

The background of the entire page is a solid blue color. Overlaid on this is a grid of lighter blue squares. The grid is not uniform; it is denser in the upper left and fades out towards the bottom right, creating a sense of depth and movement.

THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT
ELM COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL*

Report Date: March 7, 2023

Review Date: October 25, 2022

SUNY Charter Schools Institute
H. Carl McCall SUNY Building
353 Broadway
Albany, NY 12246

518.445.4250
www.newyorkcharters.org



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

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CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND

ELM COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

79-17 51st Avenue, Elmhurst, New York | Grades: K-5 | NYC Community School District 24

The State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) approved the original charter for Elm Community Charter School (“Elm Community”) on June 8, 2017. The charter opened in fall 2018, serving 100 students in Kindergarten and 1st grade.



MISSION

Our mission is to cultivate student leaders with the character and capacity to form their own identity, seize any opportunity, and shape the world around them through integrated studies and collaborative learning.

Our goal is to provide a rigorous and holistic academic program that will enable our students to choose a middle school program of their choice.

CURRENT CHARTER

Serves: Kindergarten – 5th

*Chartered Enrollment:
394*

*Charter Expiration:
July 31, 2023*

PROPOSED FUTURE CHARTER

Serves: Kindergarten – 5th

*Chartered Enrollment:
468*

*Charter Expiration
July 31, 2028*

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Collaborative learning;



Creative courses;



Student led integrated studies;



Rigorous and holistic academics;



Data driven small group learning;



Learning opportunities for all learners; and,



Focus on self exploration and self awareness;



Effective teacher collaboration and development.



CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND



NOTEWORTHY

Elm Community delivers effective academic supports for at-risk students including students with disabilities and English language learners (“ELLs”). In 2021-22, the charter’s students with disabilities and ELLs posted proficiency rates in English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics that surpassed the district. Notably, Elm Community enrolls particularly high proportions of ELLs and in 2021-22, 31% of the charter’s students were classified as an ELL or were formerly an ELL. That year, ELLs at Elm Community more than doubled the proficiency rate of the district’s ELLs in ELA and mathematics.

RESPONSE TO INTERRUPTED INSTRUCTION CAUSED BY COVID-19

To mitigate interrupted instruction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Elm Community implements a number of programmatic changes since transitioning back to full time, in-person instruction. During remote instruction, teachers and leaders began to notice marked increases in anxiety and other challenges with students that impacted learning. In response, the charter increased its resources devoted to social emotional learning by hiring an additional school counselor and creating a new leadership position to further develop the counseling team’s capacity to deliver high quality services. In addition to more robust social emotional learning supports, Elm Community prioritizes the charter’s key design element of small group instruction as a primary strategy for addressing interrupted instruction. Instructional leaders increased the amount of teacher professional development on small group instructional strategies and restructured small group supports for students most at risk of academic failure to be led by dedicated interventionists with a modified curriculum. Elm Community also leverages improvements to teacher culture to mitigate interrupted instruction. This year, leaders redesigned professional development sessions to include frequent opportunities for teachers to practice instruction in front of peers, inquiry-based structures, and rubrics aligned to the charter’s vision and mission in order to emphasize the Elm Community philosophy. As a result of these professional development changes, teachers report stronger adult culture, which enables greater focus on rebounding from interrupted instruction.

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 Elm Community Charter School for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten – 5th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal, with a projected total enrollment of 468 students. The Institute makes this recommendation based on Elm Community 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”).¹*

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,² 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.³

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, Elm Community is an academic success having met its key Accountability Plan goals. The charter also has an effective program in place on the ground. 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?

Elm Community is an academic success. The charter implements an effective academic program and met its key academic Accountability Plan goals.

Elm Community demonstrated success in the following ways:

- The charter posted high achievement in ELA and mathematics during the first year with credible state exam results. In 2021-22, Elm Community outperformed the district by 11 percentage points in ELA and 16 percentage points in mathematics;
- Elm Community also demonstrated high comparative achievement statewide during the 2021-22 school year. The charter posted effect sizes in ELA and mathematics far above the target of 0.3 indicating that the charter performed higher than expected to a large degree compared to demographically similar schools; and,
- The charter posted superlative science achievement in 2021-22 when 95% of its students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficiency exceeding the district by 20 percentage points.

Is the charter an effective, viable organization?

Elm Community 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 thoughtfully evaluates the charter's leadership.

Is the charter fiscally sound?

Elm Community is fiscally sound based on the fiscal evidence collected through renewal review. The education corporation has met or come close to meeting its fiscal benchmarks throughout the charter term and presents a reasonable and appropriate 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?

Elm Community's plans for the future are reasonable, feasible, and achievable. The charter plans to continue implementing the key elements of its program that have led to success in meeting Accountability Plan goals.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Elm Community implements a high quality academic program and posted strong baseline state exam results in 2021-22. The charter originally applied to serve a diverse student population in the Elmhurst community but, due to unforeseen circumstances regarding space, opened in fall 2018 in the Flushing neighborhood of Queens, NY. During the period of interrupted instruction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the board oversaw the construction of a new facility in the original neighborhood the school intended to serve. In fall 2021, Elm Community opened in its new space serving its original target community.

Over the term, the charter experienced teacher turnover and responded urgently to build the hiring, professional development, and coaching systems necessary to incubate and retain high quality teachers. Instructional leaders establish a positive culture focused on academic excellence that results in joyful classroom environments. Notably, the charter enrolls high proportions of ELLs and infuses its professional development program with substantial trainings for general education teachers on strategies for meeting those students' needs.

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 Elm Community Charter School an Initial Full-Term Renewal of five years.





DP

DATA PRESENTATION

PAGES: 7-19

AP

ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE

CP

COMPLIANCE
PERFORMANCE

CS

COMMUNITY
SATISFACTION

SD

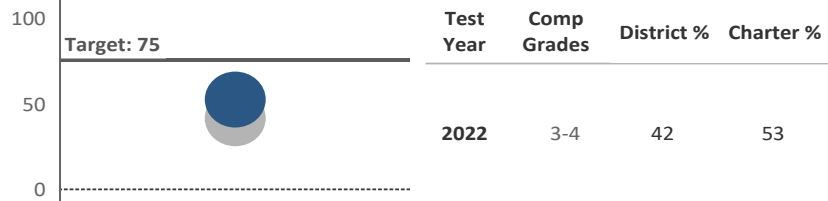
STUDENT
DEMOGRAPHICS

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

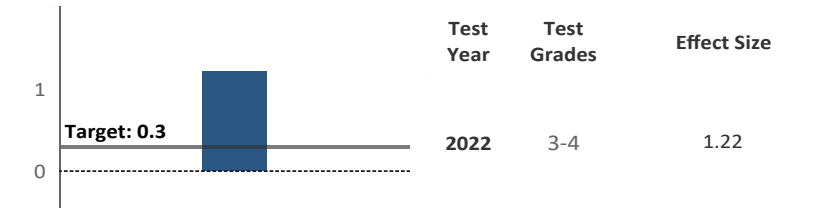
ELM COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

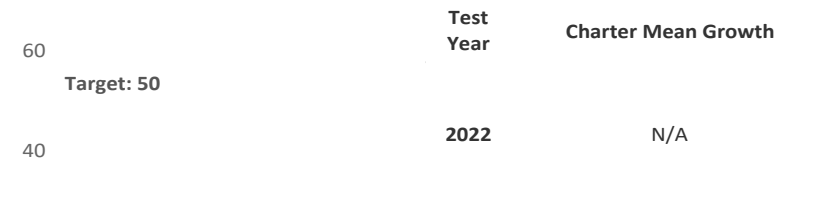
District Comparison. The percentage of students at **the charter** performing at or above proficiency in ELA compared to the district.



Effect Size. The chart shows charter's effect size above its predicted level of performance in **ELA** according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.

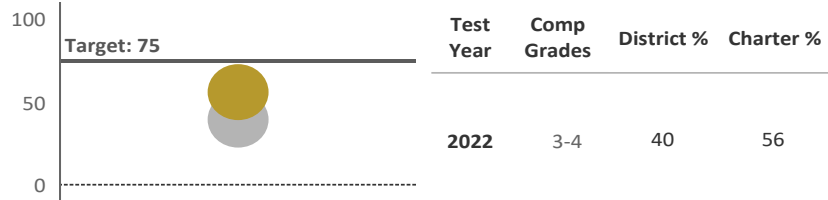


Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile. The charter's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above target of 50 in **ELA**.

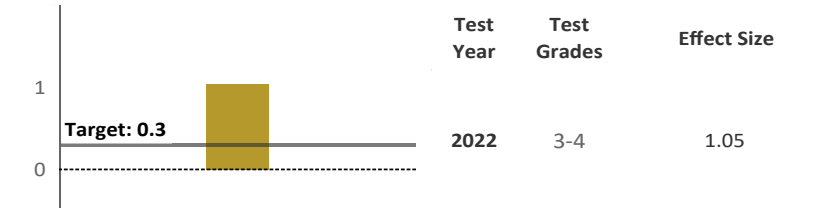


MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

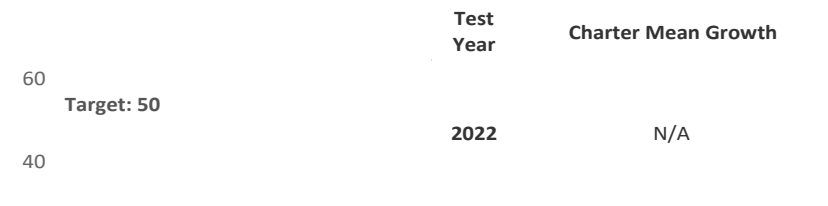
District Comparison. The percentage of students at **the charter** performing at or above proficiency in mathematics compared to the district.



Effect Size. The chart shows charter's effect size above its predicted level of performance in **mathematics** according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.



Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile. The charter's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above target of 50 in **mathematics**.



ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

ELM COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL



SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE*	
	2022
Students with Disabilities Enrollment	38
Tested on State Exam	11
Charter Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	36.4
District Percent Proficient	16.8
ELL Enrollment	82
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam	77
Charter Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress	10.4

* The academic outcome data about the performance of students receiving special education services and 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?

Elm Community first enrolled students in testing grades during the 2020-21 school year and, therefore, only produced its first set of credible New York State exam results in 2021-22. That year, the charter posted high proficiency rates in ELA and mathematics. Although the charter produced only a limited set of achievement data from state exams, Elm Community demonstrates a record of strong achievement on internal assessments. The charter also met its science and Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”) goals over the term.

Elm Community met its ELA and mathematics goals during its initial charter term. In 2021-22, the charter’s students enrolled in at least their second year posted proficiency rates of 53% and 56% in ELA and mathematics, respectively. The charter outperformed the district in both subjects. In comparison to schools across the state enrolling similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students, Elm Community performed higher than expected to a large degree in ELA and mathematics.

Given the absence of reliable and credible performance data from the state’s ELA and mathematics assessments for 3rd – 8th 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.

During the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years, the charter demonstrated academic success against key academic Accountability Plan goals using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (“F&P”) and the charter’s internally developed mathematics benchmarks aligned to state standards. Notably in 2021-22, 67% of students performed at or above grade level expectations according to end of year F&P results. In mathematics, 62% of students achieved proficiency on the benchmark assessment.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

ASSESSMENT

Elm Community has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning. The charter regularly administers reliable assessments that are standards based and aligned to the school's curriculum, including F&P quarterly for reading and Success for All's phonics assessment. The charter also administers internal assessments, end of unit exams, and on demand writing assessments. For mathematics, Elm Community administers internal assessments aligned to grade level standards and Number Stories for its inquiry-based mathematics component. Instructional leaders provide ample professional development for teachers on analyzing the data from these assessments and incorporating findings into lesson planning. Instructional leaders establish a culture of data driven inquiry that permeates team meetings, coaching sessions, and schoolwide professional development. As a result, teachers speak fluently about quantitative trends based on student results and how it drives instructional priorities. Teachers use assessment data to identify students' learning needs relative to standards, gaps in students' understanding of content, and gaps in learning between subgroups of students. For example, teachers may devote more instructional time in lessons to standards that all students struggle with or identify specific students for targeted small group instruction with modified activities tied to their learning needs.

CURRICULUM

Elm Community's curriculum supports teachers with instructional planning. In alignment with the charter's mission and key design elements, the curricular program emphasizes student centered learning experiences such as guided reading, mathematics workshops, and independent practice. This curriculum provides a fixed, underlying framework aligned to state standards and across grades. For mathematics, the charter uses Number Stories, Context for Learning Mathematics, and EngageNY. For literacy, Elm Community implements Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project for writing, and uses Lavinia Group's Insight Curriculum for reading and Success for All for phonics. Teachers use scope and sequence documents, unit calendars, and lesson plans provided by the charter and know what to teach and when to teach it. During dedicated planning time, teachers identify strategies, plan lesson activities and student exemplars, and create opportunities for facilitating peer-to-peer interaction, addressing misconceptions, and fostering higher order thinking. At the end of each school year, the leadership team, which consists of the principal and instructional leaders, reflects on the curriculum and asks teachers for feedback on the curricular program through surveys. Instructional leaders also analyze state exam and internal assessment results to identify strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum.

PEDAGOGY

High quality instruction is evident across most of Elm Community's classrooms. Teachers deliver lessons with purposeful activities aligned to clear objectives and frequently draw on prior content knowledge. To gauge student understanding, teachers employ strategies such as circulating the classroom, conferring with individual students, and including activities that require students to demonstrate learning in front of peers. As a result

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

of these practices, most teachers are able to make instructional adjustments in the moment and rephrase instructions or questions to the whole class based on identified misconceptions. Most teachers include opportunities for higher order thinking and problem solving in lessons. In some lessons, teachers do not ask students to elaborate upon short answers and do not sufficiently allow students to engage in the cognitive lift. In contrast, most teachers incorporate activities that require students to demonstrate deep understanding of multi-step problems and to show their work. Virtually all classrooms at Elm Community focus on academic achievement and all students are engaged. Teachers implement consistent routines and procedures while establishing warm, positive environments. Teachers frequently encourage and celebrate positive student behaviors.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Elm Community has strong instructional leadership that improves teaching and learning. Leaders establish high expectations for instruction and set clear quarterly pedagogical goals that drive professional learning during schoolwide professional development meetings and individual coaching sessions. As a result, all leaders and teachers align on instructional topics of focus and clearly articulate areas for growth, which evolve during the school year. For example, after focusing on community building and culture for adults and students during the first quarter, instructional leaders shifted the focus to building teachers' skills with intellectual preparation and closing their content knowledge gaps.

The charter's professional development program emphasizes accelerating learning for all students, especially those at risk of academic failure, and as such specifically prioritizes topics such as instruction for ELLs and the charter's Response to Intervention ("RTI") process. To maintain buy-in from both veteran teachers and those new to the profession, leaders incorporate inquiry-based methods into professional development sessions and allow teachers to model lesson launches and activities in front of peers for feedback. As a result, teachers report that adult culture is strong with cycles of providing each other effective feedback. Elm Community also implements effective coaching cycles that include weekly observations and debrief sessions. Leaders vary the frequency and intensity of these observations and coaching sessions to align teacher needs and interim assessment data. Coaching sessions result in clear and actionable feedback that leaders monitor in future observations.

AT RISK PROGRAM

Elm Community meets the educational needs of students with disabilities, students at risk of academic failure, and ELLs. The charter provides training and professional development to teachers on identifying and supporting at-risk students. In 2021-22, Elm Community's first set of credible state exam results demonstrated high achievement for the charter's at-risk student population.

At the beginning of each school year, Elm Community's operations team requests incoming students' files from the appropriate pre-Kindergarten center or the district Committee on Special Education ("CSE") to identify any student with existing Individualized Education Programs ("IEPs") and prepare necessary accommodations for

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

students with special academic, behavioral, or social needs. The student success team (“SST”), which is led by the director of student supports (“DSS”), reviews all referrals and recommendations. Teachers review students’ IEPs and annual academic goals to create a plan that identifies how and when they will address and assess each academic goal. The DSS oversees the IEP process and monitors student progress toward goals.

Elm Community’s RTI program supports students with academic and social emotional needs. The SST meets three times within a four to six week data cycle to analyze formative assessments and uses the quarterly benchmark goals to identify students who are struggling academically. Each tier requires data analysis for identifying struggling students, creating goals aligned to specific supports and interventions, and monitoring of student growth. Tier 1 provides general in-class strategies and intervention support. Tier 2 interventions primarily consist of data driven small group learning environments and additional small group instruction throughout the week with at-risk program teachers. Tier 3 support includes an alternate schedule with specific individualized curriculum interventions implemented by a grade level interventionist and grade level teachers.

Students in tier 3 receive small group literacy instruction with intervention programs including Leveled Literacy Intervention, FUNdations, or SPIRE, as well as small group mathematics instruction that has been differentiated by the grade level interventionist or special education teacher to better target specific skill and content gaps. In cases when an alternate schedule is not required, at-risk program teachers pull out students in tier 3 for tailored interventions. If students are not responding to tier 3 interventions, SST refers the student to the district CSE for evaluation. The DSS oversees all IEP meetings, collects student data, and monitors students’ growth in accordance with goals. Following the recommendations from the CSE, the SST ensures proper implementation of academic and related services and monitors student progress.

During enrollment, families complete a Home Language Identification Questionnaire and staff interview families as appropriate to identify potential ELLs. To determine initial speaking, listening, reading, and writing levels, ELL teachers administer the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (“NYSITELL”) and continually assesses student achievement and progress using the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (“NYSESLAT”). Elm Community’s ELL program, or emergent bilingual learners program, includes tiered interventions that include general in-class strategies and intervention support such as scaffolds, simplified language, visuals, and opportunities for discourse that are aligned to English language proficiency levels. For students who need more intensive support, English to Learners of Other Languages (“ESOL”) certified teachers or other teachers trained to lead small group ELL instruction. These teachers may deliver intensive supports that include language routines, vocabulary, reading, writing, speaking, and listening work. In alignment with Elm Community’s data driven culture, lead teachers monitor the academic growth and achievement of all students, including ELL students. Each grade level has an emergent bilingual learner teacher who supports with the planning and implementation of differentiated lessons and is responsible for leading the differentiation planning during weekly grade level meetings.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Elm Community has an organizational structure with operations and systems that effectively support the delivery of the academic program. The administrative structure has defined roles and responsibilities with clear lines of accountability that ensure teachers know who to go to for what. The charter's organizational structure allows instructional leaders to focus on the delivery of the academic program and enables them to make necessary programmatic adjustments. As a result, the charter was able to evaluate the challenges to retaining high quality teaching staff during the pandemic and respond with thoughtful changes. The charter modified its recruitment and hiring processes to select for teacher mindset rather than emphasizing specific skills. Leaders made the decision to establish an environment that prioritizes openness to feedback. In order to build up new teachers' skills, Elm Community hired a director of teacher development and established grade team lead, mentor teacher, and curriculum writer roles for classroom teachers. These positions serve as both supplements to the charter's professional development program and form career pipelines for staff members who want more responsibility.

BOARD OVERSIGHT & GOVERNANCE

The Elm Community board works effectively to achieve the charter's Accountability Plan goals. Board members possess a wide range of skills and are seeking to increase the board's capacity in academics. The board establishes clear priorities and regularly monitors progress toward its goals including increasing fundraising efforts. Members stay up to date on the charter's performance and key metrics with data dashboards and regular reports from the principal. Although the board is proud of the charter's initial record of high achievement, trustees are deeply reflective of areas where the academic program can improve and communicate high expectations for future performance. The board conducts regular evaluations of the principal and has done a self evaluation. Members recognize the opportunity to further tighten the board's routines, procedures, and systems, and engage with an external consultant to assist in development.

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.

ELM COMMUNITY 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 reports to its website as required under the Act. The Institute will ensure the charter posts its most recent annual report prior to the start of the next charter term.

Bylaws

The education corporation’s bylaws require minor amendment regarding the removal of trustees in accordance with the education law. The Institute is working with the education corporation to correct.

Code of Ethics/Conflict of Interest Policy

At the time of the renewal submission, the education corporation’s code of ethics and conflicts of interest policies were missing several required components. The Institute is working with the education corporation to ensure a more comprehensive policy is adopted.

Litigation

The education corporation has been negotiating its initial agreement with the collective bargaining unit since 2020. In November 2022, the National Labor Relations Board found the charter committed unfair labor practices by refusing to bargain collectively with the union by unilaterally setting wage rates for unit employees without giving notice or opportunity to bargain and issued an order accordingly. The Institute will monitor the charter’s compliance with the order.

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 employed 17 uncertified lead teachers, two over the allowable limit. Eight uncertified lead teachers did not meet the appropriate qualifications under the Act. The charter tracks progress for uncertified teachers to identify the best certification pathway and monitors the teacher’s progress toward certification and connect teachers to student teaching and observation opportunities.

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	TRUST	EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	STRONG FAMILY & COMMUNITY TIES
88%	95%	96%	95%	94%

Parent Survey Data

The Institute compiled data from the New York City Department of Education’s (“NYCDOE’s”) annual family survey from the 2021-22 school year for each school due for renewal. In 2021-22, 88% of families who received the NYCDOE survey responded. Of the families who responded, 95% 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 six parents and caretakers in attendance at the focus group indicated high levels of satisfaction with Elm Community. Teachers and instructional leadership regularly communicate about students’ academic performance through various methods including quarterly parent conferences. Parents and families appreciate the charter’s commitment to social emotional learning that supplements the focus on rigorous academics. Families also expressed satisfaction with the joyful, orderly, and academically focused environment at the charter. This culture allows for smooth transitions between classrooms and noticeably joyful students.

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 NYCDOE held its required hearing on Elm Community’s renewal application on December 1, 2022 by videoconference. The charter leader spoke about the charter’s mission to have students form identity, seize any opportunity, and shape the world around them. The charter leader also described four of the charter’s key design elements, which set it apart from other schools in the community: data driven, small group instruction; integrated studies; self awareness; and, creative courses. Finally, the

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION

charter leader highlighted the diversity of the community and how it is clearly reflected in the charter. The charter's assistant principal relayed the positive, collaborative nature of leadership, and its willingness to lead and support teachers growing a real sense of community. A 5th grade student, who enrolled in the charter in its first year, described how the charter shaped him to be a reflective learner and supported his continuous intellectual growth. A charter parent spoke of the positive spirit and culture among the adults at the charter, explaining how staff members' accessibility enhances the positive experience for the diverse population. No one spoke in opposition to the application.

Persistence in Enrollment An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2021-22, 83% of Elm Community 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.

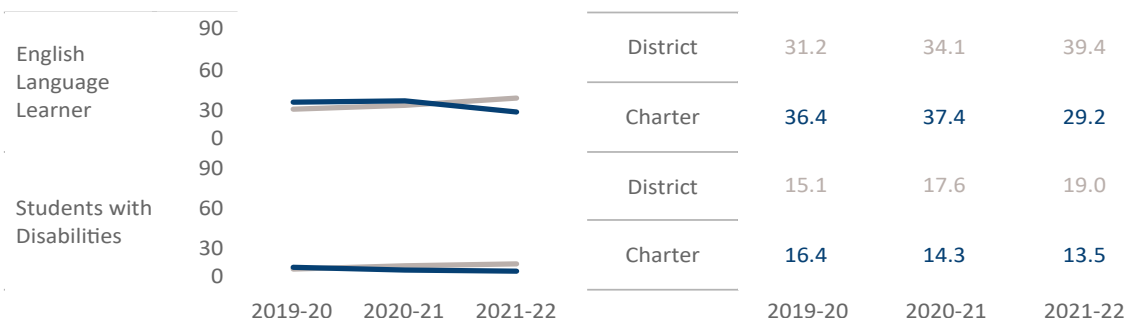
The Institute derived the statistical information on persistence in enrollment from its database. No comparative data from the NYCDOE or the NYSED is available to the Institute to provide either district or statewide context.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

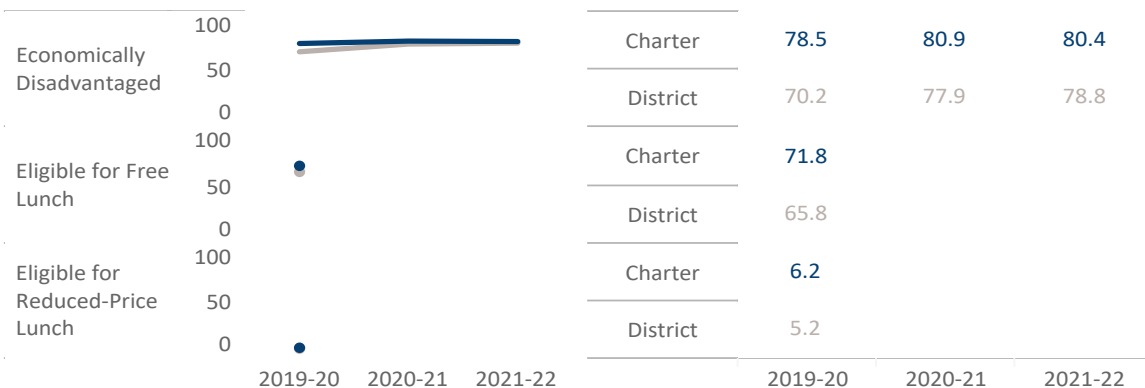
Elm Community Charter School

Queens CSD 24

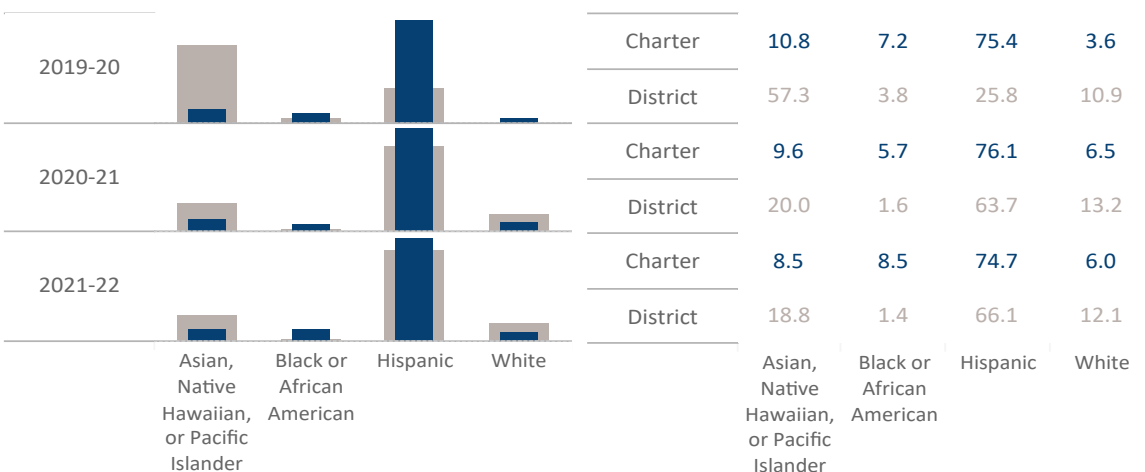
Student Demographics: Special Populations



Student Demographics: Free/Reduced Lunch



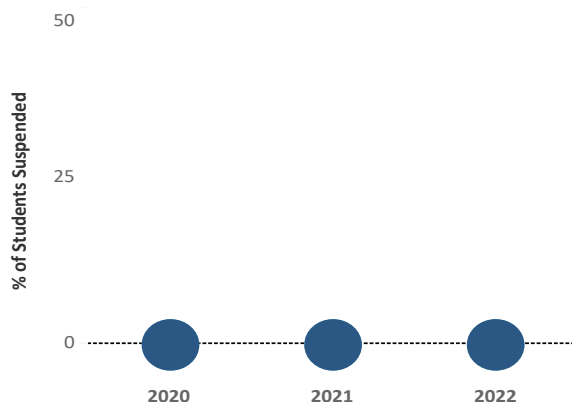
Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity



* 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

Elm Community Charter School



Queens CSD 24

ISS Rate OSS Rate

2020	0.0	0.0
2021	0.0	0.0
2022	0.0	0.0

Data suitable for comparison are not available. The percentage rate shown here is calculated using the method employed by 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	85.4			
2020-21	82.6	0	0	0
2021-22	82.6			

Elm Community Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2021-22

			Target	Charter
enrollment	economically disadvantaged	<div><div></div></div>	83.9	79.6
	English language learners	<div><div></div></div>	28.9	31.3
	students with disabilities	<div><div></div></div>	14.4	12.4
retention	economically disadvantaged	<div><div></div></div>	95.8	83.9
	English language learners	<div><div></div></div>	95.9	88.9
	students with disabilities	<div><div></div></div>	96.1	81.8

* 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.

Elm Community makes good faith efforts to meet its enrollment and retention targets. The charter meets its ELL enrollment target and comes close to meeting the target for students with disabilities and the target for students who qualify for the FRPL program. The charter plans to conduct the following recruitment and retention efforts to meet its targets:

- Holding in-person and virtual recruitment activities in partnership with local schools, community organizations, and family shelters;
- Conducting a wide marketing campaign and translating materials into Spanish, Chinese, and other relevant languages in the community;
- Translating promotional materials and the school website content into multiple languages;
- Highlighting the charter's small group instruction and integrated classroom model in marketing fliers;
- Highlighting the charter's RTI process and other at-risk programming during information sessions;
- Tailoring RTI processes to learners identified by the charter as emergent bilingual learners;
- Facilitating conversation groups for emergent bilingual learners to practice English in social circumstances;
- Connecting ELL families with Spanish speaking counselors and staff; and,
- Offering parent workshops with interpretation services to share resources and supports.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

IS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION FISCALLY SOUND?

Elm Community 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.⁴

The education corporation is under collective bargaining negotiations whereas, an agreed upon salary schedule may affect budget projections resulting in the need to make adjustments to reflect the agreement.



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.	JULY 2022

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 will have generally been 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.	N/A
If necessary, the education corporation pursues district state aid intercepts with NYSED to ensure adequate per pupil funding.	N/A
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.	N/A

The charter reported operating surpluses throughout the initial charter term. The fiscal dashboard for June 30, 2022 demonstrates fiscal strength with \$3.4 million in net assets and 5.1 months of cash on hand to pay liabilities due shortly. Elm Community has funded and maintained the required \$75,000 in a separate dissolution account as per the charter agreement.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

ELM COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

CHARTER INFORMATION

BALANCE SHEET

Assets

Current Assets

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

Total Current Assets - **GRAPH 1**

Property, Building and Equipment, net	
Other Assets	

Total Assets - **GRAPH 1**

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities

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

Total Current Liabilities - **GRAPH 1**

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	
Grants and Contracts	
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	
Total Program Services	
Management and General	
Fundraising	

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

Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations

Support and Other Revenue

Contributions	
Fundraising	
Miscellaneous Income	
Net assets released from restriction	

Total Support and Other Revenue

Total Unrestricted Revenue

Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue

Total Revenue - **GRAPHS 2 & 3**

Change in Net Assets

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

Prior Year Adjustment(s)

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

Opened 2018-19

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	220,722	790,909	1,789,333	2,359,993
-	243,868	90,088	130,430	112,356
-	-	-	-	-
-	15,603	8,854	-	142,439
-	70,000	-	-	-
-	550,193	889,851	1,919,763	2,614,788
-	132,674	222,930	276,197	632,191
-	25,000	650,166	483,500	483,500
-	707,867	1,762,947	2,679,460	3,730,479

-	152,420	204,127	198,087	199,327
-	-	-	-	-
-	36,675	664	-	67,460
-	-	-	-	-
-	40,000	70,000	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	229,095	274,791	198,087	266,787
-	-	-	128,323	-
-	70,000	318,625	-	-
-	299,095	593,416	326,410	266,787

-	383,772	1,169,531	2,353,050	3,463,692
-	25,000	-	-	-
-	408,772	1,169,531	2,353,050	3,463,692
-	707,867	1,762,947	2,679,460	3,730,479

-	1,547,140	3,053,561	3,756,272	4,721,508
-	51,420	204,082	344,491	434,316

-	-	-	-	-
-	1,450,031	-	148,140	158,231
-	-	215,705	-	-
-	-	-	318,625	-
-	-	700,000	1,075,730	1,332,375
-	-	-	-	-
-	3,048,591	4,173,348	5,643,258	6,646,430

-	1,883,869	2,440,549	3,231,158	3,695,984
-	385,850	464,864	523,089	543,128
-	-	-	-	-
-	2,269,719	2,905,413	3,754,247	4,239,112
-	378,192	517,406	746,078	1,332,592
-	4,587	-	-	-
-	2,652,498	3,422,819	4,500,325	5,571,704
-	396,093	750,529	1,142,933	1,074,726

-	12,679	2,430	38,058	35,900
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	7,800	2,528	16
-	-	-	-	-
-	12,679	10,230	40,586	35,916

-	3,061,270	4,183,578	5,683,844	6,682,346
-	-	-	-	-
-	3,061,270	4,183,578	5,683,844	6,682,346

-	408,772	760,759	1,183,519	1,110,642
-	-	408,772	1,169,531	2,353,050
-	-	-	-	-
-	408,772	1,169,531	2,353,050	3,463,692

FISCAL ANALYSIS

ELM COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

CHARTER INFORMATION - (Continued)

Functional Expense Breakdown

Personnel Service
Administrative Staff Personnel
Instructional Personnel
Non-Instructional Personnel
Personnel Services (Combined)
Total Salaries and Staff
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

Total Expenses

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	501,247	442,531	672,162	492,492
-	734,698	1,112,914	1,352,754	2,094,384
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	1,235,945	1,555,445	2,024,916	2,586,876
-	228,132	291,464	415,570	507,715
-	14,263	23,632	37,085	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	421,322	744,492	1,215,514	1,204,452
-	59,119	153,841	134,982	127,884
-	275,490	366,583	264,707	382,406
-	61,472	39,298	51,384	153,158
-	152,575	57,280	30,008	215,107
-	45,449	71,444	108,882	113,309
-	158,740	119,340	217,277	280,797
-	2,652,507	3,422,819	4,500,325	5,571,704

CHARTER ANALYSIS

ENROLLMENT

Original Chartered Enrollment
Final Chartered Enrollment (includes any revisions)
Actual Enrollment - GRAPH 4
Chartered Grades
Final Chartered Grades (includes any revisions)

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	100	180	260	330
-	100	180	260	330
-	103	189	233	280
Planning Year	K-1	K-2	K-3	K-4
-	-	-	-	-

Primary School District: NYC CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

Per Pupil Funding (Weighted Avg of All Districts)

Increase over prior year

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	15,307	16,150	16,123	16,844
0.0%	100.0%	5.2%	-0.2%	4.3%

PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

Revenue

Operating
Other Revenue and Support
TOTAL - GRAPH 3

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	29,598	22,081	24,220	23,711
-	123	54	174	128
-	29,721	22,135	24,394	23,839

Expenses

Program Services
Management and General, Fundraising
TOTAL - GRAPH 3

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	22,036	15,373	16,113	15,123
-	3,716	2,738	3,202	4,754
-	25,752	18,110	19,315	19,877
0.0%	85.6%	84.9%	83.4%	76.1%
0.0%	14.4%	15.1%	16.6%	23.9%
0.0%	15.4%	22.2%	26.3%	19.9%
#DIV/0!	13.8%	17.8%	21.5%	18.1%

% 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
-	7.7	9.5	9.7	8.8

Faculty to Admin Ratio

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
-	3.3	4.0	4.0	8.0

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	2.4	3.0	3.0	3.0
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	321,098	615,060	1,721,676	2,348,001
0.0%	10.5%	14.7%	30.3%	35.1%
0.0	2.4	3.2	9.7	9.8
N/A	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	LOW
N/A	Good	Excellent	Excellent	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	2.3	3.2	9.7	9.3
N/A	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	LOW
N/A	Good	Excellent	Excellent	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	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1
N/A	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
N/A	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

Months of Cash - GRAPH 8

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

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
0.0	1.0	2.8	4.8	5.1
N/A	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW
N/A	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent

FUTURE PLANS

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

Elm Community 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 are reasonable, feasible, and achievable.

ELM COMMUNITY 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. Elm Community plans to continue implementing the same core elements of its strong educational program. As a result of recovering from staff member turnover challenges during the current charter term, the board and instructional leaders are thoughtful about making modifications to recruitment strategies necessary to attract and retain high quality teachers in the future.

Plans for Board Oversight & Governance. Current board members express interest in continuing to serve the charter in the next term. Trustees plan to increase the board's academic expertise and further invest in the charter's curriculum. The board also plans to invest in more board professional development.

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

Elm Community has secured a long term lease in a facility designed specifically to meet the program needs and provide ample space for the next charter term.

	CURRENT	END OF NEXT CHARTER TERM
Enrollment	394	468
Grade Span	K-5	K-5
Teaching Staff	47	46
Days of Instruction	183	183

Elm Community

Ax

APPENDICES

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ELM COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CHAIR

Christopher Kong

TREASURER

Anupa Jacob

SECRETARY

Michael Dorcelly

TRUSTEES

Grace S. Yun
Zaineb H. Tambawalla
Derian De La Torre
Pam Chan

CHARTER LEADERS

PRINCIPAL

Priscilla Walton (2017-18 to Present)

CHARTER CHARACTERISTICS

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2018-19	100	103	103%	K-1
2019-20	180	189	105%	K-2
2020-21	260	233	90%	K-3
2021-22	330	280	85%	K-4
2022-23	394	384	97%	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 11,2019
2022-23	Initial Renewal Visit	October 25,2022

CONDUCT OF THE RENEWAL REVIEW

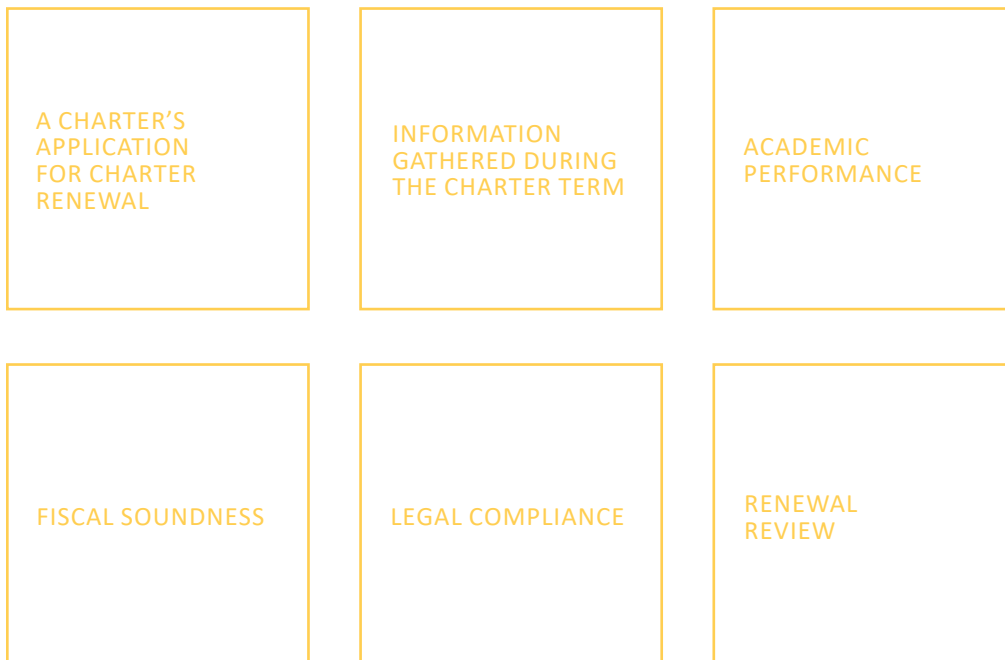
DATE(S) OF REVIEW	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
October 25,2022	Sinnjinn Bucknell Vickie Masséus	Director of Performance and Systems School Evaluation Analyst

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").¹

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”),² 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,³ 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"⁴ and states the educational programs at a charter school must "meet or exceed the student performance standards adopted by the board of regents"⁵ for other public schools. SUNY's required accountability measures rest on performance as measured by statewide assessments. Historically, SUNY's required measures include measures that present schools':

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

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

GROWTH PERFORMANCE, I.E., HOW MUCH DID THE 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 3rd- 8th 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