and is working to increase reliability in the administration of some assessments, which would enable stronger diagnosis of students' academic needs. Instructional leaders have carefully reviewed assessment data to inform instruction and professional development. Insufficient resources pose a potential threat to the effective delivery of the curriculum. New board members with background in improving student achievement are focused on assessing programmatic needs and allocating funds accordingly.

- After realizing that the interim assessments ("IAs") that the school received from Victory were not predictive of student performance on state tests, school leaders replaced those assessments with iReady tests across grades. iReady tests are aligned with New York State Standards and are approved by the New York State Education Department ("NYSED"). At

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

the time of the renewal visit, school leaders had revisions of Merrick's curriculum overviews and maps to align with these new IAs. Additionally, Merrick administers a benchmark reading assessment, tests aligned to commercial curricula and some teacher-created assessments.

- Teachers use the curriculum maps to know what to teach and when to teach it. Teachers use a portion of grade team meeting time for instructional planning with each member of the team taking responsibility for planning daily lessons in a particular subject area. Both leaders and teachers report a lack of adequate resources to support the curriculum. For example, while the ELA curriculum relies heavily on leveled texts, teachers indicate that they do not have sufficient independent reading books for students at all ability levels.
- Leaders are well aware of the need to continue building teachers' ability to use data effectively to improve student outcomes. Instructional leaders, upon recognizing a discrepancy in students' reported performance, identified training on the proper administration of its reading benchmark test as a priority. School leaders have recently introduced a number of tools such as the school-wide data driven instruction planning template to examine student work and unit assessment results and have conducted several professional development sessions on analyzing data. As a result, some grade teams are beginning to use these tools in their meetings; other grade teams, however, report needing additional guidance in systematically using those assessment results to meet students' needs. Some teachers report that they have used assessment data to re-teach standards or to group students within the classroom by skill level, but other teachers simply view the completion of these templates as a paperwork requirement. While the school provided last year's state assessment results, teachers report being unclear as to how to use the data to improve instructional practice and student learning.
- School leaders have used assessment results to make a number of key changes in the educational program. In response to the results of state assessments last spring, school leaders increased the amount of time students spend in ELA learning blocks, changed teacher assignments and communicated a school-wide goal to improve student achievement in literacy. While working to create a culture of data-driven instruction, leaders rely more heavily on classroom observations than they do on quantitative data to make decisions regarding professional development and coaching.
- In addition to sending home report cards, Merrick communicates with families through an online monitoring system through which parents have access to their students' grades, progress, disciplinary information and teacher comments.

Pedagogy. Instruction at Merrick reflects the urgency for student learning shared by the school's leaders. Teachers present clear directions to students and have lesson materials prepared in advance of instruction to maximize learning time. Instructional pacing, however, remains inconsistent across the school. Some teachers adjust lessons based on levels of student comprehension while others move swiftly through material with little accommodation for students having difficulty with the material. In many classes, teachers do not consistently redirect students who opt out of, or minimally apply themselves to, independent work. As shown in the chart below,

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

during the renewal visit, Institute team members conducted 14 classroom observations following a defined protocol used in all school renewal visits.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION METHODOLOGY: NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS

CONTENT AREA	GRADE							Total
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	
ELA		4	1	1				6
Math	1		2	2		2		7
Writing								
Science						1		1
Soc Stu								
Specials								
Total	1	4	3	3	1	2		14

- Despite being generally purposeful, instructional activities at Merrick sometimes center on discrete tasks that do not consistently align to stated learning objectives. Most teachers deliver lessons with clear directions relating to the assigned tasks (11 out of 14 classrooms observed). In most cases, teachers' lessons are consistent across grade-level classrooms.
- A majority of teachers effectively check for student understanding (8 out of 14 classrooms observed). Teachers frequently use techniques such as choral response, one-on-one consultations and circulating the room to check for student understanding. These efforts, however, generally do not result in teachers adjusting the planned lesson. In many cases, monitoring for student understanding fails to identify or assist students who opt out of lessons.
- Few teachers challenge students to develop depth of understanding and higher-order thinking through questioning and activities (4 out of 14 classrooms observed). While classroom assignments include opportunities for students to engage in higher-level thinking, many students do not complete, or even begin, this work. In most cases, teachers do not ask students to defend or elaborate upon their answers or analyze the responses of their peers and classroom interactions often do not include rigorous discussion and questioning. For example, teachers were observed focusing on vocabulary basics, without requiring students to analyze texts and support responses using citations from instructional materials. Teachers provide opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction, but these discussions rarely have depth, with students often wandering off-topic unless closely supervised.
- Most teachers establish a classroom environment that focuses on academic achievement (9 out of 14 classrooms observed) and use appropriate lesson pacing to sustain students' attention on learning activities. Teachers' classroom management techniques lack consistency across the school though students generally understand

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

expected behavior. Some students regularly opted out of, or minimally apply themselves to, independent work, which can be a challenge to swift and consistent student achievement growth.

At-Risk Students. Staffing and scheduling constraints limit the amount and variety of supports available to students who are struggling academically, a sizeable contingent of Merrick's student body. However, the school had adequate ELL supports in place at the time of the renewal visit and an integrated co-teaching classroom at every grade level to serve students with special needs.

- A diminished staffing structure and vacancies on the at-risk team strain the human capital necessary to provide interventions to meet the needs of academically struggling students. Currently, one teacher provides ELA and math supports to 54 struggling students in grades one through three resulting in group sizes of up to ten students and few opportunities to accelerate the frequency or individualize the nature of interventions.
- Due to a recent resignation and difficulties in successfully hiring additional intervention providers, at the time of the renewal visit, Merrick provided no regular academic support services for students in grades four through six, although the school's recent state test scores evidence a high level of need in the upper grades.
- The school continues to use clear procedures for identifying students with disabilities, English language learners and those struggling academically. The school uses benchmark assessment results, state test scores and teacher referrals to identify students in need of leveled academic interventions. In contrast to previous years, the school now has an English-as-a- Second Language ("ESL") teacher on staff who reviews the results of the home language survey that all new entrants complete during the registration process and administers the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners ("NYSITELL") to determine students' need of English language acquisition support. The ESL teacher provides ongoing language acquisition support for the school's ten ELLs.
- In accordance with students' individualized education programs ("IEPs"), Merrick's special education teacher provides a combination of push-in and pull-out supports for 16 students with identified disabilities. Additionally, Merrick maintains an integrated co-teaching classroom at every grade level to serve students requiring more intensive support.
- The school currently monitors the progress and success of at-risk students through a variety of school-wide assessments. At-risk staff track students' rates of progress towards meeting personalized academic goals on a weekly basis. The special education coordinator makes referrals for evaluations for students who do not demonstrate sufficient progress towards grade level proficiency, but the school does not have clear guidelines or an appropriate period of tracking interventions.
- Teachers are generally aware of their students' progress toward meeting IEP goals, although special education teachers maintain primary monitoring responsibility. The at-risk staff compiles this information for review at weekly team meetings to determine the effectiveness of both academic and behavioral intervention and to suggest changes.
- During two weeks of summer pre-service training and in weekly sessions thereafter, leaders provide general education teachers with professional development on special

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

education, differentiation of instruction and the referral process for intervention services. At-risk staff report suggesting instructional strategies and additional resources as well as reviewing lesson plans during grade team meetings with general education teachers over the course of the year.

- The school provides regular opportunities for coordination between classroom teachers and at-risk program staff during grade level team meetings once a week. Teachers and intervention providers report additional frequent, yet informal, communication about student progress and instructional planning.

		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
RESULTS	Enrollment (N) Receiving Mandated Academic Services	(31)	(33)	(31)
	Tested on State Exams (N)	(21)	(19)	(22)
	Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	0	0	0
	Percent Proficient Statewide	15.5	5.0	5.2
RESULTS	ELL Enrollment (N)	(2)	(4)	(8)
	Tested on NYSESLAT ⁸ Exam (N)	(N/A)	(0)	(7)
	Percent ‘Proficient’ or Making Progress ⁹ on NYSESLAT	N/A	N/A	14.3

⁸ New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, a standardized state exam.

⁹ Defined as moving up at least one level of proficiency. Student scores fall into four categories/proficiency levels: Beginning; Intermediate; Advanced; and, Proficient.

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

IS THE SCHOOL AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

Merrick's board is rebuilding an effective and viable organization. While the education corporation board of trustees has had challenges in the fourth year of this charter term, in the last year the board has increased its numbers and stabilized with clear systems in place to carry out its oversight responsibilities with a focus on student achievement. During the current charter term, the board has been in general and substantial compliance with the terms of its charter, code of ethics, applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations with several exceptions including violations of by-laws, which have been rectified and are discussed further below.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Board Oversight. For a portion of this charter term, the board did not work effectively to achieve the school's mission and provide oversight of the total educational program. At times the board failed to act in a manner that focused on maximizing time and resources in pursuit of increasing student achievement. Frequently deadlocked on decisions and engaged in disputes, accusations of by-laws and open meetings laws violations nearly ground governance of the education corporation¹⁰ to a halt and each side tried to terminate leadership team members favored by the other. The Institute investigated, issued a violation letter and gave the board clear direction to re-govern the school. Until recently the board was only comprised of six members. In the fall of 2014, the board took on three new members with increased academic and governance experience to assist the current board in recognized deficiencies. The board composition includes a member of the parent-teacher organization. The Institute finds the current board has the capacity to effectively govern the school during the next charter term.

Up until the 2013-14 school year, the school worked closely with Victory. However, Victory had begun to change its business model and was no longer interested in providing full education management services to schools. Instead, it was moving to a menu of services from which a school could choose and was a new contract with the board that was never memorialized. The board was too distracted to properly seek a revision of its charter or finish negotiations with Victory. Late in the charter term, the Institute pointed out that Victory was not providing an optimal level of financial information to the board. In sum, the Merrick board was not practicing good oversight over its educational services partner. Therefore, the 2013-14 school year was a time of transition for the school in developing what services (financial and back office) it would purchase from Victory and what services it would now handle internally. It was not until the board retained counsel with significant charter school and special education knowledge, and brought on the new board members with strong charter school and academic program knowledge that it began the process of finishing negotiations with Victory. The Institute will separately review and approve the current draft services agreement prior to sending any proposed renewal charter to the Board of Regents.

As a result of the foregoing governance issues and to keep the board on track with good governance practices, the Institute will, should the SUNY Trustees approve a renewal charter,

¹⁰ Legally, charter schools in New York are not-for-profit education corporations. The board of any charter school is legally the board of the education corporation authorized to operate the charter school.

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

include in Merrick's charter agreement requirements that the school: 1) fix and maintain an odd number of board members under its by-laws; 2) fill any vacancies on the board within three months; and, 3) maintain academic expertise on the board at all times (less permitted vacancies).

- Board members utilize a variety of skills and expertise in their governance of the school. The board now believes it is well represented in critical skill areas including academic, management, legal and financial expertise but is looking to add at least one additional member.
- Until additional members joined Merrick's board, the committee structure of the board had been ineffective due to capacity. Now that the board is closer to capacity, the board fulfills its responsibilities primarily through its committee structure including executive, academic, finance and human resources committees.
- The board has also developed an on-going board training calendar to ensure the board stays informed as to its legal responsibilities as well as to reflect on the effectiveness of its governance. The board has also created a self evaluation in order to reflect on its role in school governance that shall include an evaluation of accountability, contributions, attendance and seek feedback from the school leader.
- The board holds the school leader accountable for student achievement and the school's day-to-day operations. The new school leader was under a 30-60-90 day plan of expectations and evaluation by the board until the school leader evaluation metric could be completed with the school leader's input.
- At each meeting, the board reviews a school dashboard that includes data on student achievement, attendance, discipline, finances and staff performance.

Organizational Capacity. Both early and late in the charter term Merrick had in place an organizational structure that supported its academic program. The change from Victory full time management, combined with governance challenges from the board resulted in two years where the school did not fully support the effective delivery of the educational program. The school struggled to recruit and retain high quality staff and did not recognize the necessity of increased human capital to address adequately the educational needs of students at-risk of academic failure. A lack of sufficient supporting instructional materials further impeded the school's ability to deliver high quality instruction that would enable students to demonstrate mastery of core academic skills. During the final two years of the current charter term, the board has worked to stabilize its facility, labor relations and school leadership and to put into place the staff, systems and procedures that will allow the school to effectively deliver the program. For this school year, the board appointed new leadership to return the academic program to a successful track. The recent addition of charter school operational experience to the board should also help get proper resources to the academic program to drive improved student outcomes.

- The school's administrative structure, as designed, establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The school's two new instructional leaders work closely to deliver the same leadership and oversight of the instructional program to ensure consistency.

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

- Merrick's large operations team handles payroll, human resources, facilities and maintenance issues, transportation and food services in-house while Victory continues fiscal management of the school. Merrick has not deployed its limited human capital resources strategically to meet the needs of struggling students. At the time of the renewal visit, three of four academic intervention team positions remained vacant. As a result, students in 4th-6th grades received no regular academic intervention services despite recent assessment data clearly reflecting a need for these services.
- Merrick began the current school year with numerous teaching vacancies and remained not fully staffed at the time of the visit, in the third month of the school year. According to school leaders, 15 of the school's 2013-14 teachers left prior to the September 6th start of the current school year. Instructional leaders and the board attributed much of this attrition to the New York City Department of Education (the "NYCDOE") lifting its teacher hiring freeze. Other school staff members reported that the departures stemmed largely from uncertainty about the school's future under yet another new leader.
- Teachers and instructional leaders reported that the school has too few instructional resources to maximize students' learning opportunities. For example, delays in the purchasing process resulted in the school starting the year without key tools such as language acquisition software to support ELLs. Additionally, Merrick lacked an effective system of inventory control at the time of the renewal visit: multiple staff members indicated that materials had been "lost" or "disappeared" with teacher and leader transitions. The school reports an inventory of all instructional media and resources was completed after the renewal visit.
- Merrick maintains adequate student enrollment and community demand exceeds the school's capacity. The school reports a waitlist of well over 500 prospective students.
- Merrick has set forth procedures and policies to record and monitor its enrollment and retention of ELLs, students with disabilities and FRPL students, with a clear focus on developing additional strategies to recruit ELLs who tend to be geographically separated from the school. Based on these procedures and good faith recruitment efforts, the school is likely to meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets set by the SUNY Trustees.

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

FAITHFULNESS TO CHARTER & PARENT SATISFACTION

As part of their initial application and their Application for Charter Renewal, schools identify the Key Design Elements that reflect their mission and distinguish the school. The table below reflects the intended Key Design Elements and indicates for each if the school is implementing the element as included in the school's charter.

Key Design Elements	Evident?
A commitment to students, parents and the Southeast Queens community to provide an academic program that will prepare students to meet and exceed New York State performance standards;	+
A curriculum in ELA and mathematics that includes scientifically-based research to support its success;	+
The use of data to inform instruction and in providing differentiated instruction to support individual student needs;	+
Established learning community where teachers use student work, research and best practices to improve student performance;	-
A comprehensive professional development program;	-
A summer homework program to address any regression in learning;	+
One hour and thirty minutes of ELA instruction daily based on balanced literacy, including a reader's and writer's workshop, as modeled by the National Writing Project and Great Source Writing Program;	+
One hour and thirty minutes of daily mathematics instruction, using Everyday Mathematics, enrichment and experiential learning; and,	+
A comprehensive assessment system.	+

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

Parent Satisfaction. The Institute compiled data from the NYCDOE's 2013-14 NYC School Survey. The NYCDOE distributes the survey to families each year to compile data about school culture, instruction, and systems for improvement. Results from 2013-14 indicate that the parents/guardians and students who responded to the survey are satisfied with the school. The Institute notes, however, that the survey response rate is low.

2013-14
Response Rate: 29%
Instructional Core: 91%
Systems for Improvement: 87%
School Culture: 88%

Persistence in Enrollment. The Institute cannot access comparable data for the New York City district or local CSD to provide comparison but provides the following information on students' whose families choose Merrick for their education and persist year to year with that choice. Note that the school's move to a new facility during January 2014 potentially contributed to a decline in its retention rate during the 2013-14 school year.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Percent of Eligible Students Returning From Previous Year	82.7	81.3	77.8

COMPLIANCE

Governance. Merrick has recently added new school leadership and several new board members with successful charter school experience including school development, management and teaching. Through these changes, the board has designed, and is implementing, systems, processes, policies and procedures to better understand its oversight role including holding the school leadership and Victory accountable for academic fiscal results. Previously, the board had not implemented and abided by adequate and appropriate systems, processes, policies and procedures to ensure the effective governance and oversight of the school throughout all of the current charter term. After being issued a violation letter by the Institute in March of 2014, and with the loss of Victory as a full education management provider, the board took an active role at approaching its governance issues through the assistance of outside counsel and a consultant. Prior, for about two years, the board had not demonstrated a thorough understanding of its role in holding the school leadership accountable for academic results as well as fiscal soundness.

- Late in the charter term, the board did not materially comply with the terms of its by-laws. In the spring of 2014, only six trustees sat on the board even though the board had set the number of trustees at seven. This deficit was rectified and 10 trustees currently sit on the board. Further, as a deadlocked board, it did not comply with the by-laws provision to

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

annually elect officers. As a result, officers served in a holdover capacity, which created a leadership vacuum on the board. The board, with the assistance of outside counsel is now in the process of nominating and electing officers in accordance with its by-laws.

- Similarly, the board did not have functioning standing committees as articulated in its by-laws. While many SUNY authorized charter schools do not perfectly mirror their by-laws in this respect, the board as a whole usually handles the committee functions. During renewal visit in November 2014, the board, upon approval of the remaining members for a 10 member board, voted members to committees, outlined the roles and goals for each of those committees and began its work through the committee framework. The added board capacity leads the Institute to believe that the committees will function properly or the board will seek to properly amend the by-laws to handle committee functions as a commit of the whole.
- The board as a whole receives reports on fiscal and academic performance. While continuing to work more effectively to monitor academics, the board has been successful in monitoring the school's overall fiscal health during a time of labor negotiations and a facility move.
- When its relationship with Victory changed, the board, which was distracted with broader issues, did not appropriately seek an amendment to its charter from SUNY.
- The board has not always kept appropriate minutes of its meetings during the current charter term. The board was cited for this failure in 2011 and 2012 in Management Letters from their auditors. In response to an Institute March 2014 violation letter, the board admitted that it had no record of detailed meeting minutes demonstrating discussion, resolutions, and/or votes on pertinent governance matters including records of votes to approve the new facility lease. The board has hired outside counsel to assist in many of the legal aspects of governance as a public body and there is a clear improvement in board minutes and memorializing of board actions since then.
- While board members made cross-allegations of conflicts of interest, the Institute found no clear evidence that the board did not generally avoid creating conflicts of interest due to insufficient meeting minutes, except in one case that involved a consultant contract as described in the Fiscal Soundness section, below.

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

- **Complaints.** The Institute has received no formal parent complaints regarding the school and few informal complaints with the exception of complaints about the move from the previous facility to the new facility, which was handled poorly. As noted above, the Institute received several board governance complaints, but only two were substantiated.
- **By-laws.** The education corporation's by-laws are legally sufficient, but will require amendment consistent with the additional terms of the proposed renewal charter.
- **Code of Ethics.** While the education corporation supplied a code of ethics that was updated to comply with New York General Municipal Law, it is not clear that the code is appropriately distributed and executed by all trustees, officers and staff. The Institute will

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

work with the board to update the code of ethics to ensure it is appropriately distributed and acknowledged.

- [Open Meetings Law](#). Due to insufficient board meeting minutes and lack of clarity regarding board votes on key decisions, the board did not substantially comply with the New York Open Meetings Law. Coming into the last year of the current charter term, the board has put systems in place and sought legal counsel to assist with compliance, which has already been evidenced by minutes submitted for the 2014-15 school year.

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

IS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION FISCALLY SOUND?

Based on evidence collected through the renewal review, Merrick is fiscally sound. The education corporation has adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. The Institute found that the board chair entered into a facility lease without a full vetting by the board of trustees or a fair market analysis of the cost. The Institute also found a consultant contract contained processed payments that were in excess of the contract agreement and no evidence of invoice review, approval or written work product or presentation of results to the board.

Victory supports Merrick in the area of some academic and fiscal operations under the terms of a service agreement. Merrick's financial model is intended to ensure that a fully enrolled school is financially sustainable, operating the school's program solely through public funding. The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard, a multi-year financial data and analysis for SUNY authorized charter schools appears below in the Appendix.

Budgeting and Long-Range Planning. Working in partnership with Victory, Merrick has employed clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures throughout the charter term.

- Realistic budgets are developed by Victory finance and accounting personnel with input from the school principal and the finance committee of the board.
- The budget is submitted for approval to the full board of trustees, after which Victory is responsible for its implementation.
- The board routinely monitors budgets and it analyzes significant variances and makes contingent budget modifications as necessary.
- Victory in conjunction with the school leadership and school board creates realistic long range budgetary forecasts based on projected enrollments, revenues and program costs.
- The renewal application contained a realistic projected enrollment chart over the next charter term and related conservative budget projections.
- As reflected in the annual independent audit report, the education corporation has set aside a reserve fund as required under SUNY's new charter agreements. The Institute requires education corporations to create a dissolution reserve fund to be established in the amount of \$75,000 per school.
- With the revision to eliminate the 6th grade Merrick needs to provide the Institute with revised projected five-year budgets and enrollment charts to reflect changes while maintaining a balanced budget.

Internal Controls. The education corporation has established and maintained appropriate fiscal policies, procedures and controls. Written policies address key issues including financial reporting, revenues, procurement, expenditures, payroll, banking, capital assets and record retention. Victory has contractual responsibility for fiscal operations including recording and tracking revenues and expenses, and supervising and maintaining all files and records pertaining to business operation of the education corporation. The Institute found instances where Victory, on

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

behalf of the board, processed consultant contract payments without proper approval of work completion, made payments outside of the time frame of the original contract, and paid expenses that did not correlate with consultant service dates. While members of the board justified some of the costs, internal controls were not properly followed.

- Victory helps guide all fiscal internal controls and procedures at Merrick.
- Independent audit reports continue to note no material weaknesses.
- The Institute reviewed board consultant contracts and related invoices and found the above irregularities, which reflect poor internal control practices.
- The Institute determined that the new facility lease was entered into without approval from the board of trustees and without a full fair market value analysis of costs. While none of the board members wanted to try to undo the lease as the new facility has more space, and legally the school probably could not, the process reflects less than adequate internal controls and governance.

Financial Reporting. Merrick has complied with financial reporting requirements by providing the Institute and NYSED with required financial reports that are on time, complete and follow generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

- Independent audits of annual financial statements have received unqualified opinions with no material weaknesses or instances of non-compliance observed.

Financial Condition. Merrick maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations; cash on hand continues to be adequate to maintain the academic program.

- The education corporation has maintained adequate cash flow to cover current bills and those coming due shortly.
- Merrick has posted fiscally strong composite-score ratings on the SUNY Fiscal Dashboard¹¹ with the exception of one year (2013-14) when the non-operating loss from the abandonment of leasehold improvements was booked as a loss of (\$643,479). According to the board chair this was an efficient breach of the prior lease that will result in long term savings to the education corporation.
- Merrick's net assets, after booking the leasehold improvement loss, as of June 30, 2014 was just under \$1 million.
- Merrick has no long-term debt, and has consistently maintained a good to excellent Debt to Asset Ratio.

¹¹ The composite score assists in measuring the financial health of an education corporation using a blended score that measures the school's performances on key financial indicators. The blended score offsets financial strengths against areas where there may be financial weaknesses.

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard, provided in the Appendix, presents color coded tables and charts indicating that Merrick has demonstrated fiscal soundness over the majority of its charter term.¹²

¹² 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.

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

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

To the extent that Merrick has met or come close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals and the board has implemented new systems to support the school with better understanding of its governance responsibilities, the school's plans for the future are reasonable, feasible and achievable when taken together with the Institute's recommendations for conditions of renewal.

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.

MISSION FOR THE NEXT CHARTER TERM

The mission of Merrick Academy is to become one of the finest public schools in America. Merrick Academy is built on the philosophy that all children can learn and the Academy ensures that all students meet or exceed New York State performance standards. The focus of the Academy is on the core skills of reading, language and mathematics. Merrick Academy is organized to provide an extended day, a high degree of individualized instruction, and an innovative, research based academic curriculum.

Plans for the Educational Program. Merrick plans to truncate its grade span such that the school will serve students in Kindergarten through 5th grade in the next charter term. The Institute has further proposed that the school cannot instruct students in any middle school grades, 6-8, during the renewal charter term. The school has recently executed a new agreement with its education management organization for more intensive academic support.

	Current Charter Term	End of Next Charter Term
Enrollment	540	475
Grade Span	K-6	K-5
Teaching Staff	37	33
Days of Instruction	180	180

RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

Plans for Board Oversight and Governance. Board members express interest in continuing to support Merrick in a future charter term.

Fiscal & Facility Plans. Merrick plans to remain in its current private facility for the next charter term. The education corporation board's plans include three phases of renovations and improvements to enhance the total educational program.

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

APPENDIX: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Mission Statement

The mission of the Merrick Academy-Queens Public Charter School is to create one of the finest public schools in America through use of the charter school process; to serve “at risk” children of Springfield Gardens and Jamaica, Queens; and to create a model for charter public school design that can be replicated in disadvantaged neighborhoods everywhere.

Board of Trustees

Board Member Name ¹³	Position
Gerald Karikari	Chair
Marc Titus	Vice Chair/Treasurer
Anna Ramroop	Secretary
Mavis Smook	Trustee
Monica Perry	Trustee
Lula Fischer	Trustee
James Ding	Trustee
Stanton Brown	Trustee
Miriam Raccah	Trustee
Michael Zampella	Trustee

School Characteristics

School Year	Proposed Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ¹⁴	Proposed Grades	Revised Grades Served	Actual Grades
2010-11	540	--	492	K-6	K-6	K-6
2011-12	540	--	497	K-6	K-6	K-6
2012-13	540	--	493	K-6	K-6	K-6
2013-14	540	--	485	K-6	K-6	K-6
2014-15	540	--	494	K-6	K-6	K-6

¹³ Source: The Institute’s Board Records at the time of the Renewal review.

¹⁴ Source: The Institute’s Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

APPENDIX: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Student Demographics

	2011-12	% of School Enrollment	2012-13	% of School Enrollment	2013-14 ¹⁵	% of NYC CSD 29 Enrollment
		% of NYC CSD 29 Enrollment		% of NYC CSD 29 Enrollment		% of School Enrollment
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	1	0	1	0	
Black or African American	91	69	89	68	88	
Hispanic	3	13	3	13	4	
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	6	15	7	15	6	
White	0	2	0	2	0	
Multiracial	0	0	1	0	1	
Special Populations¹⁶						
Students with Disabilities	7	--	7	14	6	
English Language Learners	0	8	0	8	2	
Free/Reduced Lunch¹⁷						
Eligible for Free Lunch	53	63	58	64	--	
Eligible for Reduced–Price Lunch	15	9	13	11	--	
Economically Disadvantaged	75	--	77	83	69	

¹⁵ The Institute derived the 2013-14 Students with Disabilities, ELL and Economically Disadvantaged statistics from the school's October 2013 student enrollment report to NYSED (2013-14 BEDS Report). District data are not yet available. Because NYSED releases data up to a full year after the conclusion of any one school year, the data presented in this table may differ from current information reported by the school and included in this report.

¹⁶ District Students with Disabilities information for 2011-12 are not available.

¹⁷ School FRPL enrollment data for 2013-14 and district Economically Disadvantaged enrollment data are not available.

APPENDIX: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

School Leaders

School Year(s)	Name(s) and Title(s)
March 2010- August 2010	Carolyn Thomas, Interim Acting Principal
September 2010- November 2010	Melissa Muhammed, Director of Strategic Planning and Staff Development
January 2011-December 2011	Roberta Cummings-Smith, Director of Strategic Planning and Staff Development
January 2012-July 2013	Raquel Pottinger-Bird, Principal/ Director of Curriculum and Instruction
2013-14	Nichole Griffin, Interim Acting Principal
July 2014 to Present	Karen Valbrun, Principal

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2009-10	Subsequent Renewal Visit	Institute	November 6, 2009
2011-12	Evaluation Visit	Institute	February 15-16, 2012
2014-15	Subsequent Renewal Visit	Institute	November 13, 2014

Conduct of the Renewal Visit

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members		Title
November 13, 2014	Natasha Howard, PhD		Managing Director of Program
	Heather Wendling		Senior Analyst
	Andrea Richards		Program Analyst
	Jenn David-Lang		External Consultant

APPENDIX: FISCAL DASHBOARD



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

Merrick Academy-Queens Public Charter School

SCHOOL INFORMATION					
Opened 2000-01					
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
FINANCIAL POSITION					
Assets					
Current Assets					
Cash and Cash Equivalents - GRAPH 1	322,249	1,089,210	2,186,775	2,365,750	1,007,052
Grants and Contracts Receivable	247,295	135,079	81,317	1,189	71,233
Accounts Receivable	-	-	-	81,822	-
Prepaid Expenses	110,686	52,706	179,424	109,050	102,127
Contributions and Other Receivables	75,009	-	-	-	177,520
Total Current Assets - GRAPH 1	755,239	1,276,995	2,447,516	2,557,811	1,357,932
Property, Building and Equipment, net	870,996	1,076,005	973,403	806,691	422,915
Other Assets	49,750	49,750	49,750	172,810	-
Total Assets - GRAPH 1	1,675,985	2,402,750	3,470,669	3,537,312	1,780,847
Liabilities and Net Assets					
Current Liabilities					
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	334,941	234,743	261,946	61,551	91,204
Accrued Payroll and Benefits	725,685	493,091	470,689	589,993	583,774
Deferred Revenue	8,000	-	41,122	-	12,411
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	-	-	-	-	-
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable	16,325	-	-	-	-
Other	-	370,593	380,416	378,386	98,006
Total Current Liabilities - GRAPH 1	1,084,951	1,098,427	1,154,173	1,029,930	785,395
L-T Debt and Notes Payable, net current maturities	16,195	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities - GRAPH 1	1,101,146	1,098,427	1,154,173	1,029,930	785,395
Net Assets					
Unrestricted	574,839	1,304,323	2,316,496	2,507,382	995,452
Temporarily restricted	-	-	-	-	-
Total Net Assets	574,839	1,304,323	2,316,496	2,507,382	995,452
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	1,675,985	2,402,750	3,470,669	3,537,312	1,780,847
ACTIVITIES					
Operating Revenue					
Resident Student Enrollment	6,150,575	6,670,181	6,679,174	6,664,969	6,673,694
Students with Disabilities	-	14,286	10,120	39,672	204,651
Grants and Contracts					
State and local	-	28,541	39,740	-	-
Federal - Title and IDEA	208,684	228,975	151,073	216,619	173,769
Federal - Other	135,242	30,668	113,016	11,877	2,073
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program	166,991	158,875	173,635	140,996	78,506
Total Operating Revenue	6,661,492	7,131,526	7,166,758	7,074,133	7,132,693
Expenses					
Regular Education	4,956,546	4,773,127	4,435,056	5,176,765	6,261,725
SPED	270,943	200,769	513,574	412,335	529,151
Regular Education & SPED (combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Program Services	5,227,489	4,973,896	4,948,630	5,589,100	6,790,876
Management and General	1,367,594	1,086,676	1,217,588	1,300,672	1,045,807
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses - GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4	6,595,083	6,060,572	6,166,218	6,889,772	7,836,683
Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations	66,409	1,070,954	1,000,540	184,361	(703,990)
Support and Other Revenue					
Contributions	2,091	-	-	-	-
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Income	1,561	1,508	11,633	6,525	(807,940)
Net assets released from restriction	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support and Other Revenue	3,652	1,508	11,633	6,525	(807,940)
Total Unrestricted Revenue	6,665,144	7,133,034	7,178,391	6,896,649	6,324,753
Total Temporally Restricted Revenue	-	-	-	184,009	-
Total Revenue - GRAPHS 2 & 3	6,665,144	7,133,034	7,178,391	7,080,658	6,324,753
Change in Net Assets	70,061	1,072,462	1,012,173	190,886	(1,511,930)
Net Assets - Beginning of Year - GRAPH 2	504,778	574,838	1,304,323	2,316,496	2,507,382
Prior Year Adjustment(s)	-	(342,979)	-	-	-
Net Assets - End of Year - GRAPH 2	574,839	1,304,321	2,316,496	2,507,382	995,452

APPENDIX: FISCAL DASHBOARD



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

Merrick Academy-Queens Public Charter School

SCHOOL INFORMATION - (Continued)

Functional Expense Breakdown

Personnel Service	
Administrative Staff Personnel	416,717
Instructional Personnel	2,301,658
Non-Instructional Personnel	26,390
Personnel Services (Combined)	35,867
Total Salaries and Staff	-
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes	2,744,765
Retirement	602,933
Management Company Fees	-
Building and Land Rent / Lease	1,354,003
Staff Development	822,829
Professional Fees, Consultant & Purchased Services	18,505
Marketing / Recruitment	265,069
Student Supplies, Materials & Services	7,369
Depreciation	179,699
Other	148,712
Total Expenses	451,199

2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
416,717	274,657	276,082	574,682	747,337
2,301,658	1,915,358	2,012,653	2,476,621	2,254,411
26,390	35,867	64,138	148,329	210,969
-	-	-	-	-
2,744,765	2,225,882	2,352,873	3,199,632	3,212,717
602,933	514,788	638,492	919,599	886,392
-	25,010	-	-	-
1,354,003	750,000	750,000	600,000	624,000
822,829	614,014	633,782	789,188	1,095,159
18,505	39,652	27,376	232,117	166,323
265,069	718,790	599,216	61,056	85,895
7,369	12,933	2,630	3,649	7,392
179,699	318,988	396,098	365,039	211,039
148,712	209,041	211,170	199,919	124,211
451,199	631,473	554,581	519,573	1,423,555
6,595,083	6,060,572	6,166,218	6,889,772	7,836,683

SCHOOL ANALYSIS

ENROLLMENT

Chartered Enroll	525
Revised Enroll	-
Actual Enroll - GRAPH 4	540
Chartered Grades	494
Revised Grades	492

2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
525	540	540	540	540
-	-	-	-	-
494	492	497	493	449
K-5	K-6	K-6	K-6	K-6
K-6	-	-	-	-

Primary School District: New York City

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

12,443	13,527	13,527	13,527	13,527
0.0%	8.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Average -
5 Yrs.
OR Charter
Term

PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

Revenue

Operating	13,472
Other Revenue and Support	7
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	13,479

14,495	14,426	14,349	15,869
3	23	13	(1,798)
14,498	14,449	14,362	14,072

14,522

(350)

14,172

Expenses

Program Services	10,572
Management and General, Fundraising	2,766
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	13,338
% of Program Services	79.3%
% of Management and Other	20.7%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses - GRAPH 5	1.1%

10,110	9,961	11,337	15,109
2,209	2,451	2,638	2,327
12,318	12,412	13,975	17,436
82.1%	80.3%	81.1%	86.7%
79.3%	80.3%	81.1%	86.7%
17.9%	19.7%	18.9%	13.3%
1.1%	16.4%	2.8%	-19.3%

11,418

2,478

13,896

81.9%

18.1%

2.0%

Student to Faculty Ratio

12.4	9.3	13.8	12.3	12.1
------	-----	------	------	------

Faculty to Admin Ratio

6.7	4.8	18.0	4.0	2.8
-----	-----	------	-----	-----

2.1

Fiscally Strong

Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - GRAPH 6

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

1.0	2.0	2.7	2.7	1.3
Fiscally Adequate	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Adequate

2.1

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)

(329,712)	178,568	1,293,343	1,527,881	572,537
-4.9%	2.5%	18.0%	22.2%	9.1%
0.7	1.2	2.1	2.5	1.7
HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Poor	Poor	Good	Good	Good

648,523

9.4%

1.6

MEDIUM

Good

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)

0.6	1.1	2.0	2.4	1.6
HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good

1.5

MEDIUM

Good

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)

0.7	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.4
MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	LOW
Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

0.4

LOW

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.)

0.6	2.2	4.3	4.1	1.5
HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM
Poor	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good

2.5

MEDIUM

Good

APPENDIX: FISCAL DASHBOARD



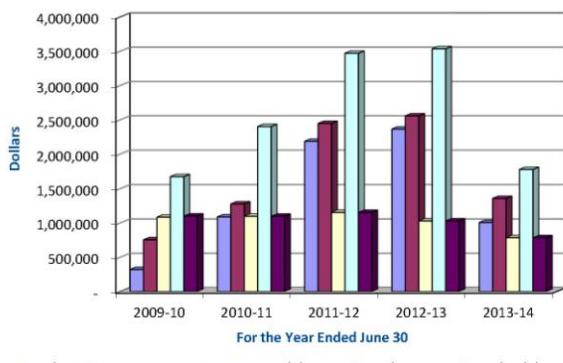
Charter Schools Institute

The State University of New York

Merrick Academy-Queens Public Charter School

GRAPH 1

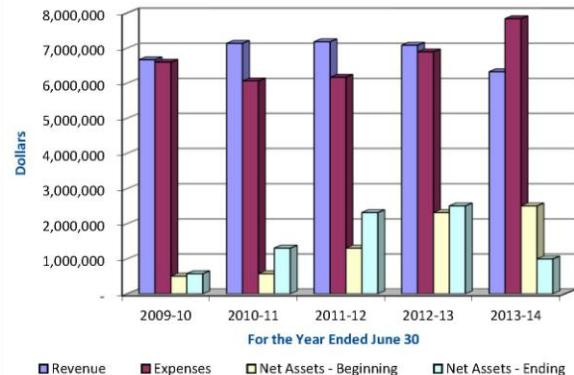
Cash, Assets and Liabilities



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

GRAPH 2

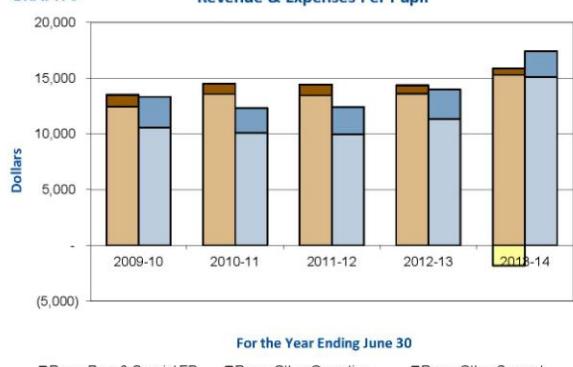
Revenue, Expenses and Net Assets



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

GRAPH 3

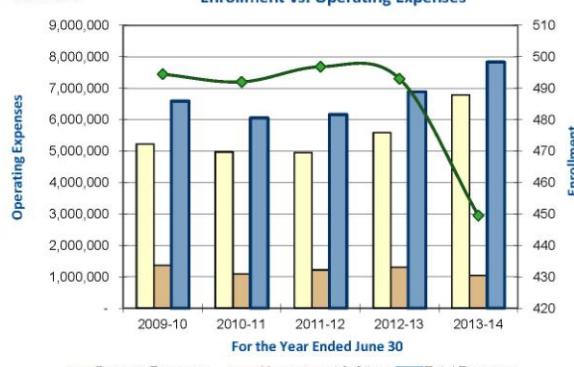
Revenue & Expenses Per Pupil



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

GRAPH 4

Enrollment vs. Operating Expenses



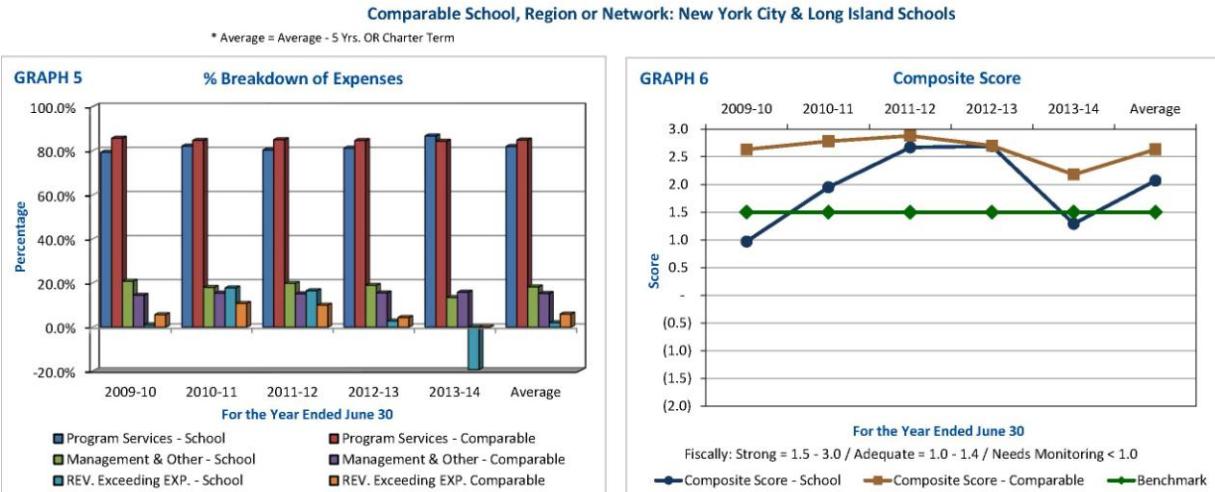
This chart illustrates to what extent the school's operating expenses have followed its student enrollment pattern. A baseline assumption that this data tests is that operating expenses increase with each additional student served. This chart also compares and contrasts growth trends of both, giving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

APPENDIX: FISCAL DASHBOARD



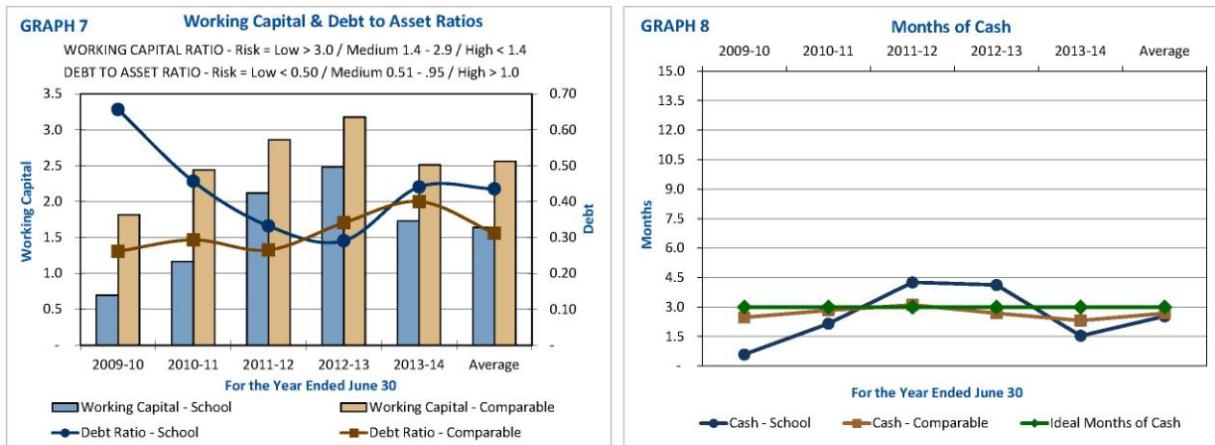
Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

Merrick Academy-Queens Public Charter School



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. W/C indicates if a school has enough short-term assets to cover its immediate liabilities/short term debt. Debt to Asset 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.

APPENDIX: PERFORMANCE SUMMARIES

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: English Language Arts Merrick Academy Queens Charter School



	2011-12						2012-13						2013-14								
	Grades Served: K-6			MET	Grades Served: K-6			MET	Grades Served: K-6			MET	Grades Served: K-6			MET	Grades Served: K-6				
	Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		
ABSOLUTE MEASURES	3	53.2 (77)	53.1 (64)		3	36.1 (72)	37.7 (61)		3	9.7 (72)	12.1 (58)		3	9.7 (72)	12.1 (58)						
1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State exam.	4	57.7 (78)	62.7 (59)		4	22.2 (72)	20.0 (65)		4	33.8 (77)	30.4 (69)		4	33.8 (77)	30.4 (69)						
	5	67.6 (68)	66.2 (65)		5	20.5 (73)	21.2 (66)		5	22.5 (71)	21.0 (62)		5	22.5 (71)	21.0 (62)						
	6	55.0 (40)	55.0 (40)		6	10.5 (19)	10.5 (19)		6	4.3 (23)	5.6 (18)		6	4.3 (23)	5.6 (18)						
	7	(0)	(0)		7	(0)	(0)		7	(0)	(0)		7	(0)	(0)						
	8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)		8	(0)	(0)						
	All	58.6 (263)	59.6 (228)	NO	All	25.0 (236)	24.6 (211)		NA	All	20.6 (243)	20.3 (207)		All	20.6 (243)	20.3 (207)	NA				
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Level Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO	YES	Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO						
	3-6	153	135		3-6	99			3-6	91	89		3-6	91	89						
COMPARATIVE MEASURES	Comparison: Queens District 29			YES	Comparison: Queens District 29				Comparison: Queens District 29				Comparison: Queens District 29				Comparison: Queens District 29				
3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		
	3-6	59.6	48.3		3-6	24.6	23.9		3-6	20.3	25.4		3-6	20.3	25.4		3-6	20.3	25.4	NO	
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at proficiency on the state exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students.	% ED Actual Predicted Effect Size			YES	% ED Actual Predicted Effect Size				% ED Actual Predicted Effect Size				% ED Actual Predicted Effect Size				% ED Actual Predicted Effect Size				
	53.2	58.6	53.1		0.38	73.2	25.0	23.0	0.15	78.0	20.6	22.8	-0.18	78.0	20.6	22.8	-0.18	78.0	20.6	22.8	NO
GROWTH MEASURE	Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		
5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	4			YES	4				4				4				4				
	5				5				5				5				5				
	6				6				6				6				6				
	7				7				7				7				7				
	8				8				8				8				8				
	All	56.6	50.0		All	53.5	50.0		All	47.7	50.0		All	47.7	50.0		All	47.7	50.0	NO	

APPENDIX: PERFORMANCE SUMMARIES

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: Mathematics

Merrick Academy Queens Charter School



	2011-12 Grades Served: K-6			MET	2012-13 Grades Served: K-6			MET	2013-14 Grades Served: K-6			MET	
	All Students % (N)		2+ Years Students % (N)		All Students % (N)		2+ Years Students % (N)		All Students % (N)		2+ Years Students % (N)		
	Grades	All Students % (N)	Grades	2+ Years Students % (N)	Grades	All Students % (N)	Grades	2+ Years Students % (N)	Grades	All Students % (N)	Grades	2+ Years Students % (N)	
ABSOLUTE MEASURES	3	62.3 (77)	4	59.4 (64)	3	31.9 (72)	4	34.4 (61)	3	26.4 (72)	4	31.0 (58)	
1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State exam.	4	71.8 (78)	5	72.9 (59)	4	34.7 (72)	5	32.3 (65)	4	45.5 (77)	5	42.0 (69)	
	5	86.8 (68)	6	86.2 (65)	5	30.1 (73)	6	27.3 (66)	5	25.4 (71)	6	24.2 (62)	
	6	70.0 (40)	7	70.0 (40)	6	21.1 (19)	7	21.1 (19)	6	13.0 (23)	7	16.7 (18)	
	7	(0)	8	(0)	7	(0)	8	(0)	7	(0)	8	(0)	
	8	(0)	All	72.4 (228)	All	31.4 (236)	All	30.3 (211)	All	30.9 (243)	All	31.4 (207)	NA
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Level Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's NCLB accountability system.	Grades	PI	AMO	YES	Grades	PLI	AMO	NA	Grades	PLI	AMO	NA	
	3-6	170	148		3-6	105			3-6	99	86		
COMPARATIVE MEASURES	Comparison: Queens District 29			YES	Comparison: Queens District 29			YES	Comparison: Queens District 29			YES	
3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		
	3-6	72.4	54.2		3-6	30.3	23.5		3-6	31.4	30.0		
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at proficiency on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students.	% ED Actual Predicted Effect Size			YES	% ED Actual Predicted Effect Size			YES	% ED Actual Predicted Effect Size			NO	
	53.2	72.6	62.1		53.2	31.4	26.0		73.2	30.9	31.5		-0.03
GROWTH MEASURE	Grades School State			YES	Grades School State			YES	Grades School State			NO	
5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	4				4	53.3			4	51.7			
	5				5	54.1			5	33.7			
	6				6	38.8			6	46.9			
	7				7	0.0			7				
	8				8	0.0			8				
	All	62.8	50.0		All	51.9	50.0		All	43.5	50.0		