

The background of the entire page is a solid blue color. Overlaid on this is a pattern of lighter blue squares arranged in a grid. This grid pattern is not uniform; it is more dense in the upper left and middle left areas, and becomes sparser and more fragmented towards the bottom right, creating a sense of depth and movement.

# THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT  
PERSISTENCE PREPARATORY  
ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL*

**Report Date: March 7, 2023**

**Review Date: October 6 – 7, 2022**

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

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## CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND

# PERSISTENCE PREPARATORY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

378 Urban Street, Buffalo, New York | Grades: K-5 | Buffalo City School District

The State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) approved the original charter for Persistence Preparatory Academy Charter School (“Persistence Prep”) on June 8, 2017. The school opened in fall 2018, serving 100 students in Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade.



### MISSION

*Through rigorous academics, high quality instruction, and leadership development, Persistence Preparatory Academy Charter School ensures that all Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade scholars are firmly on the path to succeed within a four year college and create positive change within their communities.*

### CURRENT CHARTER

Serves: Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup>

Chartered Enrollment:  
324

Charter Expiration:  
July 31, 2023

### PROPOSED FUTURE CHARTER

Serves: Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup>

Chartered Enrollment:  
486

Charter Expiration  
July 31, 2028

### KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Extended day and year;



Positive character and leadership development;



Rigorous academics with emphasis on literacy;



College and career readiness;



High quality, data driven instruction;



Social justice teaching;



Teacher development;



Enrichment; and,



Structured and joyful environment;



Increased family engagement.



## CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND



### NOTEWORTHY

In addition to providing a rigorous college preparatory academic program, Persistence Prep supports students in building skills that are career informed. The charter partners with the marketing firm, 19IDEAS, to run a business plan challenge for students interested in entrepreneurship. Annually, members of the firm mentor Persistence Prep students in the fundamentals of business planning and coach students through the process of creating a business plan. During the spring 2022 competition, 12 students participated in the program and pitched a variety of business plans to professionals including animal shelters and youth sports programs. Graduates of the program continue their learning in

the Young Entrepreneurship Showcase (“YES”) program in which students further their business knowledge and design t-shirts reflecting the charter’s logo and core values. YES mentors continue to work with students on topics such as marketing, targeting audiences, and the finances of running a business. Persistence Prep students in the program travel to the production plant to oversee t-shirt production and receive profits from sales to use for future education. As of winter 2023, three cohorts of 10 students have matriculated through the YES program.

### RESPONSE TO INTERRUPTED INSTRUCTION CAUSED BY COVID-19

To mitigate the impacts of interrupted instruction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Persistence Prep prioritizes using its internal assessment data system to drive accelerated teaching for students far behind grade level expectations. Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, the charter implemented a daily acceleration block wherein teachers provide targeted supports to students to aid them in accessing grade level content. Persistence Prep teachers use strategic checks for understanding during lessons and analysis from interim assessments to identify topics for targeted instruction and to identify specific students for increased support. Types of activities during the acceleration block include small group instruction, independent work using adaptive software, and large group reteaching of key concepts necessary to access new material. Instructional leaders also use the charter’s clear, robust Response to Intervention (“RTI”) system to closely monitor student progress, identify struggling students, and select appropriate interventions. Teachers deliver supports to students identified as tier 2 and tier 3 during acceleration blocks. As a result, teachers optimally use students’ time in core instruction and acceleration blocks effectively allowing them to assist students in accessing grade level material.

## RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

### FULL-TERM RENEWAL

**Full-Term Renewal.** *The Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) recommends the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Persistence Preparatory Academy Charter School for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal, with a projected total enrollment of 486 students. The Institute makes this recommendation based on Persistence Preparatory Academy Charter School meeting the criteria for charter renewal set forth in 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”).<sup>1</sup>*

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



have compiled a strong and compelling record of meeting or coming close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals, and have in place at the time of the renewal review an educational program that, as assessed using the Qualitative Education Benchmarks,<sup>2</sup> is generally effective; or,



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

### REQUIRED FINDINGS

In addition to making a recommendation based on a determination of whether the charter has met the SUNY Trustees’ specific renewal criteria, the Institute makes the following findings required by the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the “Act”):

1:

the charter, as described in the Application for Charter Renewal, meets the requirements of the Act and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations;

2:

the education corporation can demonstrate the ability to operate the charter in an educationally and fiscally sound manner in the next charter term; and,

3:

given the programs it will offer, its structure, and its purpose, approving the charter to operate for another five years is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act.<sup>3</sup>

1. SUNY Renewal Policies (p. 12) are available on the [Institute’s website](#).

2. The Qualitative Education Benchmarks are a subset of the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks (“SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”) which are available on the [Institute’s website](#).

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

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During its five year charter term, Persistence Prep established a particularly strong academic program and made progress toward meeting its key Accountability Plan goals. The information below demonstrates the key findings for the SUNY Trustees and highlights the successes of the charter.

### FINDINGS & INFORMATION

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

Persistence Prep is becoming an academic success. Over the current charter term, the charter implemented a particularly strong and effective academic program and made progress toward meeting its Accountability Plan goals. Persistence Prep demonstrates success in the following ways:

- Persistence Prep has strong instructional leadership and particularly effective systems in place that facilitate exemplary classroom teaching. These systems support teachers and leaders to meet the needs of its students who are far behind grade level as evidenced by baseline state exam scores. The charter's academic program and growth trends on nationally normed assessments provide ample evidence that the charter will meet or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals in a future charter term.
- The charter prioritizes high quality instructional coaching and professional development to support teachers in delivering strong instruction with a sense of urgency. In addition to regular coaching cycles and practice clinics that build concrete skills for teachers, Persistence Prep's robust professional development program incorporates multiple high quality external partnerships including the Lavinia Group, TNTP, and RELAY Graduate School of Education.
- Although the charter's baseline absolute achievement on state exams was low, the charter demonstrates high growth for its students in English language arts ("ELA") and mathematics as measured by multiple assessments including the nationally normed NWEA MAP ("MAP"). In 2021-22, the charter posted median growth percentiles of 71 in ELA and 64 in mathematics far exceeding the target of 50 established by the Institute as well as the average growth across the SUNY portfolio.
- Persistence Prep implements a high quality at-risk program with substantial supports for students with disabilities and students at risk of academic failure. In 2021-22, the charter posted high median growth percentiles for students with disabilities and students who posted low absolute achievement on normed assessments in the fall. Notably in ELA, the charter's students with disabilities posted a median growth percentile of 82 surpassing the growth of the general education population.
- The charter delivers superlative instruction focused on accelerating student learning and developing higher order thinking skills across all classrooms. Teachers establish joyful classrooms where students enjoy participating in academic activities while maintaining a high level of rigor.

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

Persistence Prep is an effective, viable organization. The charter's organizational structure allows instructional leaders to focus on improving teaching and learning. The board provides effective oversight of the program and remains abreast of family and community needs. The charter strategically partners with external consultants with track records of success to implement high quality programming.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### ***Is the charter fiscally sound?***

Persistence Prep is fiscally sound based on the evidence collected through renewal review. The education corporation met its fiscal benchmarks and presents a reasonable fiscal plan for the next charter term.

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

Persistence Prep's plans for the charter are reasonable, feasible, and achievable. If renewed, the charter will continue to grow into middle school grades, building on the effective elements of its Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grade program with a focus on preparing students to succeed in the best possible college preparatory high schools.

Persistence Prep has a strong academic program on the ground corroborated by promising nationally normed assessment results. Over the charter term, leaders made necessary curriculum changes and increased the capacity of the professional development program to better meet the needs of its student population. The charter resolutely maintains high academic standards and a positive culture. As a result, students and staff members feel welcome and eager to engage in academic work. Families report high satisfaction with the charter and persist at particularly high rates year over year. The charter's building also serves as a neighborhood hub providing space for parent groups, community organization meetings, and youth clubs.

Based on the Institute's review of the charter's performance as posted over the charter term; a review of the Application for Charter Renewal submitted by the education corporation; a review of academic, organizational, governance, and financial documentation; and a renewal review of the charter's academic program, the Institute finds that the charter meets the required criteria for renewal.

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees grant Persistence Preparatory Academy Charter School an Initial Full-Term Renewal of five years.







# DP

DATA PRESENTATION

PAGES: 7-20

AP

ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE

CP

COMPLIANCE  
PERFORMANCE

CS

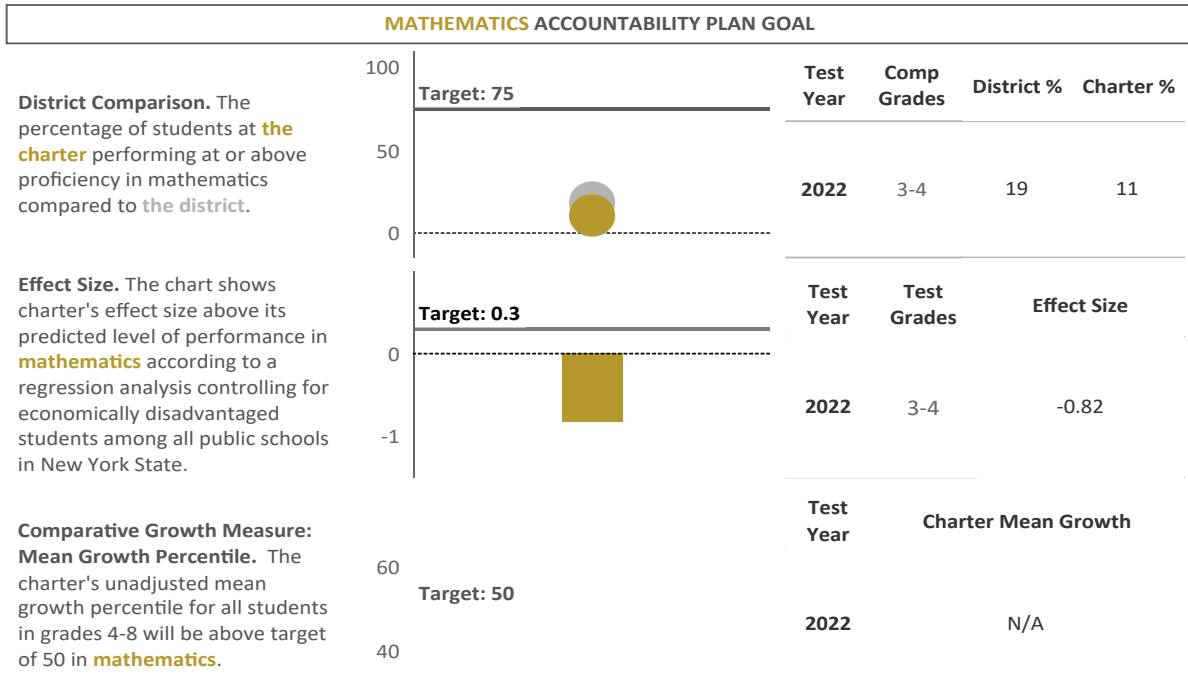
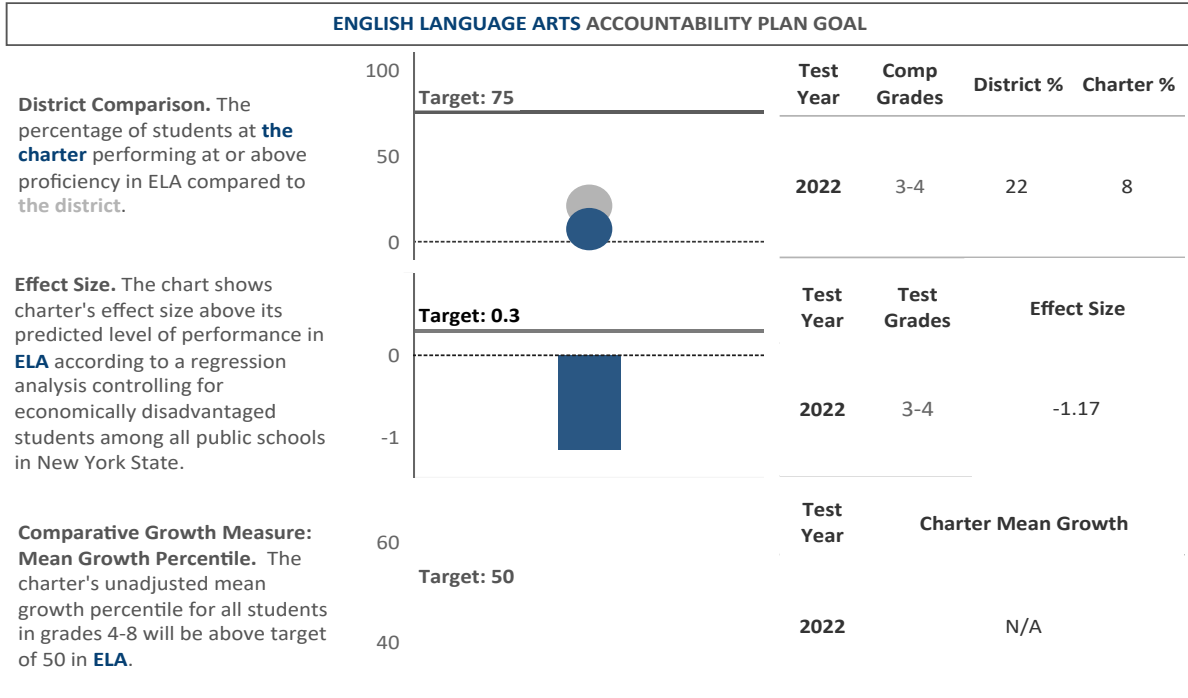
COMMUNITY  
SATISFACTION

SD

STUDENT  
DEMOGRAPHICS

## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

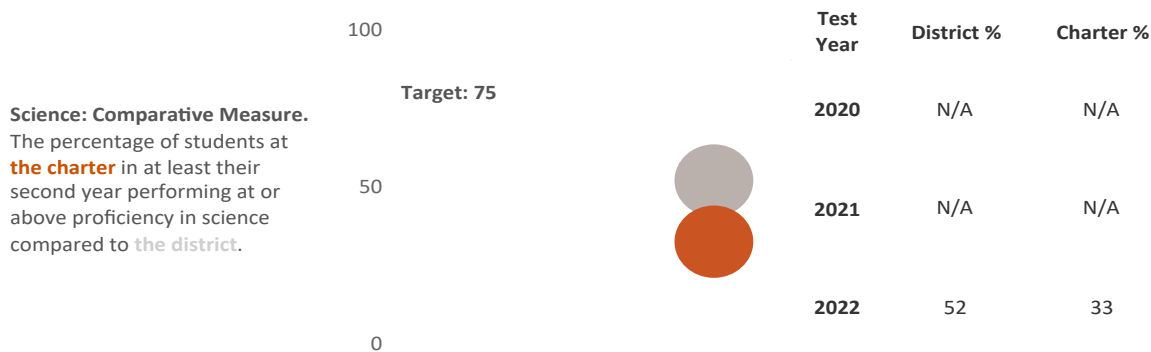
### PERSISTENCE PREPARATORY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL



## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

### PERSISTENCE PREPARATORY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

#### SCIENCE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL



#### SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE\*

	2022
Students with Disabilities Enrollment	28
Tested on State Exam	10
Charter Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	0.0
District Percent Proficient	9.0
ELL Enrollment	0
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam	0
Charter Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress	NA

\* The academic outcome data about the performance of students receiving special education services and English language learners ("ELLs") above is not tied to separate goals in the charter school's formal Accountability Plan. The NYSESLAT, the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, is a standardized state exam. "Making Progress" is defined as moving up at least one level of proficiency. Student scores fall into five categories/proficiency levels: Entering; Emerging; Transitioning; Expanding; and, Commanding. In order to comply with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act regulations on reporting education outcome data, the Institute does not report assessment results for groups containing five or fewer students and indicates this with an "s".

## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE



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

Persistence Prep made progress toward meeting its Accountability Plan goals during its initial charter term. The charter posted its first set of state exam results suitable for analysis in 2021-22. While the charter's baseline achievement according to state assessments is low, Persistence Prep demonstrated high growth on externally developed, nationally normed assessments over the term. The charter's particularly strong academic program and growth trends on normed assessments demonstrate the charter is likely to meet or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals in a future charter term.

The charter first enrolled students in state testing grades during 2020-21, and therefore only posted credible and reliable baseline state exam results in 2021-22. That year, eight percent of Persistence Prep's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficiency in ELA and 11% in mathematics. The charter underperformed the district and posted effect sizes that fell under the target of 0.3 in both subjects.

Although the charter's first set of state exam data fell under the absolute and comparative targets, Persistence Prep demonstrated strong growth on internal assessment results. Given the absence of reliable and credible performance data from the state's ELA and mathematics assessments for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2019-20 and 2020-21, the Institute worked with charters and testing experts to develop a set of performance measures for use with internal and nationally normed assessments. The Institute continues to analyze each charter's internal assessments to evaluate the charter's academic attainment in lieu of reliable state exam data in 2020-21 and to contextualize the baseline state exam data from 2021-22. In 2021-22, Persistence Prep demonstrated high growth in ELA and mathematics according to the MAP assessment. The charter's students enrolled in at least their second year posted median growth percentiles of 71 in ELA and 64 in mathematics surpassing the target of 50. Among SUNY authorized charters with available MAP growth results, Persistence Prep's median growth percentiles were the second highest in ELA and in the top third for mathematics.

## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

### BENCHMARK SUMMARY

#### ASSESSMENT

Persistence Prep implements a comprehensive assessment system that provides valid and reliable data to improve student learning. The robust system includes a variety of formative and summative assessments throughout the school year and implements structures to evaluate the effectiveness of the assessments regularly. Instructional leaders and teachers recognizing the need for more timely literacy data to inform classroom instruction, a research-based approach to literacy, and the need for personalized reading interventions, made changes to the charter's assessment plan during the initial charter term. The charter transitioned from Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress ("STEP") assessment to the DIBELS assessment and mClass Intervention through Amplify. This shift improved the quality of lesson planning, provided teachers with tools for effective progress monitoring, and made actionable early literacy data more accessible and useful to teachers, instructional leaders, and board members. To identify student needs at each grade level, the charter consistently administers MAP three times per year. The charter also administers quarterly teacher developed standards aligned interim assessments for Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics and 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade ELA. Leaders establish clear performance targets for each assessment to monitor progress toward grade level academic performance for all students.

The leadership team works with teachers to ensure classroom assessments drive instructional plans, daily instruction, and interventions. Teachers receive intensive training on using data driven instructional practices. As a result, teachers check for understanding using a variety of effective strategies including circulating the room, physical response, cooperative learning structures, open ended questions, conferencing with students, hand signals, performance tasks, end of unit assessments, weekly quizzes, and daily exit tickets aligned to learning objectives. In addition, teachers and support staff members use student observation data to identify students for individualized interventions. The charter holds data days throughout the year to review student progress and design interventions for remediation and acceleration. Grade level and content teams meet regularly with instructional leaders to review assessment data, share actionable feedback, and make adjustments to instructional plans. During regular coaching cycles, teachers work with coaches to analyze data from formative assessments and corroborate trends based on lessons. Leaders use these data meetings to inform coaching strategies, evaluate teacher effectiveness, and identify action steps for teachers.

Persistence Prep uses Schoolrunner to collect, analyze, and communicate academic data. The charter regularly communicates academic progress with students and families. Students track academic performance and meet with teachers to review benchmarks and identify growth areas. The charter values family engagement and communicates student progress through family conferences, succinct report cards, and accurate progress reports.



## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

### CURRICULUM

Persistence Prep has a curricular framework that teachers use effectively to deliver standards aligned, rigorous instruction. It also provides the framework within which teachers and leaders evaluate its effectiveness and make timely and appropriate adjustments to ensure instructional rigor and effectiveness. Instructional leaders promote a data driven culture through intensive professional development and structured time each week for collaborative planning. The charter's evidence-based curricular programs align across and within grade levels. In mathematics, the charter shifted away from Everyday Mathematics and implemented EngageNY across Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grade. All teachers have access to the Zearn platform for deeper, individualized mathematics interventions. In ELA, teachers use the Amplify Core Knowledge Skills curriculum in Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> and the Lavinia Group's Close Reading curriculum in 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The charter also uses the Lavinia Group's Insight Humanities curriculum across all grades. The humanities program emphasizes inquiry-based instruction, rich and culturally relevant content, and high quality instructional tools aligned to state literacy and social studies standards. The program also creates structures for students to engage in thematic learning topics such as identity, social change, and cultural diversity across content areas. Persistence Prep's high quality curricular materials, and its effective systems to support teachers, result in high quality daily lesson plans that drive substantial growth in student achievement.

Using data and feedback from all stakeholders, the charter has an established process for selecting, developing, and reviewing its curricular program. This data driven approach allows teachers to clearly outline what students will learn in each grade, and teachers within and across grades know what to teach and when to teach it. Instructional leaders identified pacing as a challenge for some teachers and work collaboratively with teachers to unpack scope and sequence documents and unit plans and plan purposeful and focused lessons. Teachers use interim assessment data to make necessary modifications to the pacing, content, and scaffolding included in the curricular resources. Leaders engage experts and consultants to support strategic planning, curriculum development, learning culture, and instructional practices.

### PEDAGOGY

Persistence Prep's teachers deliver high quality instruction across the entire charter. Teachers include clear objectives aligned to purposeful, rigorous activities that have clear connections to previous material. Teachers employ a variety of effective strategies to check for student understanding such as circulating the classroom, conferencing with students, and using hand signals. Notably, teachers establish a caring, positive environment where the majority of students feel safe to take risks and volunteer to answer questions and share misunderstandings. As a result of the authentic checking for understanding across classrooms, teachers at Persistence Prep are able to make in the moment adjustments to instruction and redirect the class strategically based on misconceptions that surface. Teachers make adjustments using clear and precise language that maintains a high level of academic vocabulary.

In the majority of classrooms, teachers effectively build higher order thinking and problem solving skills. Most teachers embed opportunities for higher order thinking throughout lessons and frequently ask students to elaborate on responses and provide detailed evidence to support their answers. In one close reading

## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

lesson, the teacher asked probing questions to elicit both students' understanding of plot details as well as the author's purpose and intent. Teachers maintain the high level of expectations whether delivering whole class instruction or providing targeted instruction to a small group. As a result, lessons focus on academic achievement and virtually all students are highly engaged. Teachers implement consistent routines that ensure students remain on task and are fully engaged in academic material throughout lessons.

### INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Persistence Prep has strong instructional leadership. The charter's head of school and leadership team set high academic and cultural expectations. Leaders support teachers to meet rigorous expectations for pedagogical quality through systematic coaching and a robust professional development program. The charter's strong adult culture of professionalism, accountability, and alignment to the mission results in well run and joyful classrooms.

The charter implements a coaching cycle with weekly observations and debrief meetings that supports teachers in improving instructional effectiveness. Leaders increase the frequency and intensity of these observations and coaching sessions depending on teacher needs and interim assessment data. Coaching sessions result in clear and actionable feedback that leaders monitor in future observations. In addition to individual coaching, the charter runs weekly practice clinics for teachers requiring more intensive support. Persistence Prep holds its teachers accountable through these coaching systems as well as formal improvement plans when necessary.

As part of the charter's key design element of high quality teacher development, Persistence Prep's leaders also deliver a comprehensive professional development program. Early in the charter term, instructional leaders identified areas for improvement in teaching that were compounded by the onset of interrupted instruction due to COVID-19. In response, the charter established multiple external partnerships with organizations including the Lavinia Group, TNTF, and RELAY Graduate School of Education. Consultants from these external partners provide summer trainings and follow up during the school year with teachers on topics such as lesson internalization and student work analysis. Most notably, the Lavinia Group have worked with the charter since the 2019-20 school year to support the implementation of the humanities curriculum and each year provides 20 on site support days with lesson observation and feedback. Persistence Prep leaders promote a culture of openness to feedback that results in teachers authentically implementing aspects of the professional development in daily lessons.

### AT RISK PROGRAM

Persistence Prep implements a high quality at-risk program with clear identification procedures and robust interventions for students at risk of academic failure and students with disabilities. At-risk program staff members and general education teachers meet weekly to collaboratively plan lessons, modify curricular materials, and increase their collective understanding of students at risk of academic failure. Notably in 2021-22, the charter demonstrated high growth for students with disabilities and students far below grade level on the MAP assessment. Although the charter did not enroll ELLs at the time of the visit, Persistence Prep has a compliant identification system and language acquisition program in place to deliver when applicable.

## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Persistence Prep uses a RTI program to support the needs of students struggling academically. Teachers refer students of concern to the charters' RTI team using a referral form with supporting data from classroom observations and from the charter's interim assessments including DIBELS and MAP. The director of special education and student support meets with intervention and RTI teachers weekly to plan interventions, complete progress monitoring, and evaluate the effectiveness of different interventions. For students identified as needing additional support, interventions include at-risk program staff members pushing into classrooms, small group instruction, and tailored curriculum differentiation. If students do not make adequate progress after six to eight weeks, the charter escalates to more intensive supports such as increased frequency of pull out instruction in small groups of four or fewer. If students continue to not make academic progress, Persistence Prep works with families and the district of location committee on special education to evaluate the student for special education services, as needed.

Persistence Prep provides services to support the needs of students with disabilities. The director of special education and student support shares individualized education programs ("IEPs") with all relevant instructional staff members, and teachers are aware of each students' IEP goals and how to provide appropriate accommodations. The charter has an integrated co-teaching model ("ICT") in Kindergarten – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and delivers one ICT classroom in each 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, which allows regular differentiation and small group instruction to students through the ICT model.

Persistence Prep uses the home language survey to identify ELLs. Persistence Prep does not presently enroll any ELL students. If a student enrolls in Persistence Prep, the charter will administer the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners ("NYSITELL") and New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test ("NYSESLAT") to determine whether the student is an emerging, transitioning, expanding, or commanding ELL. At the time of the Institute's visit, the instructional leadership team articulated a clear plan on how ELL services will be provided to students by a dual certified Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages ("TESOL") teacher immediately upon the student's enrollment at the charter. Instructional leadership and the board continue to recruit ELLs to meet ELL enrollment targets.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Persistence Prep's organizational structure and operational systems work cohesively to support the delivery of the educational program. The administrative structure at Persistence Prep clearly delineates operational and instructional roles so that teachers and instructional leaders can focus primarily on academic instruction. The charter clearly defines roles and responsibilities with distinct lines of accountability, which ensures teachers know who to go to for what. The director of operations and supporting operations team members take responsibility for facilities, materials, busing, and other operational tasks. As a result, Persistence Prep's head of school, instructional coaches, and director of special education and student support provide consistent, comprehensive observation and feedback to improve teachers' instructional skills. Together, the operations and instructional leadership teams foster a collegial and supportive environment for teachers that results in high teacher retention and a culture that promotes high academic achievement and joy for students.



## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Persistence Prep implements a clear discipline system consistently applied across the school. Persistence Prep incorporates elements of the Responsive Classroom framework into the educational program. To preserve instructional time and support teachers in delivering rigorous lessons, instructional leaders at Persistence Prep set clear expectations for behavior management in professional development and hold teachers accountable to these expectations through regular classroom observations.

Persistence Prep maintains high student enrollment and often exceeded enrollment goals throughout the charter term. The charter exceeds its enrollment target for economically disadvantaged students but does not meet the target for ELLs or students with disabilities. The board, operations, and instructional leadership teams recognize the need to increase the intensity of efforts to enroll students with disabilities and ELLs in the next charter term, if granted.

Persistence Prep's board members, instructional leadership team, and operations leaders regularly monitor and reflect upon the effectiveness of the charter's programs and interventions. For example, in response to low attendance and late arrivals caused by irregular busing schedules, the charter decided to shift its school day to start later to accommodate the district's transportation constraints. As a result, leaders observed improved attendance and fewer late arrivals. In another instance, Persistence Prep modified its RTI program to incorporate more push in supports and increased the cadence of its formative assessment schedule to gather more frequent data on student performance in response to the spring 2022 state exam results. These changes enable teachers to provide more accurately targeted interventions during acceleration blocks.

### BOARD OVERSIGHT & GOVERNANCE

The Persistence Prep board works effectively to ensure the charter's academic program is strong and that the charter will continue to make progress toward meeting Accountability Plan goals. Board members have experience in a variety of areas including education and finance that enables them to provide effective oversight of the charter. As the charter plans to grow into a full Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> grade program, board members plan to increase the board's internal capacity. The board also works closely with the head of school to develop plans for a talent pipeline to ensure that the middle school continues to deliver the same high quality instruction as the elementary program. Members are deeply thoughtful about the future of the charter's program and engage in planning work around securing high school scholarship opportunities for alumni as well as establishing additional alternative accountability measures to capture the charter's success. The charter's head of school provides the board with monthly data reports on progress related to achievement, attendance, student engagement, culture, operations, and finance. Based on these monthly reports, the board establishes clear priorities aligned to the charters' academic, fiscal, and operational success, and monitors ongoing progress toward meeting these goals. In response to close analysis of state exam and internal assessment results, the board establishes clear expectations for future performance including a goal of 20 percentage point increases in ELA and mathematics state exam proficiency rates.

## COMPLIANCE REPORTING



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

*The education corporation substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations, and provisions of its charter. During the current charter term, the education corporation demonstrates a clear record of compliance with the terms of its charter including the timely submission of required reporting to the Institute.*

#### PERSISTENCE PREPARATORY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

##### **Annual Reports**

The charter submitted its annual reports to the Institute and the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) on time but has not posted the most recent submission to NYSED to the charter’s website in accordance with the charter and the Act. The Institute will ensure compliance prior to the start of the next charter term.

##### **Complaints**

The charter’s formal complaint policy inaccurately describes the process to escalate the appeal of a formal complaint. The Institute will ensure the charter updates its policy prior to the start of the next charter term.

##### **Teacher Certification**

The Act allows charters to hire up to 15 uncertified faculty members contingent upon those teachers meeting certain requirements including: two years of Teach for America experience; three years of teaching experience; status as a higher education professor; exceptional experience in a subject; or, teaching science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) or career and technical education courses.

At the time of the visit, the charter was within the allowable limit and the six uncertified lead teachers met the appropriate qualifications under the Act. Persistence Prep partners with Canisius College’s Teacher Readiness Program through the Western New York Teacher Residency Program, which Persistence Prep helped design and develop. The charter also partners with Relay providing tuition assistance to teacher candidates to obtain a masters degree and certification in exchange for a commitment to the charter for two years upon receiving certification.

## COMMUNITY SATISFACTION

To report on parent satisfaction with the charter’s program, the Institute used satisfaction survey data, information gathered from a focus group of parents representing a cross section of students, and data regarding persistence in enrollment.

### PARENT SATISFACTION: SURVEY RESULTS

RESPONSE RATE	OVERALL SATISFACTION	SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	STRONG FAMILY & COMMUNITY TIES	EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
77%	99%	99%	99%	99%

#### *Parent Survey Data*

The Institute compiled data from the charter’s annual family survey from 2021-22. That year, 77% of families who received the survey responded. Of the families who respond, 99% expressed satisfaction with the charter.

#### *Parent Focus Group*

The Institute asks all schools facing renewal to convene a representative set of parents for a focus group discussion. A representative set includes parents of students in attendance at the charter for multiple years, parents of students new to the charter, parents of students receiving general education services, parents of students with special needs, and parents of ELLs. The 18 parents and caretakers in attendance at the focus group indicated high levels of satisfaction with Persistence Prep. Teachers and instructional leadership regularly communicate about students’ academic performance through text messages, emails, phone calls, and formal and informal meetings to discuss student needs. Persistence Prep hosts bi-monthly meetings where parents can gather with the administration on video conference to discuss emergent needs and challenges with the charter’s administration. Parents and families choose to send children to Persistence Prep for consecutive years, and the charter posted retention rates at or above 90 percent for each 2020-21 and 2021-2022.

#### *Public Comments*

In accordance with the Act, the Institute notified the district in which the charter school is located regarding the Application for Charter Renewal. The full text of any written comments received from the district appears below, which also includes a summary of any public comments.

The Buffalo City School District held its required hearing on Persistence Prep’s renewal application on October 12, 2022 at the district offices. The charter leader provided an overview of the history of the school, the academic program, student demographics, achievement data, attendance, retention, finances, and staff member demographics and attrition. A teacher spoke as a representative of the teachers about the positive and supportive student experiences and the diversity of the adults around them. A student spoke about how the school showed up at her adoption ceremony, how the building

## COMMUNITY SATISFACTION

provides inspirational messages from diverse speakers, each classroom is named for a college to keep her pushing, and how teachers are supportive of every student. Another parent spoke of how the values, teachers, and community outreach are unmatched and how the charter provides the differentiated instruction, related services, and social emotional supports needed by her three children. The Buffalo City board of education asked questions regarding student and staff member demographics, student discipline, finances, interim assessments, and teacher planning time.

**Persistence in Enrollment** An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2021-22, 93% of Persistence Prep students returned from the previous year. Student persistence data from previous years of the charter term is available in student demographics section of the report.

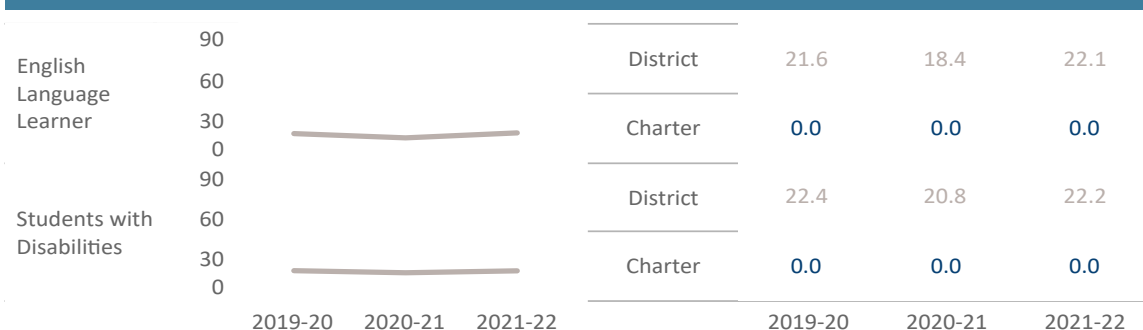
*The Institute derived the statistical information on persistence in enrollment from its database. No comparative data from the New York City Department of Education ("NYCDOE") or the NYSED is available to the Institute to provide either district or statewide context.*

## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

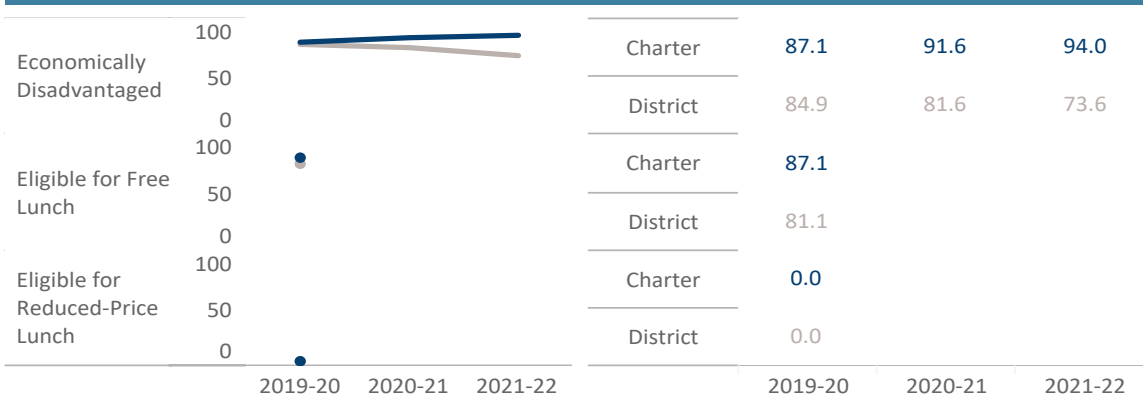
### Persistence Preparatory Academy Charter School

### Buffalo City School District

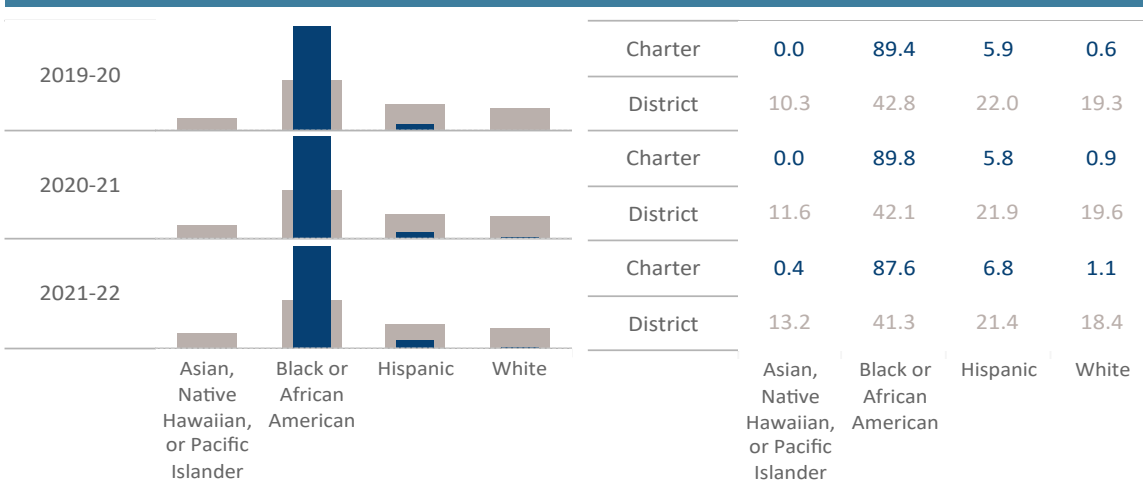
#### Student Demographics: Special Populations



#### Student Demographics: Free/Reduced Lunch



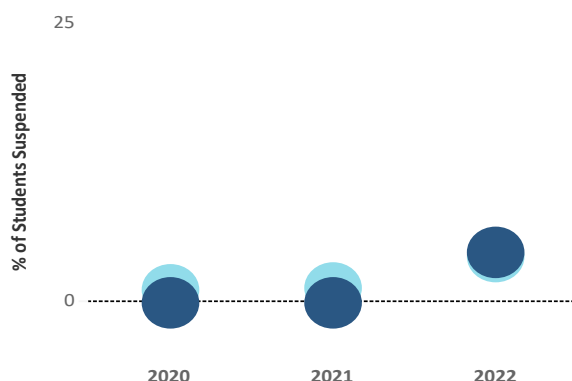
#### Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity



\* Data reported in these charts reflect BEDS day enrollment counts as reported by the NYSED except for the charter's 2020-21 ELL enrollment which reflects data reported by the education corporation and validated by the Institute.

## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

### Persistence Preparatory Academy Charter School



### Buffalo City School District

ISS Rate OSS Rate

2020	1.2	0.0
2021	1.3	0.0
2022	4.1	4.5

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

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

**Expulsions:** The number of students expelled from the charter each year

		2020	2021	2022
2019-20	88.0			
2020-21	92.5	0	0	0
2021-22	92.9			

### Persistence Preparatory Academy Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2021-22

			Target	Charter
enrollment	economically disadvantaged		86.7	92.9
	English language learners		12.9	0.0
	students with disabilities		21.0	10.5
retention	economically disadvantaged		95.1	93.4
	English language learners	NA	95.0	NA
	students with disabilities		95.3	86.4

\* Data reported in these charts reflect information reported by the education corporation and validated by the Institute.

## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

### ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION TARGETS

As required by Education Law § 2851(4)(e), a charter must include in its renewal application information regarding the efforts it will put in place to meet or exceed SUNY's enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, ELLs, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch ("FRPL") program. The Institute examines each charter's progress toward meeting or coming close to meeting its targets over the charter term as well as the efforts it has and will put in place to meet or continue to meet those targets.

Persistence Prep makes good faith efforts to meet its enrollment and retention targets. The charter acknowledges the opportunity to increase its efforts for recruiting ELLs from the community. The charter plans to conduct the following efforts to meet its targets in a future charter term:

- Canvassing door-to-door and in grocery stores, medical offices, libraries, and community centers in the local community;
- Partnering with Person Centered Services, a local organization that coordinates support for people with disabilities, to expand targeted outreach efforts;
- Soliciting referrals from members of the Buffalo City School District committee on special education ("CSE") who have relationships with parents of students with disabilities;
- Hosting open houses with the charter's director of special education and special education teachers to promote the program and address questions from families;
- Tracking the demand for special education services within the Persistence Prep application pool and using the data to give priority to special education students in the selection lottery as needed;
- Implementing a Responsive Classroom model and training all teachers on trauma informed care, co-teaching structures, and inclusive classroom practices;
- Promoting the charter's strong academic program through advertising campaigns in news outlets and social media platforms;
- Translating application materials into Spanish, Arabic, Bengali, and Burmese and distributing them in neighborhoods with a high concentration of families that speak languages other than English;
- Offering free transportation citywide to facilitate student access to the school; and,
- Increasing recruitment of dual certified teachers who have TESOL and birth-to-childhood certifications to address the unique needs of ELL students.

## FISCAL ANALYSIS

### IS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION FISCALLY SOUND?

*Persistence Prep is fiscally sound based on the Institute's review of the fiscal evidence collected through the renewal review. The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard presents color-coded tables and charts indicating that the education corporation has demonstrated fiscal soundness over the majority of the charter term.<sup>4</sup>*



The education corporation recently completed \$7.5 million facility financing for the newly constructed Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> grade facility to provide ample space for the full academic and community programming needs. The charter school benefits from strong enrollment and is now housed in its long term facility that includes arts, music, dance and gymnasium space.



### DOES THE EDUCATION CORPORATION OPERATE PURSUANT TO A FISCAL PLAN WITH REALISTIC BUDGETS THAT IT MONITORS AND ADJUSTS WHEN APPROPRIATE?

***The education corporation operates pursuant to a long-range financial plan in which it creates realistic budgets that it monitors and adjusts when appropriate. The following elements are generally present:***

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
The education corporation has clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures.	+
Board members, charter management, and staff members contribute to the budget process, as appropriate.	+
The education corporation frequently compares its long-range fiscal plan for the charter to actual progress and adjusts it to meet changing conditions.	+
The education corporation routinely analyzes budget variances for the charter; the board addresses material variances and makes necessary revisions.	+
Actual expenses are equal to, or less than, actual revenue with no material exceptions.	+

4. 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.

"+" : This indicator is generally present.

"-" : This indicator is generally not present.

"P" : The education corporation is progressing toward this indicator being present.

"N/A" : This indicator is not applicable.



## FISCAL ANALYSIS

### DOES THE EDUCATION CORPORATION MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE INTERNAL CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES?

*The education corporation maintains appropriate internal controls and procedures. The following elements are generally present:*

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
The education corporation has a history of sound fiscal policies, procedures and practices, and appropriate internal controls.	+
The most recent audit report was free of any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal controls.	+
The education corporation reviews and updates its Financial Policies and Procedures Manual ("FPPM"), which covers the charter, on a regular basis. The most recent review of the FPPM is found in the next column. The Institute recommends, as a best practice, that the education corporation review and update its FPPM on an annual basis.	<b>JULY 2022</b>

### DOES THE EDUCATION CORPORATION COMPLY WITH FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

*The education corporation complies with financial reporting requirements by providing the SUNY Trustees and NYSED with required financial reports that are on time, complete, and follow generally accepted accounting principles. The following reports are generally filed in a timely, accurate, and complete manner:*

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
Annual financial statement audit reports, including federal Single Audit report, if applicable.	+
Annual budgets.	+
Un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses, and enrollment.	+
Bi-monthly enrollment reports to the sending districts and, if applicable, to NYSED including proper documentation regarding the level of special education services provided to students.	+
Grant expenditure reports.	+

## FISCAL ANALYSIS

### DOES THE EDUCATION CORPORATION MAINTAIN ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO ENSURE STABLE OPERATIONS?

*The education corporation maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. Critical financial needs of the charter are not dependent on variable income (grants, donations, and fundraising). The following elements are generally present:*

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
The education corporation maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly.	+
The education corporation maintains adequate liquid reserves to fund expenses in the event of income loss (generally 30 days).	+
The education corporation prepares and monitors cash flow projections.	+
If the education corporation includes philanthropy in its budget, it monitors progress toward its development goals on a periodic basis.	+
If necessary, the education corporation pursues district state aid intercepts with NYSED to ensure adequate per pupil funding.	+
The education corporation accumulates unrestricted net assets that are equal to or exceed two percent of the charter's operating budget for the upcoming year.	+
The education corporation is in compliance with all loan covenants.	+

The education corporation is fiscally strong with operating surpluses in each year of the current charter term. Net assets have grown to \$2.7 million with 3.1 months of cash on hand for liabilities coming due in the near future. The charter established and maintains the required dissolution reserve fund. The education corporation has remained in compliance with any debt related loan covenants as required. The audit from June 30, 2022 reported continued fiscal strength.

## FISCAL ANALYSIS

### PERSISTENCE PREPARATORY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

#### CHARTER INFORMATION

##### BALANCE SHEET

###### Assets

###### Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents - <b>GRAPH 1</b>	
Grants and Contracts Receivable	
Accounts Receivable	
Prepaid Expenses	
Contributions and Other Receivables	
<b>Total Current Assets - GRAPH 1</b>	
Property, Building and Equipment, net	
Other Assets	

###### Total Assets - GRAPH 1

###### Liabilities and Net Assets

###### Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	
Accrued Payroll and Benefits	
Deferred Revenue	
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable	
Other	
<b>Total Current Liabilities - GRAPH 1</b>	
Deferred Rent/Lease Liability	
All other L-T debt and notes payable, net current maturities	

###### Total Liabilities - GRAPH 1

###### Net Assets

Without Donor Restrictions	
With Donor Restrictions	

###### Total Net Assets

###### Total Liabilities and Net Assets

##### ACTIVITIES

###### Operating Revenue

Resident Student Enrollment	
Students with Disabilities	
<b>Grants and Contracts</b>	
State and local	
Federal - Title and IDEA	
Federal - Other	
Other	
NYC DoE Rental Assistance	
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program	

###### Total Operating Revenue

###### Expenses

Regular Education	
SPED	
Other	
<b>Total Program Services</b>	
Management and General	
Fundraising	

###### Total Expenses - GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4

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

###### Support and Other Revenue

Contributions	
Fundraising	
Miscellaneous Income	
Net assets released from restriction	

###### Total Support and Other Revenue

Total Unrestricted Revenue	
Total Temporally Restricted Revenue	

###### Total Revenue - GRAPHS 2 & 3

###### Change in Net Assets

###### Net Assets - Beginning of Year - GRAPH 2

###### Prior Year Adjustment(s)

###### Net Assets - End of Year - GRAPH 2

Opened 2018-19

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	575,584	945,915	907,297	1,054,365
-	67,645	-	239,423	193,996
-	-	229,815	-	-
-	14,265	24,803	37,837	11,448
-	-	-	-	-
-	657,494	1,200,533	1,184,557	1,259,809
-	243,707	415,706	6,975,813	8,661,228
-	25,000	50,000	397,826	481,810
-	926,201	1,666,239	8,558,196	10,402,847

-	31,351	131,735	1,154,562	130,417
-	54,742	-	74,761	103,795
-	76,194	-	-	-
-	6,581	8,349	11,168	121,070
-	-	-	400,000	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	168,868	140,084	1,640,491	355,282
-	-	-	-	-
-	7,382	259,974	4,512,840	7,340,329
-	176,250	400,058	6,153,331	7,695,611

-	724,951	1,171,462	2,394,765	2,707,236
-	25,000	94,719	10,100	-
-	749,951	1,266,181	2,404,865	2,707,236
-	926,201	1,666,239	8,558,196	10,402,847

-	1,357,199	2,266,369	2,952,431	3,565,311
-	80,671	87,215	106,155	192,595

-	-	-	-	113,143
-	1,271,393	608,768	680,855	147,008
-	-	-	-	307,374
-	41,801	-	254,452	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	2,751,064	2,962,352	3,993,893	4,325,431

-	1,109,722	1,690,009	1,729,542	2,590,023
-	165,588	166,272	209,878	286,059
-	100,073	144,226	269,104	366,315
-	1,375,383	2,000,507	2,208,524	3,242,397
-	625,730	556,037	667,215	819,634
-	-	-	-	-
-	2,001,113	2,556,544	2,875,739	4,062,031

-	749,951	405,808	1,118,154	263,400
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-	-	94,719	10,100	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	15,703	10,430	38,971
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	110,422	20,530	38,971

-	2,751,064	2,978,055	4,099,042	4,374,502
-	-	94,719	(84,619)	(10,100)
-	2,751,064	3,072,774	4,014,423	4,364,402

-	749,951	516,230	1,138,684	302,371
-	-	749,951	1,266,181	2,404,865
-	-	-	-	-
-	749,951	1,266,181	2,404,865	2,707,236

# FISCAL ANALYSIS

## PERSISTENCE PREPARATORY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

### CHARTER INFORMATION - (Continued)

#### Functional Expense Breakdown

Personnel Service
Administrative Staff Personnel
Instructional Personnel
Non-Instructional Personnel
Personnel Services (Combined)
<b>Total Salaries and Staff</b>
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes
Retirement
Management Company Fees
Building and Land Rent / Lease / Facility Financing
Staff Development
Professional Fees, Consultant & Purchased Services
Marketing / Recruitment
Student Supplies, Materials & Services
Depreciation
Other
<b>Total Expenses</b>

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	275,713	224,961	260,095	318,752
-	630,318	995,133	1,052,502	1,449,997
-	29,035	51,998	143,460	154,429
-	-	-	-	-
-	935,066	1,272,092	1,456,057	1,923,178
-	204,038	322,989	300,824	373,831
-	-	-	74,803	77,609
-	-	-	-	-
-	119,835	154,892	187,927	347,335
-	42,459	51,211	126,674	49,215
-	166,637	201,027	301,787	302,361
-	62,359	22,977	12,931	9,253
-	171,841	189,655	74,737	195,784
-	118,618	153,121	70,536	299,870
-	180,260	188,580	269,463	483,595
-	2,001,113	2,556,544	2,875,739	4,062,031

### CHARTER ANALYSIS

#### ENROLLMENT

Original Chartered Enrollment
Final Chartered Enrollment (includes any revisions)
Actual Enrollment - <b>GRAPH 4</b>
Chartered Grades
Final Chartered Grades (includes any revisions)

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	108	162	216	270
-	108	162	216	270
-	100	168	224	269
Planning Year	K-1	K-2	K-3	K-4
-	-	-	-	-

<b>Primary School District: BUFFALO CITY SD</b>
<b>Per Pupil Funding</b> (Weighted Avg of All Districts)
Increase over prior year

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	13,350	13,494	13,494	13,308
0.0%	100.0%	1.1%	0.0%	-1.4%

#### PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

##### Revenue

Operating
Other Revenue and Support
<b>TOTAL - GRAPH 3</b>

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	27,531	17,609	17,795	16,089
-	-	656	91	145
-	27,531	18,265	17,886	16,234

##### Expenses

Program Services
Management and General, Fundraising
<b>TOTAL - GRAPH 3</b>
% of Program Services
% of Management and Other

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	13,764	11,891	9,840	12,061
-	6,262	3,305	2,973	3,049
-	20,026	15,196	12,813	15,109
0.0%	68.7%	78.3%	76.8%	79.8%
0.0%	31.3%	21.7%	23.2%	20.2%
0.0%	37.5%	20.2%	39.6%	7.4%
#DIV/0!	4.4%	5.2%	4.7%	8.0%

% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses - **GRAPH 5**

% of Revenue Expended on Facilities

#### Student to Faculty Ratio

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	8.3	7.3	9.8	10.0

#### Faculty to Admin Ratio

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	4.0	11.5	7.7	6.1

#### Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - **GRAPH 6**

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

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
0.0	2.8	3.0	1.8	2.4
N/A	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong

#### Working Capital - **GRAPH 7**

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

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
0	488,626	1,060,449	(455,934)	904,527
0.0%	17.8%	35.6%	-11.1%	20.7%
0.0	3.9	8.6	0.7	3.5
N/A	LOW	LOW	HIGH	LOW
N/A	Excellent	Excellent	Poor	Excellent

#### Quick (Acid Test) Ratio

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

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
0.0	3.8	8.4	0.7	3.5
N/A	LOW	LOW	HIGH	LOW
N/A	Excellent	Excellent	Poor	Excellent

#### Debt to Asset Ratio - **GRAPH 7**

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

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
0.0	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.7
N/A	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
N/A	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good

#### 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.)

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
0.0	3.5	4.4	3.8	3.1
N/A	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
N/A	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

## FUTURE PLANS

### IF THE SUNY TRUSTEES RENEW THE CHARTER, ARE THE EDUCATION CORPORATION'S PLANS FOR THE CHARTER REASONABLE, FEASIBLE, AND ACHIEVABLE?

*Persistence Prep implements a strong academic program supported by an effective, viable organization. The charter is fiscally sound and presents sound financial plans. As such, the charter's plans for the next charter term, including expansion into middle school grades, are reasonable, feasible, and achievable.*

#### PERSISTENCE PREPARATORY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

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

**Plans for the Educational Program.** Persistence Prep plans to continue implementing the same core elements of its strong educational program at the elementary program and grow to serve middle school grades. The board and instructional leaders are thoughtful about the staffing increases and programmatic modifications necessary to deliver high quality teaching and learning to middle school students in anticipation of matriculation into college preparatory high schools and beyond. The charter's plans for growth into middle school grades demonstrate a high level of detail with promising practices that, if renewed, will likely lead the charter to meet or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals in any future charter term.

**Plans for Board Oversight & Governance.** Multiple current trustees nearing the end of their terms express interest in serving in an emeritus capacity in a future charter term. The board plans to increase its membership and capacity in the areas of finance, facilities, and education.

**Fiscal & Facility Plans.** Persistence Prep is fiscally sound based on the evidence collected through renewal review and presents a reasonable fiscal plan for the next charter term.

Recently completed facility construction provides ample space for the anticipated fully grown Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> grade academic programming needs including space for art, music, dance, and physical education. In addition, a condition as part of the property purchase is that the facility include dedicated community programming space, which has been incorporated into the academic experience.

	CURRENT	END OF NEXT CHARTER TERM
<b>Enrollment</b>	324	486
<b>Grade Span</b>	K-5	K-8
<b>Teaching Staff</b>	29	42
<b>Days of Instruction</b>	183	183



Persistence Prep

# Ax

APPENDICES

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OVERVIEW

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<sup>B</sup>  
**RI**  
REPORT  
INFORMATION

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## APPENDIX A: CHARTER SCHOOL OVERVIEW

### PERSISTENCE PREPARATORY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CHAIR	TRUSTEES
Elisha Tomasello	Zach Melas
VICE CHAIR	Kenneth Newsom
Catherine Roberts	Aaron Bennett
TREASURER	Derrick Parson
Kevin Celniker	Rebecca F. Izzo
SECRETARY	Jennifer Zorn
Darnell Haywood	Christopher Ciechoski
	Bobbie Finocchio
	Adriana A. Viverette
	Nicole A. Wodka-Cook

### CHARTER LEADERS

PRINCIPAL
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*Joelle Formato, Head of School (October 2017-Present)*

### CHARTER CHARACTERISTICS

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2018-19	108	100	93%	K-1
2019-20	162	168	104%	K-2
2020-21	216	224	104%	K-3
2021-22	270	270	100%	K-4
2022-23	324	323	100%	K-5

## APPENDIX A: CHARTER SCHOOL OVERVIEW

### TIMELINE OF CHARTER RENEWAL



### CHARTER SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY

SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
2018-19	First Year Visit	April 18, 2019
2022-23	Initial Renewal Review	October 6-7, 2022

### CONDUCT OF THE RENEWAL REVIEW

DATE(S) OF REVIEW	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
October 6-7, 2022	Sinnjinn Bucknell	Director of Performance and Systems
	Andrew Kile	Managing Director of School Evaluation
	Erin Allen	Senior Analyst
	Kennesha Kelly	External Consultant

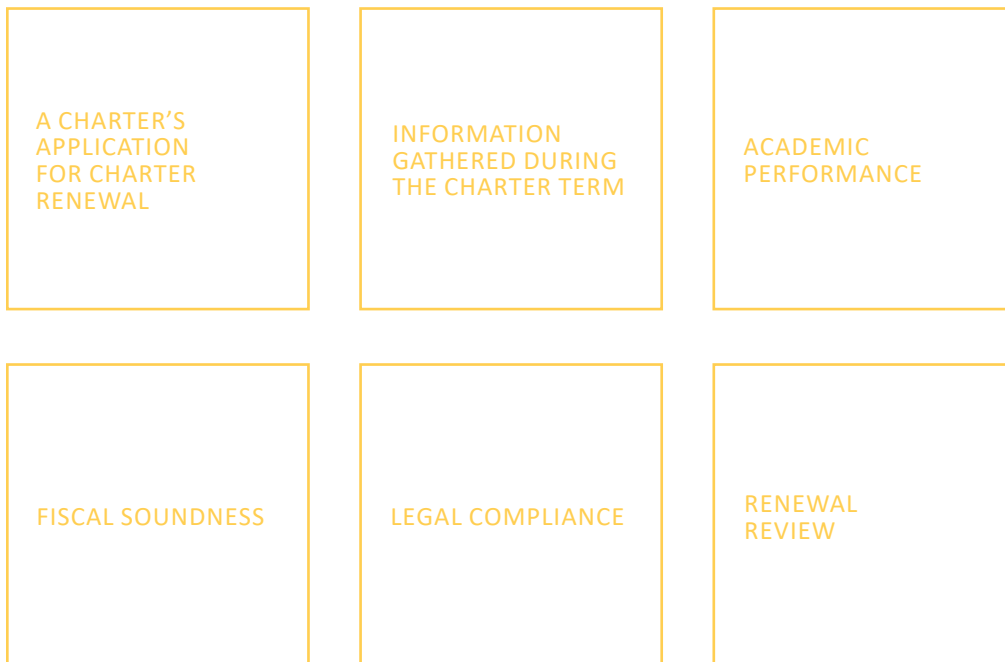


The sections below contain general information about the SUNY Trustees’ and Institute’s approach to renewal.

#### REPORT FORMAT

This report is the primary means by which the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) transmits to the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) its findings and recommendations regarding a charter school’s Application for Charter Renewal, and more broadly, details the merits of a charter’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”).<sup>1</sup>

#### THE INSTITUTE MAKES ALL RENEWAL RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON



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

1. Revised September 4, 2013 and available on the [Institute’s website](#).

This renewal recommendation report compiles evidence using the **State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks** (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”),<sup>2</sup> which specify in detail what a successful charter 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 charter has made an adequate case for renewal.

#### RENEWAL QUESTIONS



**IS THE CHARTER AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?**

**IS THE CHARTER AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?**

**IS THE CHARTER FISCALLY SOUND?**

**IF THE SUNY TRUSTEES RENEW THE CHARTER, ARE THE EDUCATION CORPORATION’S PLANS FOR THE CHARTER REASONABLE, FEASIBLE, AND ACHIEVABLE?**

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



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](#).

2. Version 5.0, May 2012, are available on the [Institute’s website](#).



## IS THE CHARTER AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS? THE INFORMATION BELOW HIGHLIGHTS THE INSTITUTE'S AND SUNY TRUSTEES' APPROACH TO ACCOUNTABILITY PLANS FOR EACH SUNY AUTHORIZED CHARTER.

At the beginning of the Accountability Period,<sup>3</sup> the charter developed and adopted an Accountability Plan that set academic goals for performance in the key subjects of ELA and mathematics, as well as science and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA"). High school Accountability Plans also include goals for High School Graduation, College Preparation, and Social Studies. For each goal in the Accountability Plan, specific outcome measures define the level of performance necessary to meet that goal. The Institute examines results for all required Accountability Plan measures to determine goal attainment. The Act requires charters be held "accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results"<sup>4</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>5</sup> for other public schools. SUNY's required accountability measures rest on performance as measured by statewide assessments. Historically, SUNY's required measures include measures that present schools':

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

COMPARATIVE PERFOR-  
MANCE, I.E., HOW DID THE  
CHARTER DO AS COMPARED  
TO SCHOOLS IN THE  
DISTRICT AND SCHOOLS  
THAT SERVE SIMILAR  
POPULATIONS OF ECO-  
NOMICALLY DISADVAN-  
TAGED STUDENTS?

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

Absolute, comparative, and growth achievement provide a basis for triangulating charter performance within each academic goal area. Furthermore, every SUNY authorized charter school may propose additional, mission aligned goals and measures of success when crafting its Accountability Plan. The final Accountability Plan adopted by the education corporation's board and approved by the Institute is included in the charter and frames the analysis of the charter's student achievement results.

The Institute consistently emphasizes comparative and growth performance over absolute measures in its analysis of goal attainment. Nevertheless, the Institute analyzes every measure included in a charter's Accountability Plan to determine its level of academic success, including the extent to which each charter has established and maintained a record of high performance and demonstrated progress toward meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals throughout the charter term. Whether or not a charter includes additional measures in its Accountability Plan, the Institute considers all available evidence of charter performance at the time of renewal.

3. Because the SUNY Trustees make a renewal decision before student achievement results for the final year of a charter term become available, the Accountability Period ends with the school year prior to the final year of the charter term. For a charter in a subsequent charter term, the Accountability Period covers the final year of the previous charter term and ends with the school year prior to the final year of the current charter term. In this renewal report, the Institute uses "charter term" and "Accountability Period" interchangeably.

4. Education Law § 2850(2)(f).

5. Education Law § 2854(1)(d).

State assessment data in ELA, mathematics, and science in 3<sup>rd</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> grade form the basis of data required to analyze the required accountability measures for elementary and middle schools. These data were not available in 2019-20 following the state's cancellation of all state exams during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although schools participated in state assessments in ELA and mathematics in 2020-21, the participation rates that year were inconsistent. The resulting data is not sufficiently reliable or credible for cogent analyses of charter academic performance. In response, the Institute provided all SUNY authorized charter schools a framework for the analysis of norm-referenced and internally developed exam data. To every extent possible, the Institute attempted to maintain a consistent framework of examining absolute, comparative, and growth performance. During 2019-20 and 2020-21, charters reported data on a variety of norm-referenced and internally developed assessments to demonstrate student academic success. This renewal report contemplates charter performance during the pandemic through the lenses of absolute and growth performance on norm-referenced and internally developed ELA, mathematics, and science assessments along with high school completion and college readiness data.



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