



# Renewal Recommendation Report South Buffalo Charter School

**Report Date:** January 23, 2015

**Visit Date:** March 11, 2014

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# 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”).

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

## SOUTH BUFFALO CHARTER SCHOOL

### BACKGROUND

Opened in September 2000, South Buffalo Charter School (“South Buffalo”) is now in its fifteenth year of operation and provides a quality school option to public school students in Buffalo. South Buffalo’s focus on learning is driven by research, data and collaborative reflection to increase student achievement. South Buffalo remains an independent not-for-profit education corporation. The school’s mission states:

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

The school currently serves 804 students in grades K-8 in a new, unique private facility at 154 South Ogden Street, Buffalo, NY, in the Buffalo City School District, which is financed by South Buffalo.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Buffalo is an independent charter school success story. Its founders proposed a rather large, K-4 school that nearly doubled its enrollment in its second year. While many managed schools of the same size, age and ambition did not make it through SUNY’s initial renewal process, South Buffalo has twice been renewed for full terms of five years. During a previous charter term (2008), the school’s workforce was unionized by New York State United Teachers. Throughout, an experienced and stable education corporation board of trustees (the “board”) has focused on academic outcomes, sound fiscal outcomes and long term facilities planning. South Buffalo, while located in a geographically distinct section of Buffalo, draws students from one of the poorest performing school districts in New York. South Buffalo’s student population has consistently comprised approximately 80-90 percent of students who are economically disadvantaged. As part of a broader mission of serving Buffalo’s students, South Buffalo backfills student enrollment in every grade.

Throughout the charter term, South Buffalo met or came close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals in the key areas of English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics. In ELA, the school met or came close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals, but in 2013-14, the most recent state assessment year, did not surpass its benchmark on the Institute’s comparative effect size measure, which compares the school’s performance to all other schools statewide with a similar percentage of economically disadvantaged students. On that measure, South Buffalo performed lower than expected and thus the school came close to meeting its ELA goal during that year. In mathematics, the school met its Accountability Plan goal throughout the charter term. In 2013-14, South Buffalo

## SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

met the benchmark for its effect size measure in mathematics by performing as predicted based on its percentage of economically disadvantaged students. However, the school's 8<sup>th</sup> grade students performed better to a large degree and, with the exception of 7<sup>th</sup> grade, each grade above the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade performed better than the next lowest grade providing evidence that the school is preparing students for high school.

### NOTEWORTHY

South Buffalo actively evaluates the school program and takes direct action in response to state test results. Based on a careful analysis, the school fully informs the entire staff about student outcomes, adjusts classroom assignments in the lowest performing grades and develops action plans including working with teachers in grades below the identified critical grades.

# RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

## RECOMMENDATION: FULL-TERM RENEWAL

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the Application for Charter Renewal of South Buffalo Charter School for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal, with a projected total enrollment of 900 students.

To earn a Subsequent Full-Term Renewal of five years, a school must have met or come close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals during the Accountability Period.<sup>1</sup>

## 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.<sup>2</sup>

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. SUNY<sup>3</sup> and the New York State Board of Regents finalized the methodology for setting targets in October 2012, and the Institute communicated specific 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

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<sup>1</sup> SUNY Renewal Policies, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> See New York Education Law § 2852(2).

<sup>3</sup> 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.

# 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,<sup>4</sup> 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.

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<sup>4</sup> State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks, version 5.0, revised May 2012, available at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/SUNY-Renewal-Benchmarks.pdf>.



# RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

## IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

South Buffalo is an academic success based on its record of meeting or coming close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals and evidence regarding its educational program compiled at the time of renewal that demonstrates the school is educationally sound.

At the outset of the Accountability Period,<sup>5</sup> 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 ELA and math goal attainment. Because the Act requires charters be held “accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results”<sup>6</sup> and states the educational programs at a charter school must “meet or exceed the student performance standards adopted by the board of regents”<sup>7</sup> 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 or above proficiency on state exams?;
- Comparative performance, i.e., how did the school perform 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. South Buffalo 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 for each goal 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,<sup>8</sup> 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.

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<sup>5</sup> 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 Plan covers the last year of the previous charter term through the second to last year of the charter term under review.

<sup>6</sup> Education Law § 2850(2)(f).

<sup>7</sup> Education Law § 2854(1)(d).

<sup>8</sup> While the state has recalibrated the absolute Annual Measurable Objective, the Institute will only report on the 2013-14 results, not on those for 2012-13.

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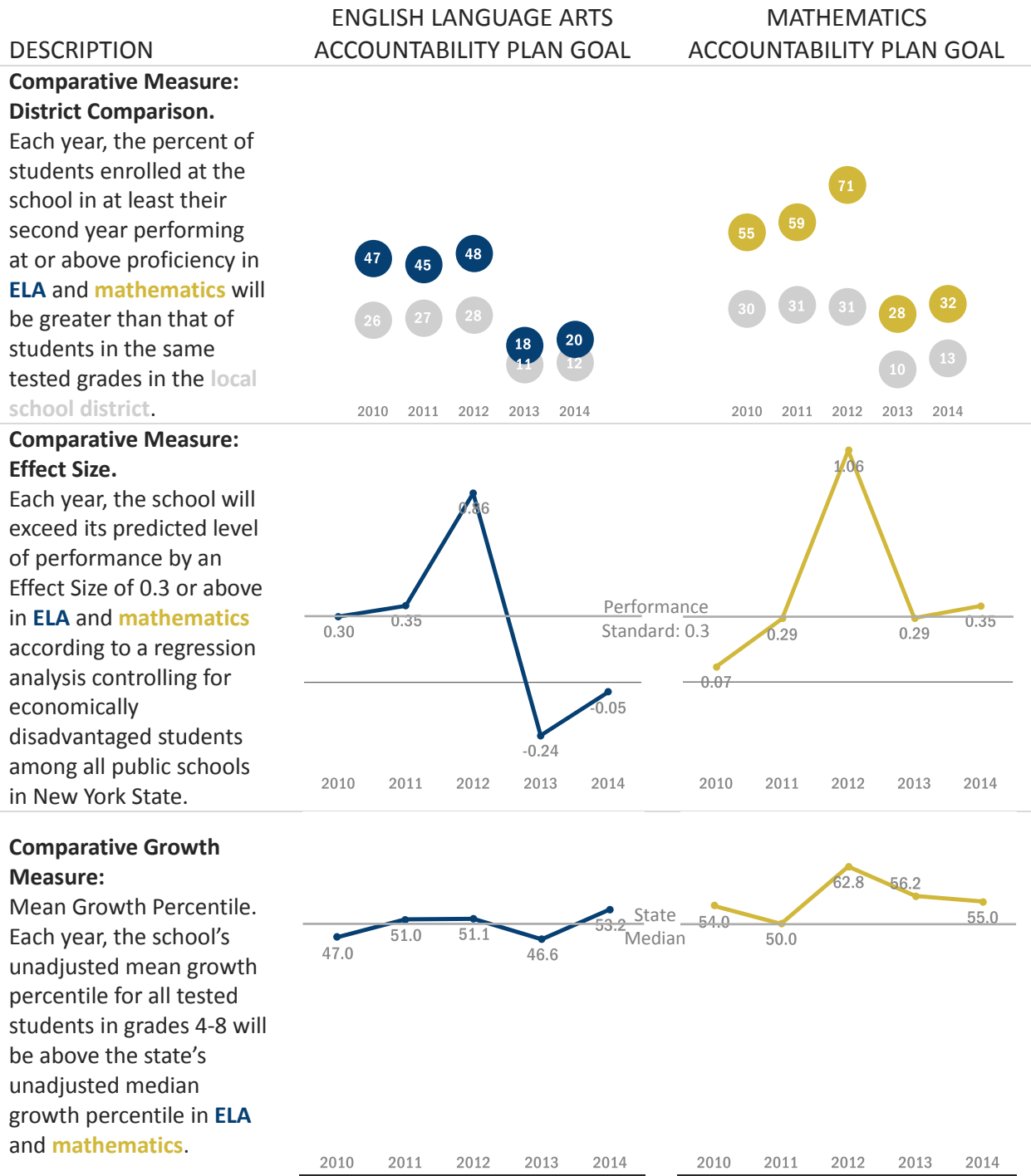
The Accountability Plan also includes science and No Child Left Behind Act (“NCLB”) goals. For each goal in the Accountability Plan, specific outcome measures define the level of performance necessary to meet that goal. Please note that for schools located in New York City, the Institute uses the Community School District (“CSD”) as the local school district.

**Academic Attainment.** Throughout the charter term, South Buffalo consistently met or came close to meeting its key academic Accountability Plan goal in ELA as measured by its comparative and growth measures. The school consistently met its mathematics goal throughout the charter term also as measured by its comparative and growth performance. The school continues to meet its science and NCLB goals.

Throughout the Accountability Period, South Buffalo consistently outperformed its local district in ELA. During 2012-13 and 2013-14, the school performed lower than expected relative to schools throughout the state that serve the same grades and that are similarly economically situated. The school’s ELA achievement grew at a pace faster than the median rate throughout the state during 2013-14. This data, along with the school’s growing trend in comparative ELA performance, indicates that the school’s achievement in ELA is likely to improve during a subsequent charter term.

South Buffalo consistently posted strong performance in mathematics according to the school’s comparative and growth measures under the goal. South Buffalo outperformed the local district in mathematics throughout the Accountability Period. The school’s performance relative to demographically similar schools throughout the state was higher than expected to a meaningful degree during 2010-11 and every subsequent year. South Buffalo has also posted growth in mathematics achievement that meets or outpaces the state median score of 50 during each year in the Accountability Period.

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**Instructional Leadership.** Under the direction of its Academic Support Team (“AST”), South Buffalo, at the time of the renewal visit, maintained strong instructional leadership by providing a coherent focus to delivering the educational program based on a comprehensive approach to using data. Team members were fully aware of the school’s attainment of Accountability Plan goals and regularly apprise the teaching staff of the school’s status based on student outcomes. The school tightly integrates its teacher evaluations with individual coaching and school-wide professional development.

- The school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance in content knowledge and pedagogical skills. The AST ensures that the teachers are aware of their contribution to overall school performance including the results for grades above and below the ones they teach. As a result, the school creates a culture of self-reflection based on student outcomes.
- The AST, consisting of the principal, assistant principal, special services coordinator, achievement coordinator and instructional coach, is adequate to support the development of the teaching staff. While some of the positions have changed, the team has generally been stable throughout the charter term.
- Through grade team meetings and the current school-wide focus on developing curriculum modules aligned with the new state standards, instructional leaders improve teachers’ instructional effectiveness. The school provides direct individual coaching based on leaders’ analyses of formal teacher evaluations and interim ELA assessment results. The leaders coordinate these efforts well, providing the coaching systematically. Nevertheless, the deployment of only one full-time instructional coach limits the amount of coaching.
- Instructional leaders provide opportunities and guidance for teachers to plan curriculum and instruction within and across grade levels through their leadership at bi-weekly teacher data-discussion meetings. In addition, the schedule includes a common planning time for all teachers at the beginning of the school day and a second daily common planning time for each grade later each day.
- The AST implements a comprehensive professional development program that develops the competencies and skills of all teachers. The school offers a program in the summer for five days with two additional days for new teachers, as well as six professional development days scheduled during the school year. Teachers receive regular support in implementing the math program from Boards of Cooperative Education Services (“BOCES”) consultants. In addition, South Buffalo also gives teachers opportunities to attend outside conferences, often under BOCES sponsorship. This year, South Buffalo is focusing its professional development on developing and aligning curriculum modules.
- The principal and assistant principal (as well as the head of school) regularly conduct formal teacher observations with clear criteria that identify teachers’ strengths and weaknesses. The school, using the Danielson Framework, has had the same format and procedures for conducting these observations over the last three years. The observations are now subsumed in end-of-year teacher evaluations based on the state’s Annual Professional Performance Review with 60 percent of the evaluation based on the observation and 40 percent generally based on state exam results. At the time of the renewal visit, the leaders had completed all the formal evaluations and three of five

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informal walkthroughs of classroom instruction. Again, the observation results determine coaching and school-wide professional development needs.

- In the context of the school's collective bargaining agreement, instructional leaders limit the extent to which they hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement. Based on low ELA performance last year, the AST changed selected teachers' classroom assignments. Low performing teachers are generally not on improvement plans.

**Curriculum and Assessment.** After reflecting on the ineffectiveness of certain curriculum materials and assessments during the previous school year, South Buffalo is now implementing more rigorous systems and programs to align with the state standards.

- South Buffalo administers valid and reliable assessments that align to the school's curriculum and state performance standards. These assessments include the STAR Enterprise Assessment given four times a year, and curriculum module assessments. Teachers also give self-created quizzes and exit tickets to assess student mastery of learning objectives.
- South Buffalo uses a robust data analysis and reporting system called Performance Plus to score and analyze assessments. This system provides a platform for analyzing individual student data and aggregating by classroom, grade and school. Performance Plus also generates reports and graphs on student performance that corresponds to the data that school leaders and teachers use to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and assessment materials.
- Teachers analyze Performance Plus reports at bi-weekly data discussion meetings with school leaders. A teacher, who has attended specific professional development sessions on data analysis, leads the weekly grade level meeting in his/her respective grade. In these meetings, teachers discuss use of the data including adjusting curriculum unit plans in each subject area, as well as placing students in small groups for special intervention and providing struggling students with more intensive interventions.
- The administration uses student data in its teacher evaluation system. School leaders also analyze student data to target teachers who are in need of extra coaching from the instructional coach or an outside consultant.
- South Buffalo communicates student growth and progress to parents and guardians in several ways. The school sends home student progress reports and in-depth report cards four times a year each. The school requires teachers to hold parent-teacher conferences three times a year, and parents also have access to a "Parent Portal" to check on their children's weekly assignments and grades.
- The school uses online state developed curriculum modules in ELA and math. Teachers regularly reference New York state standards when developing their own curriculum materials in science and social studies. These frameworks provide a fixed structure that promotes student academic achievement across the school.
- South Buffalo has supporting tools that provide a bridge between the curriculum framework and lesson plans. School leadership expects teachers to modify school documents to address the specific needs of the students they teach.

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- Each spring, outside consultants review with teachers the effectiveness of the school's curriculum and supporting materials. As a result of this review, they collaborate with the instructional leaders on developing, revising and adjusting the curriculum materials for the following school year.
- Through these various methods, teachers plan purposeful and focused lessons.

**Pedagogy.** Competent instruction is generally evident throughout the school. As shown in the chart below, 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

		GRADE									
		K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
CONTENT AREA	ELA				1	1	1	1	1	1	6
	Math				2	1	1		1	2	7
	Writing										
	Science					1					1
	Soc Stu										
	Specials										
Total					3	3	2	1	2	3	14

- Teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school's curriculum. They present concepts with accuracy in age-appropriate terms. There is evidence that co-teachers have clear roles in helping students reach objectives. Lesson activities and plans are purposeful and align with stated learning objectives.
- Teachers regularly use techniques to check for student understanding, generally using questioning techniques to gauge student recall. They also circulate around their classrooms to check student work. Nevertheless, teachers do not adjust their instruction during the course of lessons based on student work and on responses to their questions. Teachers are aware of the use of exit tickets but do not uniformly use this technique.
- In many classes teachers follow an instructional approach in which students actively interact with peers during learning activities. Teachers include opportunities in their lessons to encourage peer-to-peer interaction, but generally do not challenge students with questions and activities that help develop depth of understanding and problem solving skills.
- Teachers emphasize the acquisition of facts and knowledge, not application of that knowledge to investigate open-ended problems and to address real-life situations. Similarly, teachers do not challenge students to defend and elaborate on their answers.

## RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

- While the school has not fully implemented various aspects of the new state learning standards, teachers develop inter-disciplinary lessons and often center their attention on using informational texts to gather evidence – both components of the state standards.
- Teachers establish and maintain a classroom environment with a consistent focus on academic achievement. Teachers are prepared with materials readily available. Teachers minimize transition time and use effective techniques to focus students' attention on lesson activities. Teachers clearly communicate behavioral expectations. They also anticipate and redirect misbehavior.
- Teachers communicate a sense of urgency for learning and provide clear directions to students. They tend to cover all planned material at the expense of deeper exploration and engaging students in higher order thinking.

**At-Risk Students.** As has been the case throughout the charter term, South Buffalo provides both push-in and pull-out services, utilizing adequate resources, to address the educational needs of at-risk students.

- Throughout the life of its charter, South Buffalo has had clear processes for identifying at-risk students. The school reviews assessment data from a student progress monitoring system, in addition to anecdotal classroom performance and student grades to determine which students need additional interventions. The school also refers students who do not respond to interventions for special education services. South Buffalo identifies ELLs through the administration of the Language Assessment Battery-Revised and the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners.
- Over the course of the charter term, South Buffalo used a three-tiered-intervention strategy, providing sufficient programs to address differing student needs. The first tier involves general education teachers providing differentiated support in classrooms, with the second and third tiers involving the placement of students in pull-out or push-in intervention groups with the option of also receiving one-on-one support if necessary. For students with Individualized Education Programs ("IEPs"), special education teachers provide additional individualized push-in services in general education classrooms. The school groups students with IEPs in one classroom per grade. ELLs also receive push-in services and before and after school supports from the English-as-a-second-language ("ESL") instructor which helps them to have a better grasp on classroom content.
- South Buffalo employs an achievement coordinator that oversees the eight intervention teachers that serve struggling general education students. These staff members regularly review the performance of these students to determine which interventions are appropriate or need to be adjusted to fit specific needs. Nine special education teachers specifically serve students with IEPs under the guidance of the school's special services coordinator. Special education teachers regularly meet with general education teachers to modify units and/or particular lessons to ensure students are making progress toward meeting specific IEP goals. ELLs benefit from having an ESL teacher who administers a

## RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

comprehension and reading skills assessment bi-weekly. The teacher also monitors classroom grades to gauge student understanding of taught lessons.

- Intervention teachers also monitor student progress every two weeks by examining student assessment scores. Both reading and math intervention teachers use specific methods, such as running records and weekly word-problem assessments respectively, to gauge student progress and to help inform decisions around student support. Special education teachers serving students with IEPs informally review IEP goals monthly.
- Teachers receive adequate support in serving the needs of students who are at-risk of academic failure. As most students with IEPs are grouped in the same classroom at each grade level, special education and general education teachers are aware of and work collaboratively to support students in meeting IEP goals. Intervention teachers provide some professional development to general education teachers during common planning meetings and the ESL teacher also meets with general education teachers during planning periods to discuss specific ESL student needs, which teachers report as helpful in their instructional practice.

		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Enrollment (N) Receiving Mandated Academic Services		(81)	(93)	(94)
RESULTS	Tested on State Exams (N)	(46)	(63)	(61)
	Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	23.9	1.6	4.9
	Percent Proficient Statewide	15.2	5.0	5.2

		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
ELL Enrollment (N)		(0)	(6)	(9)
RESULTS	Tested on NYSESLAT <sup>9</sup> Exam (N)	(N/A)	(2)	(8)
	Percent 'Proficient' or Making Progress <sup>10</sup> on NYSESLAT	N/A	5 <sup>11</sup>	0

<sup>9</sup> New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, a standardized state exam.

<sup>10</sup> Defined as moving up at least one level of proficiency. Student scores fall into four categories/proficiency levels: Beginning; Intermediate; Advanced; and, Proficient.

<sup>11</sup> In order to comply with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations on reporting education outcome data, the Institute does not report assessment results for groups containing five or fewer students.



# RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

## IS THE SCHOOL AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

South Buffalo is an effective and viable organization. The education corporation board (the “board”) carries out its oversight responsibilities more than adequately. The school organization supports the delivery of an effective educational program that improves student learning and acts with urgency to make changes. During the current charter term, the board has generally abided by its by-laws and has been in general and substantial compliance with the terms of its charter, applicable state and federal law, rules and regulations.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

**Board Oversight.** The education corporation board works effectively to achieve the school’s Accountability Plan goals.

- South Buffalo’s board of trustees has been stable; a number of members are founding board members and almost all of the current members have been on the board throughout this, the school’s third, charter term. With experience in finance, real estate, construction and higher education, the board has an adequate skill set to carry out its oversight. In acting as a committee of the whole, the board taps individual member’s expertise to take the lead in carrying out various governance responsibilities including personnel, building and finance. Members report that the board intends to strengthen and formalize its academic oversight functions.
- According to the Institute’s 2011-12 school evaluation report, the board was receiving regular reports from the head of school about the health of the school, but the reports were not part of a formalized dashboard with a specific set of indicators for consistently monitoring achievement. The board indicated that the school leader would regularly provide aggregate assessment outcomes, which were internally consistent with end-of-year student report card results. Starting earlier this year, however, the board reported that it no longer had confidence in the accuracy and reliability of information from the head of school. Two board members conducted a goal-setting performance review with the head of school focusing on her improving the quality of her reporting to the board and indicated offering her leadership coaching support. They asserted that she was unresponsive to their requests. She left the school three weeks before the current renewal visit.
- Notwithstanding this recent administrative disruption, the school’s instructional leadership team (AST) continued to carry out its day-to-day supervision of the educational program seamlessly, with the principal assuming the role of interim head of school. The board has initiated a comprehensive process for hiring a new head of school including engaging the head of school of a highly effective charter school as a consultant, and plans to have a new head of school in place before the end of the current school year.
- For the last few years, the board’s priority and ongoing focus has been to build a new facility – a task that it approached with considerable due diligence including multiple evaluations of potential locations and elaborate environmental testing and cleanup of the

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final designated site. The new facility will open at the beginning of the 2014-15 school year, the last year of the charter term.

**Organizational Capacity.** South Buffalo's school organization effectively supports the delivery of the educational program. The education corporation has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program. The acting school leader competently manages the day-to-day operations of the school; the school's leadership aligns priorities to the school's mission.

- The school maintains distinct lines of accountability. Its operations support team under the supervision of a business administrator handles the full complement of administrative tasks, enabling instructional leaders to focus on teaching and learning.
- The head of school, who carried out a set of administrative executive director responsibilities including overseeing the school budget and reporting to the board on the school program, left the school a few weeks before the renewal visit. Her departure had a minimal effect on the day-to-day operation of the school at the time of the Institute's visit and the school currently operates with a new, full-time leader.
- South Buffalo has had a collective bargaining agreement with its teaching staff through an Instructional Staff Association, represented by New York State United Teachers.
- The school has a comprehensive discipline system with a progressive approach to infractions and effective procedures to resolve issues. Two behavior intervention specialists work with students to internalize the rules and take responsibility for student actions. The school's intervention monitoring program includes a behavioral component. The school provides alternative instruction including on-call tutors (with teachers paid extra) and appropriately modifies consequences for infractions for students with IEPs, as needed.
- Throughout the charter period, South Buffalo has maintained full enrollment and reports a waitlist of 272 students seeking entry for the current school year. The school has generally low attrition with some students leaving to enter grades that coincide with Buffalo City School District school levels.
- South Buffalo has allocated sufficient resources to support the achievement of goals. The school has an abundance of technology, including piloting iPads in early grades, providing all grades with interactive white-boards and every class with an audio-visual cart. In support of its services to at-risk students, it has nine special education teachers and eight intervention specialists for its nine grades (K-8).

### FAITHFULNESS TO CHARTER & PARENT SATISFACTION

As part of its Application for Charter Renewal, the school identified 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.

# RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

Key Design Elements	Evident?
Professional Learning Community;	+
New York State Standards-Based Curriculum;	+
Technology Integration;	+
Character Education;	+
Extended Day and School Year;	+
Professional Development; and,	+
Parent/Guardian Involvement and Engagement.	+

**Parent Satisfaction.** The school submitted survey results with its Application for Charter Renewal to demonstrate parents/guardians and students are generally satisfied with the school; however, the survey response rate of 4 percent is extremely low and does not constitute a group that is representative of the school community.

2013-14
Response Rate: 4%
Overall satisfaction: 84%
Academics: 91%
School Environment: 94%

**Persistence in Enrollment.** The Institute derived the following statistical information from its database. No comparative data from the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) is available to the Institute to provide either district wide or by CSD comparison. As such, the data presented is for information purposes but does not allow for comparative analysis.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Percent of Eligible Students Returning From Previous Year <sup>12</sup>	90.7	88.9	87.0

<sup>12</sup> The Institute calculated these statistics using the school’s 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 BEDS reports.

# RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

## COMPLIANCE

**Governance.** In material respects, the South Buffalo board has implemented and abided by adequate and appropriate systems, processes, policies and procedures to ensure the effective governance and oversight of the school. The board demonstrates a thorough understanding of its role in holding the school leadership accountable for both academic results and fiscal soundness. The board has also performed adequately with respect to its role as “management” in a collective bargaining agreement.

- The board has generally avoided creating conflicts of interest.
- The board has materially complied with the terms of its by-laws and code of ethics.
- The board has a functioning finance committee that has allowed the school to be housed in private space without extensive fundraising but with bank financing and state grants (non-educational).
- The board hired appropriate outside legal counsel to guide it through the complicated process of locating new facilities to accommodate increasing enrollment and advising the board through the process of creating a real estate subsidiary, tax implications, qualifying for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s Brownfields Cleanup Program and leasing the new facility back from the subsidiary.

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

- The Institute has received no formal or informal complaints regarding the school.
- The school has sought advice from the Institute in handling difficult special education matters where the Buffalo City School District has not fully understood the role of charters under state and federal law.
- The Institute noted exceptions to the school’s compliance in the following areas.
  - **By-laws.** The education corporation’s by-laws need to be updated including, but not limited to, certain committee provisions, to be in compliance with the New York Not-For-Profit Corporation Law. The Institute will ensure these provisions are updated prior to the start of a new charter term.
  - **Code of Ethics.** The education corporation’s code of ethics needs to be updated to comply with provisions of the New York General Municipal Law. The Institute will also ensure this is updated prior to the start of a new charter term.
  - **Complaint Process.** While the school has a complaint processes for discrimination, harassment and public complaints against staff, the school’s policies lacked the general complaint process required by the Act, which it had in place in prior charter terms. The Institute will ensure such complaint process is adopted and in place prior to the start of a new charter term.
  - **Open Meetings Law.** Records indicate the full school board has conducted regular meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law, yet minutes lack sufficient detail to understand some of the transactions taking place. As evidenced by the board meeting

## RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

minutes, the board appears to substantially comply with the New York Open Meetings Law when it goes into executive session.

# RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

## IS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION FISCALLY SOUND?

Based on evidence collected through the renewal review, South Buffalo is fiscally sound. The education corporation has successfully managed cash flow and has adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. The education corporation engages in effective budgeting practices and routinely conducts monitoring of revenues and expenses, making appropriate adjustments when necessary. The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard, a multi-year financial data analysis for SUNY authorized charter schools appears below in the Appendix.

**Budgeting and Long-Range Planning.** South Buffalo has demonstrated capable budgeting and planning throughout the charter through conservative budgeting practices and routine monitoring of revenues and expenses. Net assets have increased in each school year.

- The business manager is responsible for developing the budget with collaborative input from key staff, administration and the board finance committee. The full board is responsible for the final approval of the budget.
- The board reviews and approves monthly financials including balance sheet, monthly statement of revenues and expenses, monthly statement of cash flows, monthly check register, monthly schedule of bills slated for payment and all of the journal entries made to the accounting software by the business manager.
- The education corporation has developed a five year projected budget in accordance with Institute renewal process. A review of the five year budget reflects somewhat aggressive enrollment targets yet remains a well-reasoned, economically feasible plan given significant cash reserves and healthy operating margins over the renewal period.

**Internal Controls.** South Buffalo has generally established and maintained appropriate fiscal policies, procedures and controls. Written policies addressing key issues including financial reporting, revenues, procurement, expenditures, payroll, banking, capital assets, record retention, confidentiality, conflict of interest and internal control structures are not recorded in a comprehensive Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual. Accordingly, the Institute recommends South Buffalo develop and maintain such a manual for best practices.

- An audit issued in November 2011 by the New York State Comptroller's Office of enrollment and billing resulted in a minor attendance discrepancy finding, which South Buffalo addressed and remediated in a timely manner. The school implemented procedures to reduce associated risk factors.
- The education corporation's most recent audit of internal controls related to financial reporting and compliance with laws, regulations and grants, disclosed no material weaknesses.
- The education corporation has accurately recorded and appropriately documented transactions in accordance with established policies.
- The education corporation ensures that personnel in the business office have the appropriate education and experience to carry out the duties of the business office.

## RENEWAL BENCHMARK CONCLUSIONS

**Financial Reporting.** South Buffalo has complied with financial reporting requirements by providing the SUNY Trustees and NYSED with required financial reports that are generally on time, complete and follow generally accepted accounting principles (“GAAP”).

- The education corporation presents its annual financial statements in accordance with GAAP and the independent audits of those statements have received unqualified opinions.
- The education corporation has generally filed key reports timely and accurately including: audit reports; budgets; cash-flow statements; un-audited reports of revenues, expenses and enrollment; and, grant expenditure reports.

**Financial Condition.** South Buffalo maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations, and has demonstrated consistently strong financial responsibility composite scores with some relative weakness in a few areas late in the charter term as a result of significant facility financing.

- The education corporation has posted fiscally strong composite-score ratings on the SUNY Fiscal Dashboard indicating a consistent level of fiscal stability over the charter contract term.<sup>13</sup>
- The education corporation has relied primarily on recurring operating revenues to cover its operating expenses, had no long term debt as of June 30, 2014 and approximately \$3.5M cash which is greater than five months of cash on hand per the SUNY Fiscal Dashboard. (The Institute recommends a minimum of one month of cash on hand.) As of June 30, 2014, South Buffalo was nearing completion of a new facility constructed using both unrestricted net assets and a short-term construction bridge loan of \$8.9 million. Low ratio scores for Working Capital and Quick (“Acid Test”) Ratio for 2013-14 on the SUNY Fiscal Dashboard are a result of the temporary construction bridge loan in place and the time of the audit; these scores are not indicative of the significantly better ratios to be calculated after construction costs and the permanent, long-term mortgage is booked.
- Since the last charter renewal in 2009, SUNY authorized charter agreements have changed to include a required \$75,000 Dissolution Reserve Fund for the purpose of covering legal and administrative costs associated with the closure/dissolution of a school. Seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) for the school is to be funded, at a minimum, by reserving twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) per year during the first three (3) years of the charter term.

The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard, provided in the Appendix, presents color coded tables and charts indicating that South Buffalo has demonstrated fiscal soundness over the course of its charter term.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> 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

## 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 South Buffalo has established an academic program that will likely result in the school’s being able to meet or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals and has the organizational capacity to support an effective educational program, its plans for the next charter term are reasonable, feasible and achievable.

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

**Plans for the Educational Program.** South Buffalo plans to continue its current academic program, serving Kindergarten through eighth grade, in its new private facility.

	Current Charter Term	End of Next Charter Term
Enrollment	800	900
Grade Span	K-8	K-8
Teaching Staff	74 (Grades K-8)	80 (Grades K-8)
Days of Instruction	195	195

**Plans for Governance and Board Oversight.** Board members express an interest in continuing to serve South Buffalo in the next charter term and may add additional members in the future.

<sup>14</sup> 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

**Fiscal & Facility Plans.** The education corporation has presented a reasonable and appropriate fiscal plan for the term of the next charter including budgets that are feasible and achievable. South Buffalo plans to remain in its new facility for the renewal 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. The school has amended or will amend other key aspects of the renewal application including by-laws and code of ethics to comply with various provisions of federal regulations, and the New York Education Law, Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, Public Officers Law or General Municipal Law, as appropriate. Based on the foregoing, the school, as described in the amended Application for Charter Renewal will meet the requirements of the Act and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations.

## APPENDIX: SCHOOL OVERVIEW

### Mission Statement

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

### Board of Trustees

Board Member Name <sup>15</sup>	Position
Jim Neimeier	President
Kathy Linhardt	Secretary
Chris Schafer	Parent Representative
Bill DiLorenzo	Treasurer
Steve Nigrelli	Trustee
Kristi Maggio	Trustee
Anne Marie Tryjankowski	Vice President
Jennifer Mack	PTO Parent Representative

### School Characteristics

School Year	Proposed Enrollment	Actual Enrollment <sup>16</sup>	Proposed Grades	Actual Grades
2009-10	705	666	K-8	K-8
2010-11	669	668	K-8	K-8
2011-12	800	673	K-8	K-8
2012-13	850	672	K-8	K-8
2013-14	669	684	K-8	K-8
2014-15	800	804	K-8	K-8

<sup>15</sup> Source: Institute Board Records at the time of the renewal review.

<sup>16</sup> 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		2012-13		2013-14 <sup>17</sup>
	% of School Enrollment	% of Buffalo CSD Enrollment	% of School Enrollment	% of Buffalo CSD Enrollment	% of School Enrollment
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>					
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1	1	1	1
Black or African American	22	53	25	51	26
Hispanic	16	16	18	17	17
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	1	6	1	6	1
White	60	22	55	22	55
Multiracial	0	2	0	2	0
<b>Special Populations</b>					
Students with Disabilities	12	20	14	21	--
English Language Learners	--	11	1	12	0
<b>Free/Reduced Lunch</b>					
Eligible for Free Lunch	84	72	100	76	-- <sup>18</sup>
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	16	5	0	5	--
Economically Disadvantaged	--	90	78	82	83

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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)
2000-01	Donald Graff, Director
2001-02 to 2004-05	Gregory Speranza, Director
2004-05	Larry Gustina, Director
2005-06 to 2007-08	Cedrick Ellis, Director
2008-09 to 2013-14	Carrie Dzierba, Head of Schools
2013-14	Sarah Vittoria, Interim Head of Schools
2014-15 to Present	Brian Wiesinger, Head of Schools

### School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
<b>2009-10</b>	Subsequent Renewal Visit	Institute	November 10, 2009
<b>2011-12</b>	Evaluation Visit	Institute	December 14-15, 2011
<b>2013-14</b>	Subsequent Renewal Visit	Institute	March 11, 2014

### Conduct of the Renewal Visit

Date(s) of Visit	Evaluation Team Members	Title
<b>March 11, 2014</b>	Ron Miller, PhD	Executive Deputy Director for Accountability
	Aaron Campbell	Senior Analyst
	Adam Aberman	External Consultant

# APPENDIX: FISCAL DASHBOARD



## South Buffalo Charter School

### SCHOOL INFORMATION

#### FINANCIAL POSITION

##### Assets

##### Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents - **GRAPH 2**  
Grants and Contracts Receivable  
Accounts Receivable  
Prepaid Expenses  
Contributions and Other Receivables

##### Total Current Assets - **GRAPH 2**

Property, Building and Equipment, net

Other Assets

##### Total Assets - **GRAPH 2**

##### Liabilities and Net Assets

##### Current Liabilities

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

##### Total Current Liabilities - **GRAPH 2**

L-T Debt and Notes Payable, net current maturities

##### Total Liabilities - **GRAPH 2**

##### Net Assets

Unrestricted  
Temporarily restricted

##### Total Net Assets

##### Total Liabilities and Net Assets

#### ACTIVITIES

##### Operating Revenue

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

##### Total Operating Revenue

##### Expenses

Regular Education  
SPED  
Regular Education & SPED (combined)  
Other

##### Total Program Services

Management and General  
Fundraising

##### Total Expenses - **GRAPH 1 / GRAPH 4**

##### Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations

##### Support and Other Revenue

Contributions  
Fundraising  
Miscellaneous Income  
Net assets released from restriction

##### Total Support and Other Revenue

Total Unrestricted Revenue

Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue

##### Total Revenue - **GRAPH 1**

##### Change in Net Assets

##### Net Assets - Beginning of Year - **GRAPH 1**

Prior Year Adjustment(s)

##### Net Assets - End of Year - **GRAPH 1**

#### Opened 2000-01

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Cash and Cash Equivalents - <b>GRAPH 2</b>	6,205,326	8,733,067	10,190,812	9,938,470	3,458,282
Grants and Contracts Receivable	243,003	56,285	96,728	309,556	108,657
Accounts Receivable	17,472	14,818	-	-	-
Prepaid Expenses	103,655	96,432	104,286	266,569	765,488
Contributions and Other Receivables	-	2,093	819	-	-
<b>Total Current Assets - GRAPH 2</b>	<b>6,569,456</b>	<b>8,902,695</b>	<b>10,392,645</b>	<b>10,514,595</b>	<b>4,332,427</b>
Property, Building and Equipment, net	3,435,215	3,665,986	4,460,550	6,563,419	23,847,721
Other Assets	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Assets - GRAPH 2</b>	<b>10,004,671</b>	<b>12,568,681</b>	<b>14,853,195</b>	<b>17,078,014</b>	<b>28,180,148</b>

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	215,952	199,596	341,157	1,176,413	2,032,972
Accrued Payroll and Benefits	651,617	705,530	809,109	944,957	1,049,207
Deferred Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	-	-	-	-	-
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable	-	-	-	-	8,906,736
Other	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Current Liabilities - GRAPH 2</b>	<b>867,569</b>	<b>905,126</b>	<b>1,150,266</b>	<b>2,121,370</b>	<b>11,988,915</b>
L-T Debt and Notes Payable, net current maturities	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Liabilities - GRAPH 2</b>	<b>867,569</b>	<b>905,126</b>	<b>1,150,266</b>	<b>2,121,370</b>	<b>11,988,915</b>

Unrestricted	9,137,102	11,663,555	13,702,929	14,956,644	16,191,233
Temporarily restricted	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>9,137,102</b>	<b>11,663,555</b>	<b>13,702,929</b>	<b>14,956,644</b>	<b>16,191,233</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>10,004,671</b>	<b>12,568,681</b>	<b>14,853,195</b>	<b>17,078,014</b>	<b>28,180,148</b>

Resident Student Enrollment	6,901,572	7,978,312	7,943,019	7,952,798	8,123,015
Students with Disabilities	457,267	567,275	422,475	440,186	417,674
Grants and Contracts	-	-	-	-	-
State and local	-	-	-	-	-
Federal - Title and IDEA	534,347	502,133	468,812	597,346	515,173
Federal - Other	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	35,083	-	48,746	8,624
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>7,893,186</b>	<b>9,082,803</b>	<b>8,834,306</b>	<b>9,039,076</b>	<b>9,064,486</b>

Regular Education	4,006,733	4,171,621	3,963,763	4,402,642	4,442,223
SPED	397,347	427,484	772,598	877,319	907,418
Regular Education & SPED (combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Other	168,745	180,294	1,319,316	1,496,789	1,486,991
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>4,572,825</b>	<b>4,779,399</b>	<b>6,055,677</b>	<b>6,776,750</b>	<b>6,836,632</b>
Management and General	1,911,977	1,776,950	784,581	1,017,871	993,265
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenses - GRAPH 1 / GRAPH 4</b>	<b>6,484,802</b>	<b>6,556,349</b>	<b>6,840,258</b>	<b>7,794,621</b>	<b>7,829,897</b>
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations</b>	<b>1,408,384</b>	<b>2,526,454</b>	<b>1,994,048</b>	<b>1,244,455</b>	<b>1,234,589</b>

Contributions	11,140	-	-	-	-
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Income	45,080	-	45,325	9,260	-
Net assets released from restriction	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Support and Other Revenue</b>	<b>56,220</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>45,325</b>	<b>9,260</b>	<b>-</b>

Total Unrestricted Revenue	7,949,406	9,082,803	8,879,631	9,048,336	9,064,486
Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Revenue - GRAPH 1</b>	<b>7,949,406</b>	<b>9,082,803</b>	<b>8,879,631</b>	<b>9,048,336</b>	<b>9,064,486</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>1,464,604</b>	<b>2,526,454</b>	<b>2,039,373</b>	<b>1,253,715</b>	<b>1,234,589</b>
<b>Net Assets - Beginning of Year - GRAPH 1</b>	<b>7,672,498</b>	<b>9,137,102</b>	<b>11,663,556</b>	<b>13,702,929</b>	<b>14,956,644</b>
Prior Year Adjustment(s)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net Assets - End of Year - GRAPH 1</b>	<b>9,137,102</b>	<b>11,663,556</b>	<b>13,702,929</b>	<b>14,956,644</b>	<b>16,191,233</b>

# APPENDIX: FISCAL DASHBOARD



## South Buffalo Charter School

### SCHOOL INFORMATION - (Continued)

#### Functional Expense Breakdown

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Personnel Service					
Administrative Staff Personnel	318,000	318,000	930,466	178,308	410,188
Instructional Personnel	3,107,811	3,022,569	2,834,462	3,209,539	3,317,197
Non-Instructional Personnel	669,836	683,475	284,473	936,115	786,230
Personnel Services (Combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Salaries and Staff	4,095,647	4,024,044	4,049,400	4,323,962	4,513,615
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes	887,525	947,609	1,289,491	1,729,562	1,031,728
Retirement	219,315	290,248	-	-	579,040
Management Company Fees	-	-	-	-	-
Building and Land Rent / Lease	4,400	4,800	140,968	164,813	-
Staff Development	64,154	59,605	85,324	154,413	84,861
Professional Fees, Consultant & Purchased Services	114,303	71,157	454,759	583,635	211,386
Marketing / Recruitment	7,600	6,422	-	-	11,539
Student Supplies, Materials & Services	329,693	411,015	286,276	275,994	671,601
Depreciation	210,558	232,038	233,379	235,308	242,533
Other	551,607	509,411	300,661	326,934	483,594
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>6,484,802</b>	<b>6,556,349</b>	<b>6,840,258</b>	<b>7,794,621</b>	<b>7,829,897</b>

### SCHOOL ANALYSIS

#### ENROLLMENT

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Chartered Enroll	657	669	800	850	900
Revised Enroll	705	-	-	-	669
Actual Enroll - GRAPH 4	666	668	673	672	684
Chartered Grades	K-8	K-8	K-8	K-8	K-8
Revised Grades	-	-	-	-	-

#### Primary School District: 1003

Per Pupil Funding (Weighted Avg of All Districts)	8,693	9,499	9,567	10,429	10,429
Increase over prior year	5.4%	9.3%	0.7%	9.0%	0.0%

#### PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

##### Revenue

Operating	11,852	13,597	13,127	13,451	13,252	13,056
Other Revenue and Support	84	-	67	14	-	33
<b>TOTAL - GRAPH 3</b>	<b>11,936</b>	<b>13,597</b>	<b>13,194</b>	<b>13,465</b>	<b>13,252</b>	<b>13,089</b>

##### Expenses

Program Services	6,866	7,155	8,998	10,084	9,995	8,620
Management and General, Fundraising	2,871	2,660	1,166	1,515	1,452	1,933
<b>TOTAL - GRAPH 3</b>	<b>9,737</b>	<b>9,815</b>	<b>10,164</b>	<b>11,599</b>	<b>11,447</b>	<b>10,552</b>
% of Program Services	70.5%	72.9%	88.5%	86.9%	87.3%	81.2%
% of Management and Other	29.5%	27.1%	11.5%	13.1%	12.7%	18.8%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses - GRAPH 5	22.6%	38.5%	29.8%	16.1%	15.8%	24.0%

#### Student to Faculty Ratio

9.3	9.2	9.5	9.3	9.5
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#### Faculty to Admin Ratio

6.5	24.2	4.7	18.0	18.0
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#### Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - GRAPH 6

Score	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.4	3.0
Fiscally Strong 1.5 - 3.0 / Fiscally Adequate 1.0 - 1.4 / Fiscally Needs Monitoring < 1.0	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong

#### Working Capital - GRAPH 7

Net Working Capital	5,701,887	7,997,569	9,242,379	8,393,225	(7,656,488)	4,735,714
As % of Unrestricted Revenue	71.7%	88.1%	104.1%	92.8%	-84.5%	54.4%
Working Capital (Current) Ratio Score	7.6	9.8	9.0	5.0	0.4	6.4
Risk (Low > 3.0 / Medium 1.4 - 2.9 / High < 1.4)	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	HIGH	LOW
Rating (Excellent > 3.0 / Good 1.4 - 2.9 / Poor < 1.4)	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Poor	Excellent

#### Quick (Acid Test) Ratio

Score	7.5	9.7	8.9	4.8	0.3	6.3
Risk (Low > 2.5 / Medium 1.0 - 2.4 / High < 1.0)	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	HIGH	LOW
Rating (Excellent > 2.5 / Good 1.0 - 2.4 / Poor < 1.0)	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Poor	Excellent

#### Debt to Asset Ratio - GRAPH 7

Score	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.2
Risk (Low < 0.50 / Medium 0.51 - .95 / High > 1.0)	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent < 0.50 / Good 0.51 - .95 / Poor > 1.0)	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

#### Months of Cash - GRAPH 8

Score	11.5	16.0	17.9	15.3	5.3	13.2
Risk (Low > 3 mo. / Medium 1 - 3 mo. / High < 1 mo.)	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent > 3 mo. / Good 1 - 3 mo. / Poor < 1 mo.)	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

Average -  
5 Yrs.  
OR Charter  
Term

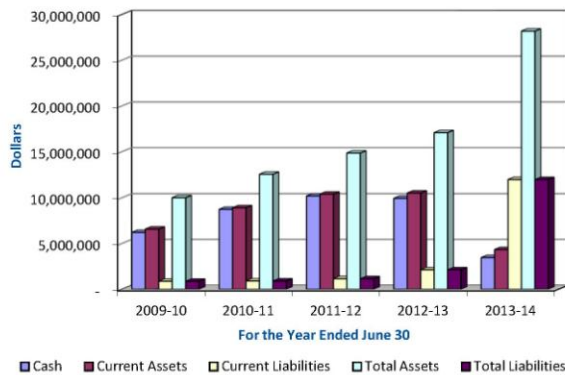


# APPENDIX: FISCAL DASHBOARD



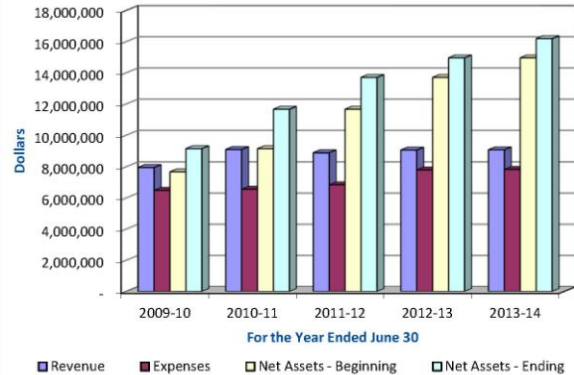
## South Buffalo Charter School

**GRAPH 1** Cash, Assets and Liabilities



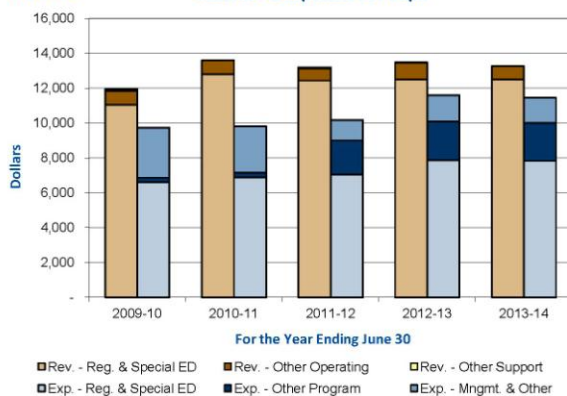
This chart illustrates total revenue and expenses each year and the relationship those subsets have on the increase/decrease of net assets on a year-to-year basis. Ideally subset 1, revenue, will be taller than subset 2, expenses, and as a result subset 3, net assets - beginning, will increase each year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

**GRAPH 2** Revenue, Expenses and Net Assets



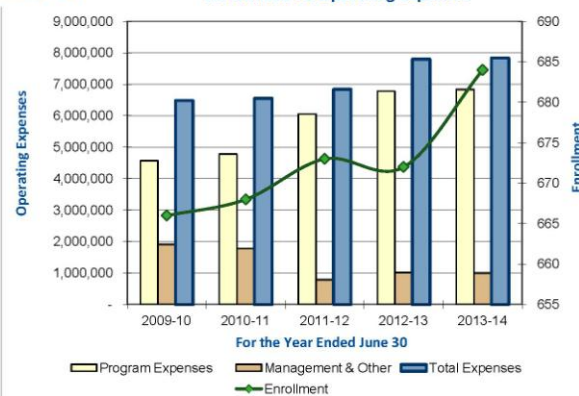
This chart illustrates the relationship between assets and liabilities and to what extent cash reserves makes up current assets. Ideally for each subset, subsets 2 thru 4, (i.e. current assets vs. current liabilities), the column on the left is taller than the immediate column on the right; and, generally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

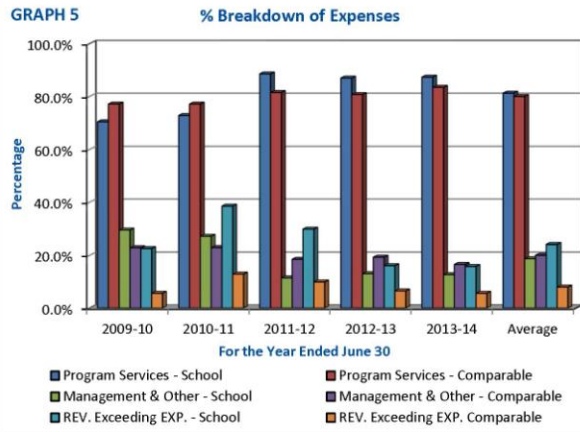


**Charter Schools Institute**  
The State University of New York

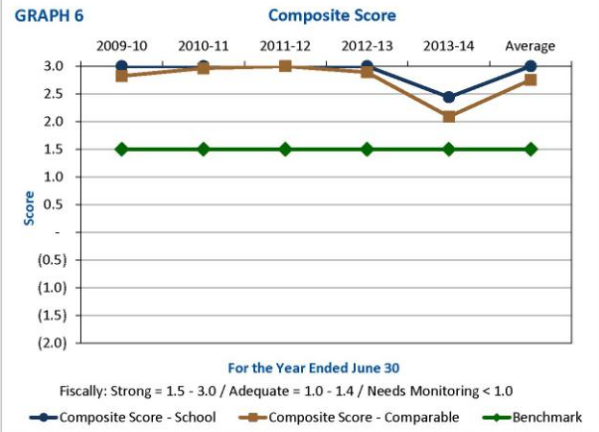
## South Buffalo Charter School

Comparable School, Region or Network: Western & Central NY Schools

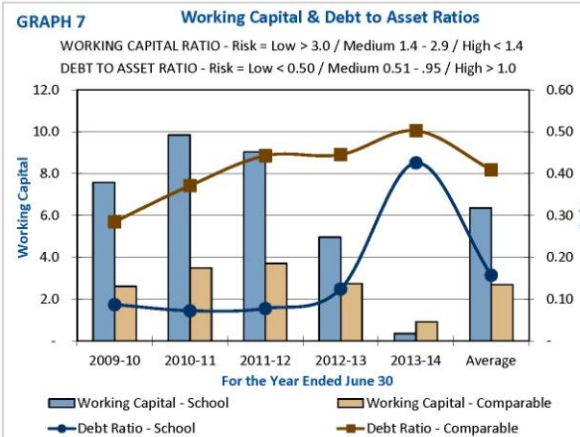
\* Average = Average - 5 Yrs. OR Charter Term



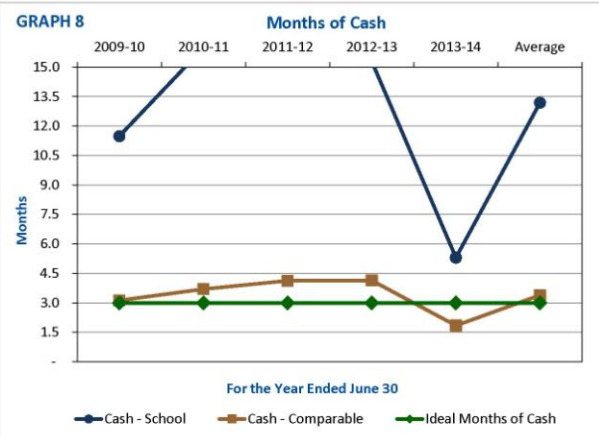
This chart illustrates the percentage expense breakdown between program services and management & others as well as the percentage of revenues exceeding expenses. Ideally the percentage expense for program services will far exceed that of the management & other expense. The percentage of revenues exceeding 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 South Buffalo Charter School



	2011-12 Grades Served: K-8			MET	2012-13 Grades Served: K-8			MET	2013-14 Grades Served: K-8			MET			
	Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)				
<b><u>ABSOLUTE MEASURES</u></b> 1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State exam.	3	45.8 (72)	46.8 (62)	NO	3	9.6 (73)	9.5 (63)	NA	3	20.0 (75)	21.0 (62)	NA			
	4	53.2 (79)	54.3 (70)		4	20.3 (74)	23.8 (63)		4	18.7 (75)	19.7 (66)				
	5	48.6 (74)	47.7 (65)		5	18.1 (72)	18.2 (66)		5	14.1 (71)	12.7 (55)				
	6	60.6 (71)	59.7 (67)		6	17.9 (78)	20.6 (68)		6	11.8 (76)	11.9 (67)				
	7	33.8 (74)	35.4 (65)		7	17.4 (69)	19.0 (58)		7	24.3 (70)	26.6 (64)				
	8	45.5 (66)	44.6 (56)		8	18.1 (72)	15.6 (64)		8	23.4 (64)	26.4 (53)				
	All	47.9 (436)	48.3 (385)		All	16.9 (438)	17.8 (382)		All	18.6 (431)	19.6 (367)				
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	PI	AMO	NA			
	3-8	141	135		3-8	77	3-8		76	89					
<b><u>COMPARATIVE MEASURES</u></b> 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.	Comparison: Buffalo City Schools			YES	Comparison: Buffalo City Schools			YES	Comparison: Buffalo City Schools			YES			
	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District				
	3-8	48.3	27.8		3-8	17.8	11.5		3-8	19.6	12.0				
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	NO	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	NO
	83.6	47.9	34.9	0.87		78.8	16.9	20.4	-0.24		84.8	18.6	19.2	-0.05	
<b><u>GROWTH MEASURE</u></b> 5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.	Grades	School	State	YES	Grades	School	State	NO	Grades	School	State	YES			
4			4		50.0	4	63.0								
5			5		45.9	5	42.6								
6			6		45.0	6	45.0								
7			7		40.7	7	58.3								
8			8		51.0	8	58.1								
All	51.1	50.0	All		46.6	50.0	All		53.2	50.0					

# APPENDIX: PERFORMANCE SUMMARIES

## SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: Mathematics

### South Buffalo Charter School



ABSOLUTE MEASURES	2011-12 Grades Served: K-8			MET	2012-13 Grades Served: K-8			MET	2013-14 Grades Served: K-8			MET			
	Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)		Grades	All Students % (N)	2+ Years Students % (N)				
		3 4 5 6 7 8 All	51.4 (72) 69.6 (79) 62.2 (74) 91.5 (71) 58.1 (74) 87.9 (66) 69.7 (436)			54.8 (62) 67.1 (70) 63.1 (65) 92.5 (67) 61.5 (65) 87.5 (56) 70.9 (385)	3 4 5 6 7 8 All			19.2 (73) 36.5 (74) 27.8 (72) 44.9 (78) 17.4 (69) 9.7 (72) 26.3 (438)	20.6 (63) 42.9 (63) 28.8 (66) 47.1 (68) 19.0 (58) 7.8 (64) 28.0 (382)		3 4 5 6 7 8 All	36.0 (75) 17.3 (75) 36.6 (71) 36.8 (76) 21.4 (70) 34.4 (64) 30.4 (431)	33.9 (62) 18.2 (66) 40.0 (55) 40.3 (67) 23.4 (64) 35.8 (53) 31.6 (367)
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.				NO				NA				NA			
COMPARATIVE MEASURES	Grades	PI	AMO	YES	Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PI	AMO	NA			
	3-8	167	148		3-8	92			3-8	103	86				
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.															
COMPARATIVE MEASURES	Comparison: Buffalo City Schools			YES	Comparison: Buffalo City Schools			YES	Comparison: Buffalo City Schools			YES			
	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District				
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.	3-8	70.9	30.0		3-8	28.0	9.6		3-8	31.6	13.2				
GROWTH MEASURE	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	YES	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	NO	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	YES
	83.6	69.7	47.4	1.06		78.8	26.3	21.3	0.29		84.8	30.4	24.5	0.35	
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.															
GROWTH MEASURE	Grades	School	State	YES	Grades	School	State	YES	Grades	School	State	YES			
	4 5 6 7 8 All				4 5 6 7 8 All	55.6 50.4 72.5 53.4 47.1 56.2			4 5 6 7 8 All	51.9 59.6 65.7 38.5 59.6 55.0					
5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the state's unadjusted median growth percentile.															