

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 composed of several rectangular blocks of squares of varying sizes. One large block covers the top-left and middle-left portions of the page. Another block is in the top-right. A third, smaller block is in the bottom-right. The word 'INSTITUTE' is printed in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the page, with the 'THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS' text above it. The subtitle is in a smaller, white, italicized, sans-serif font below the main title.

THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT
ACADEMY OF THE CITY CHARTER SCHOOL*

Report Date: December 5, 2023

Review Date: September 28 – 29, 2023

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Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

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CHARTER SCHOOL BACKGROUND

ACADEMY OF THE CITY CHARTER SCHOOL

31-29 60th Street, Queens | Grades: K-5 | NYC Community School District 30
23-40 Astoria Boulevard, Queens | Grades: 6-8 | NYC Community School District 30

The State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) approved the original charter for Academy of the City Charter School (“Academy of the City”) on September 15, 2010. The school opened in fall 2011, serving 104 students in Kindergarten – 1st grade.

“MISSION

Academy of the City provides its students with the rigorous and student-centered education, values, and tools needed to succeed at the highest levels. We are committed to being an inclusive, equitable, and joyful community where all children reach their full potential.

CURRENT CHARTER

Serves: Kindergarten – 8th

Chartered Enrollment:
728

Charter Expiration:
July 31, 2024

PROPOSED FUTURE CHARTER

Serves: Kindergarten – 8th

Chartered Enrollment:
735

Charter Expiration:
July 31, 2029

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Student-centered instruction;	+	Commitment to professional development;	+
Literacy across the curriculum;	+	A longer school day;	+
Data-driven instruction;	+	A focus on social emotional learning (“SEL”); and,	+
A commitment to inclusion;	+	High school guidance and access.	+

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 Academy of the City Charter School for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten – 8th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal, with a projected total enrollment of 735 students. The Institute makes this recommendation based on Academy of the City 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 a **Subsequent Full-Term Renewal**, a charter must demonstrate that it has met or come close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals.

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.²

1. SUNY Renewal Policies (p. 14) are available on the [Institute’s website](#).

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Academy of the City is an academic success having met or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals during its five year charter term. The school outperformed Queens Community School District (“CSD”) 30 (the “district”) in English Language Arts (“ELA”) by at least three percentage points and posted effect sizes well above the target of 0.3 each year. The school met its mathematics goal during most years of the current charter term, exceeding targets for all growth and comparative measures in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

Originally an elementary program, Academy of the City expanded to serve 6th – 8th grade students during the current charter term. In addition to the challenges encountered with expansion and opening a new facility, turnover in the executive director and middle school principal positions impacted the consistency of teacher support and some educational programming. The board’s decision to discontinue a middle school extracurricular program prompted some families to disenroll student from the school. At the time of the Institute’s visit, the board of trustees and school leaders were in the early stages of planning a new after school program to better meet families’ needs, including high school test preparation and hosted by teachers at the middle school campus.

Despite these challenges, Academy of the City continues to strengthen its academic program. With the support of external consultants, the school improved its data collecting, reporting, and dashboard systems to increase teacher and leader access to academic performance data. Leaders support teachers in regularly reviewing outcome data and identifying trends in student performance. Leaders updated the teacher evaluation system to include the Danielson Framework and teachers receive feedback from observations in alignment with elements of the framework’s domains. The school has nascent strategies to combine achievement data and lesson observation data to drive instructional improvement given the leadership turnover during the charter term.

The school continues to provide targeted intervention services for students at-risk of academic failure and staff members take pride in the quality of identification and progress monitoring systems used to support students with disabilities. In response to an increasing number of English language learners (“ELLs”) enrolling at Academy of the City over the last two school years, the school hired a fourth ELL provider. As a result of robust ELL services, the school was able to move 42 students up one or more English proficiency levels during the 2022-23 school year.

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?

Academy of the City is an academic success. The school demonstrates academic success in the following ways:

- In ELA, Academy of the City’s students enrolled in at least their second year posted high proficiency rates in every year of the term with state exam results suitable for analysis; and
- In 2017-18 and 2018-19, students enrolled in at least their second year posted mathematics proficiency rates close to the absolute target of 75% and at least 17 percentage points above the district results.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Is the charter an effective, viable organization?

Academy of the City is an effective, viable organization, and the board provides effective oversight. During the five year charter term, the board conducted a self-evaluation and developed a strategic plan to guide its ongoing oversight and governance of the program. At the time of the Institute's visit, the board had paused the search for an executive director and supported two co-principals in leading the operations of the school through bimonthly check in meetings.

Is the charter fiscally sound?

Academy of the City needs fiscal monitoring. Weak internal controls allowed staff members to create unaccounted challenges to the school's budget with little fiscal oversight. In fiscal year 2022, the school reported an unbudgeted \$1,456,815 operating deficit. A significant portion of the deficit was due to depreciation, deferred rent, and amortization of the capital lease. The board and the finance committee reflected on its oversight of the school's financial management to determine areas that need improvement and strengthen internal controls.

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

Academy of the City's plans for the future are reasonable, feasible, and achievable. The charter plans to implement the same core elements that led to its success over the current charter term and plans to add integrated co-teaching ("ICT") teachers to every grade over the next charter term to meet community demand for additional special education services.

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 Academy of the City Charter School a full-term Subsequent Renewal of five years.



DP

DATA PRESENTATION

PAGES: 6-19

AP

ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE

CP

COMPLIANCE
PERFORMANCE

CS

COMMUNITY
SATISFACTION

SD

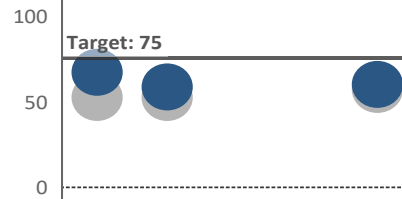
STUDENT
DEMOGRAPHICS

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

ACADEMY OF THE CITY 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.

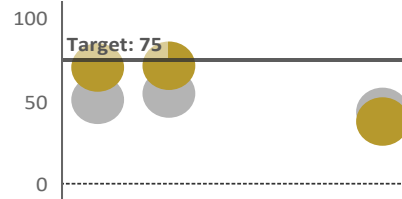


Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile. The charter's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above target of 50 in **ELA**.

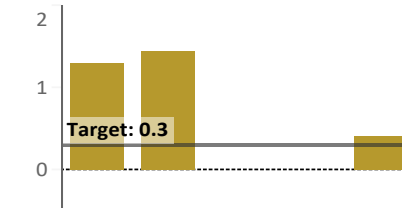


MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

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.

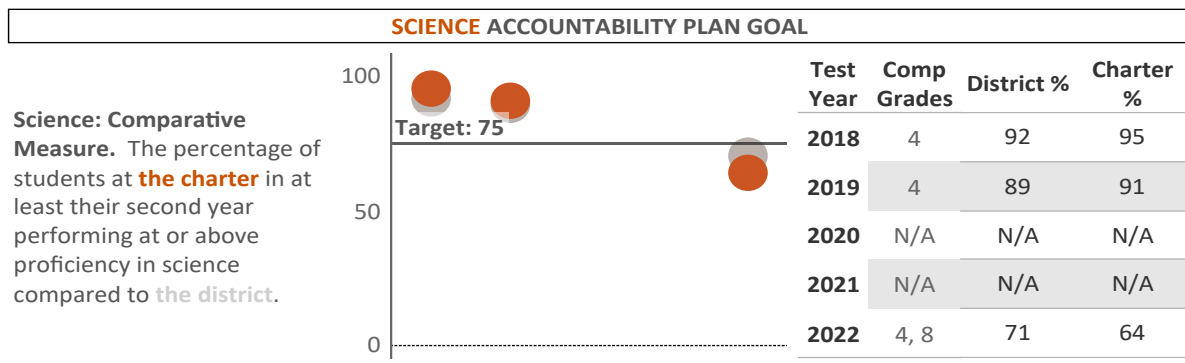


Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile. The charter's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above target of 50 in **mathematics**.



ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

ACADEMY OF THE CITY CHARTER SCHOOL



TESTED PERCENTAGES*				
	2019		2022	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
School Tested Number	229	226	406	365
School Tested %	94.2%	93.4%	86.4%	78.0%
District Tested %	92.6%	94.3%	90.1%	86.0%

SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE**			
	2018	2019	2022
Students with Disabilities Enrollment	52	51	83
Tested on State Exam	25	23	40
Charter Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	40.0	30.4	20.0
District Percent Proficient	16.7	17.4	19.0
ELL Enrollment	49	41	85
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam	49	41	85
Charter Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress	20.4	34.1	32.9

*Mathematics participation rates may reflect discrepancies from ELA participation rates due to students sitting for a Regents exam in lieu of the traditional state exam.

** 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?

Academy of the City met its key academic Accountability Plan goals in ELA and mathematics over its subsequent charter term. Notably, the school exceeded the targets for all comparative measures in ELA during every year with available data. The school also met its science and Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”) goals.

In ELA, Academy of the City’s students enrolled in at least their second year posted high proficiency rates in every year of the term with state exam results suitable for analysis. The school outperformed the district by at least three percentage points each year. The school also posted effect sizes well above the target of 0.3 each year. This level of performance indicates that Academy of City performed higher than expected in ELA to a large degree in comparison to schools across the state enrolling similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students. Although the school posted mean growth percentiles in ELA that fell under the target of 50 in 2017-18 and 2018-19, Academy of the City’s absolute achievement remained high.

Over the majority of the charter term, Academy of the City met its mathematics goal. During 2017-18 and 2018-19, the school exceeded the targets for all comparative and growth measures. The school’s students enrolled in at least their second year posted proficiency rates close to the absolute target of 75% and at least 17 percentage points above the district results. In comparison to demographically similar schools across New York State, Academy of the City performed higher than expected to a large degree in both years. In both years, the school posted mean growth percentiles in mathematics that surpassed the target of 50. In 2021-22, the first year subsequent to the cancellation of the state exams in 2019-20 with data suitable for analysis, the school posted baseline achievement scores in mathematics that were slightly lower than the district. The school posted an effect size above the target of 0.3 indicating meaningfully higher than expected performance.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

ASSESSMENT

Academy of the City's assessment systems and data analysis routines support a culture of high expectations but the school does not have coherent expectations or procedures to support teachers in modifying their instruction based on student outcomes. Academy of the City administers nationally normed NWEA MAP ("MAP") assessments and internally developed assessments three times each year. At the elementary level, the school also uses formative curriculum-based assessments to gather performance data. The school recently changed curricula for both mathematics and ELA and now relies on assessments provided within the commercially available MyView Literacy and Bridges in Mathematics curricula, such as MyView and Bridges assessments and mathematics checkpoints. At the middle school level, teachers also track performance with commercially available McGraw Hill assessments and teacher-developed midterms across content areas.

The school has a process in place for analyzing and reviewing assessment results. Teachers and leaders compile assessment data and a consultant compiles the results in a dashboard including MAP and state standardized test results. The data is accessible to school stakeholders and leaders review their analysis with staff in professional development meetings for the purpose of making any necessary adjustments to their practice. Administrators and teachers across the elementary and middle levels routinely analyze data during designated meetings. Families receive updates on their students' growth through progress reports, parent and teacher conferences, and ongoing teacher communication.

Academy of the City's assessment system and culture of high expectations does not fully manifest in teachers' planning and delivery in a manner that supports academic progress across all subpopulations. Although instructional staff members indicate assessment data inform the formation of reading and mathematics groups, the Institute's team did not see evidence of small group assignments, instructional differentiation strategies, or other tier 1 learning interventions in lesson plans or other curricular materials. Curricular and lesson planning materials did not incorporate detailed use of assessment data into the lesson planning process, nor did the Institute observe teachers targeting specific students or skills to address a gap in understanding identified by analyzing assessments.

CURRICULUM

Academy of the City recently shifted to the My View Literacy and Bridges in Mathematics curricular programs at the elementary level and to McGraw Hill at the middle school level to ensure access to high quality learning materials for all students. The school formed committees, which included teachers, and spent a significant amount of time vetting different curricula through field testing and sessions with representatives to evaluate the strengths of each program. Although instructional staff were heavily invested in the selection process, teachers struggle with the delivery of the new curricula and spiraling tasks that cover missed skills and standards, most notably with Bridges Math. Assistant Principals provide guidance with lesson planning, including offering modifications based on assessment data.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

PEDAGOGY

Instruction at the Academy of the City supports students in making academic progress in alignment with the state standards but does not support students in acquiring the skills necessary to support independence and college and career readiness. Notwithstanding, some organizational changes during the last charter term positively impacted the academic program. For example, both the elementary and middle school programs updated the curricular programs in ELA and mathematics to support aligned instruction across grade levels and the Institute observed teachers implementing the new programs with fidelity. Teachers consistently implemented strategies to check for understanding, including cold calling, turn and talks, and conferencing. However, the Institute observed multiple instances where teachers missed critical opportunities to respond to student misunderstanding and foster student debate, problem solving and engagement. Inconsistent expectations for student behavior and academic performance degrade the schools' efforts to deliver a rigorous academic program. Generally, students behave appropriately and there is a warm rapport between teachers and students. However, when provided with unclear directions, students often engage in nonacademic tasks during lessons. In classrooms where all students engage in academic tasks, teachers are not prepared to respond to misunderstandings or facilitate rigorous discussion.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Academy of the City has an organized instructional leadership structure, which includes a principal and two assistant principals at the elementary and middle school levels, respectively. Instructional leadership expertise is apparent at the elementary level across the leadership structure; however, instructional leaders at the middle school demonstrated inconsistent leadership and instructional expertise. The board identified developing instructional leadership at the middle school as an academic priority for the 2023-24 school year and was in the process of restructuring the leadership team to better support the middle school at the time of the Institute's visit. As the school works to stabilize the leadership structure and systems, planning for differentiated coaching and supervision of teachers could significantly impact student outcomes.

Leaders provide opportunities for teachers to plan curriculum and instruction within and across grade levels at Academy of the City. Teachers write lesson plans during grade level and department team meetings. Leaders provide professional development during monthly development sessions. Leaders seek teacher input on development and training needs through surveys and committees. For instance, the school updated its mathematics and ELA curricula and continue to provide staff training on the new materials in response to teacher feedback.

There is a positive working relationship among instructional leaders and teachers across the school, however, leaders recognize the need for improved systems to hold all staff members accountable for instructional priorities and high quality instruction. Academy of the City is currently engaged in a partial implementation of the Danielson framework and leaders use it to formally evaluate teachers twice each year. Instructional leaders continue to develop systems supporting sustained observation, coaching, feedback, and staff training

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

but identify some structural barriers to providing more intensive coaching and feedback to teachers. However, within the existing instructional leadership model, the Institute did not observe evidence of systems by which leaders could identify trends in teacher performance or pedagogical priorities or outline the specific strategies to ensure teachers implement initiatives with fidelity.

AT-RISK PROGRAM

Academy of the City uses performance data from NWEA, F&P running records, and teacher referrals to identify students with disabilities, ELLs, and those struggling academically. Both the elementary and middle school programs employ a robust team of integrated co-teaching (“ICT”) teachers, interventionists, special education teacher support services (“SETSS”) instructors, and ELL teachers to meet the educational needs of at-risk students. Academy of the City delivers a multi-tiered system of support (“MTSS”) program where students are placed into different groups based on academic need. Leaders expect teachers to deliver tier 1 support in the classroom, such as flexible grouping, conferring, visual aids, and modified materials. If a student’s academic performance is not positively impacted by tier 1 interventions, the intervention team provides tier 2 support through targeted push-in and pull-out tutoring. If students do not progress after two consecutive intervention cycles of six to ten weeks, the special education team works with families and the committee on special education (“CSE”) to evaluate the student for an individualized education plan (“IEP”). The school uses shared progress monitoring and data trackers to ensure that all instructional staff members have access to performance data for each subpopulation of students.

Academy of the City uses the home language questionnaire and family interviews to identify ELLs. ELL providers use data from the New York State Identification Test for English language learners (“NYSITELL”) and New York State English as a second language test (“NYSESLAT”) to identify and monitor students’ English proficiency and reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. The school provides a specific ELL curriculum to elementary school ELL providers to support their instruction and middle school ELL teachers collaborate with content teachers to provide English instruction that supports the content areas. ELL students receive push-in or pull-out English instruction of varying duration based on whether they test as entering, emerging, transitioning, or commanding language proficiency. Forty-two of the schools’ 82 ELL students increased their language proficiency by at least one level on the NYSESLAT in the 2022-23 school year.

Providing differentiated instruction to all students is a stated priority for the 2023-24 school year. Focus group interviews and review of professional development calendars verify that the school provides training to teachers on accessing and reading IEPs, differentiation strategies, support for ELLs, and co-teaching models. Leaders also prioritize opportunities for at-risk providers and general education teachers to collaborate and co-plan lessons when developing the schedule. Interventionists, SETSS teachers, and ELL providers’ schedules allow them to regularly attend weekly content meetings and grade team meetings and contribute to planning interventions. Leaders also provide opportunities at monthly professional development sessions for teachers and at-risk providers to coordinate and collaborate on services suggesting interventions in general education teachers’ lesson plans when needed.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

While the Academy of the City has strong systems for both identifying students at risk of academic failure and teacher training and collaboration, the current implementation has limited impact on classroom instruction. The Institute’s review of lesson plans and unit plans shows that planned differentiation lacked sufficient detail and reference to performance data that would support teachers in effectively delivering targeted interventions during lessons. Furthermore, most lessons observed followed a direct instruction format dominated by teacher voice. Most teachers delivered content through two modalities: presentations and worksheets. While Institute staff did consistently observe the integration of translation and visual aids, other tier 1 differentiation strategies were absent from lessons.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Academy of the City is in the process of transitioning to an organizational structure that has the capacity to effectively bolster the delivery of the academic program and support retention of instructional staff. There are defined roles and responsibilities within the school that provide clarity for instructional personnel to obtain the support required to focus on educational tasks. The executive director’s departure and the lack of systematized operational processes and procedures contributed to difficulties in managing and maintaining financial operations. At the beginning of the 2023-24 school year, the elementary principal and director of operations assumed responsibility for billing and invoicing tasks, along with managing arrival and dismissal of students, which diverts time from their primary duties. Despite these challenges, the school functions in a manner that is conducive to the provision of a stable learning environment. At the time of the Institute’s visit, the school was in the process of restructuring the leadership team to better support the middle school and maintain separate operational and instructional leadership work flows.

BOARD OVERSIGHT & GOVERNANCE

Academy of the City’s board of trustees is developing strong oversight of the program that supports the delivery of the academic program. Board members, some of whom are also parents and community members, possess marketing, legal, and financial expertise that they contribute to the oversight and governance of Academy of the City. The board is actively engaged in a search for a member to add Kindergarten – 12th grade, middle school programming, and high school application expertise to the board. The board chair and vice chair meet directly with the elementary and middle school principals bimonthly after the board’s decision to pause the executive director search for the 2023-24 school year. In these meetings and regularly scheduled board meetings, principals share fiscal, academic, enrollment, and other co-academic data that the board uses to establish priorities and long-term goals. The board relies almost entirely on principal reports and informal conversations when making personnel, funding, and other decisions.

In the face of operating deficits, the board reviewed current accounting and spending procedures to ensure appropriate internal controls for school leaders and staff members when making purchasing decisions. The board recently contracted with a partner organization to provide financial training to the board and school leadership on the financial policies and procedures manual and proper oversight of day-to-day financial

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

operations. The board also supports the elementary and middle school leaders in prioritizing financial decisions such as hiring and modifying programming to accommodate the fiscal shortfall. The fiscal shortfall had significant impact on middle school programming for the 2023-24 school year as the board and school leadership eliminated some leadership positions and enrichment programming.

The board uses both a strategic plan and a self-evaluation to guide decision-making and board actions. In a recent self-evaluation, half of the board members noted they were not meeting expectations relating to board member recruitment. As of September 2023, the board had recently recruited and onboarded two new members. The board also uses the strategic plan as a basis for guiding funding decisions and school priorities. The board and school leaders share and review the strategic plan with teachers and other staff members. During focus groups, many teachers cited goals from the strategic plan when asked about schoolwide priorities. The board also identified recruiting for the position of executive director as an urgent need. Three individuals occupied the executive director position over the last charter term and the position is currently vacant. Filling the executive director position and adding a board member with education expertise to strengthen the board's capacity to provide oversight and set clear expectations for the Academy of the City's academic program remains a priority for the school's board members.

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.

ACADEMY OF THE CITY CHARTER SCHOOL

Annual Reports

The school submitted its annual reports to the Institute and NYSED on time and has posted portions of the annual reports on its website. The school has not incorporated the Accountability Plan Progress Report and annual financial audit in its postings in accordance with the charter and the Act. The Institute will ensure compliance prior to the start of the next charter term.

By-laws

The education corporation bylaws require minor revision regarding the work of committees. The Institute will work with the education corporation to ensure an update set of bylaws are put in place prior to the start of the next charter term.

FOIL

At the time of the renewal submission the education corporation did not have a complete Freedom of Information Law policy or subject matter list with link to the Committee on Open Government available on its website. The Institute will work with the education corporation to update the policy prior to the next charter term.

Teacher Certification

The Act allows charters to hire up to 15 uncertified lead teachers 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 or career and technical education courses.

At the time of the renewal review the school employed 51 lead teachers. Of the 51 lead teachers, 15 were uncertified within the allowable limit. Five of the 15 uncertified teachers did not meet the appropriate qualifications under the Act. The school monitors teacher certification upon employment and tracks teachers progress toward 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 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 2022-23, 75% of families who received the NYCDOE survey responded. Of the families who responded, 93% expressed satisfaction with the charter.

Parent Focus Group

The Institute asks all charters 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. Academy of the City families express that they are pleased with the nurturing, welcoming environment at the charter. Parents report that teachers are caring, helpful, and willing to provide the specific academic and behavior supports that their students require. In addition, effective and plentiful modes of communication and responsive leadership only serve to bolster the congenial feeling about the Academy of the City community. Although parents report limited opportunities for formal feedback, instructional leadership is available and amenable to engaging with parents on a case-by-case basis. Teachers communicate student academic progress regularly through email, phone call, ClassDojo and PowerSchool, although there is some concern about the timeliness of academic updates. Generally, however, parents were satisfied with Academy of the City.

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 Academy of the City’s renewal application on October 23, 2023 by videoconference. The school’s board chair and middle school principal spoke in support of the application discussing the school’s strategic plan goals, which align with the mission and vision, and include not only academic goals such as 75% of students meeting growth targets, but also a joyful school and upholding shared values. In addition, the school leader discussed the school’s robust programming for at-risk populations such as SETSS, ELLs Support, support for students who are struggling academically, and ICT classrooms. Four parents spoke in support of the application and detailed their appreciation for the school’s small class sizes, individualized student attention and resources, teacher and parent involvement, assistance with special services

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION

such as ICT classrooms and IEPs, and the school's welcoming and safe environment where their children continue to grow academically. One Community Education Council member spoke in opposition of charter schools generally, not specifically about the renewal for Academy of the City, and alleged district schools are losing enrollment and funding to charter schools and priority should be given to enrollment at district schools over enrollment at charter schools.

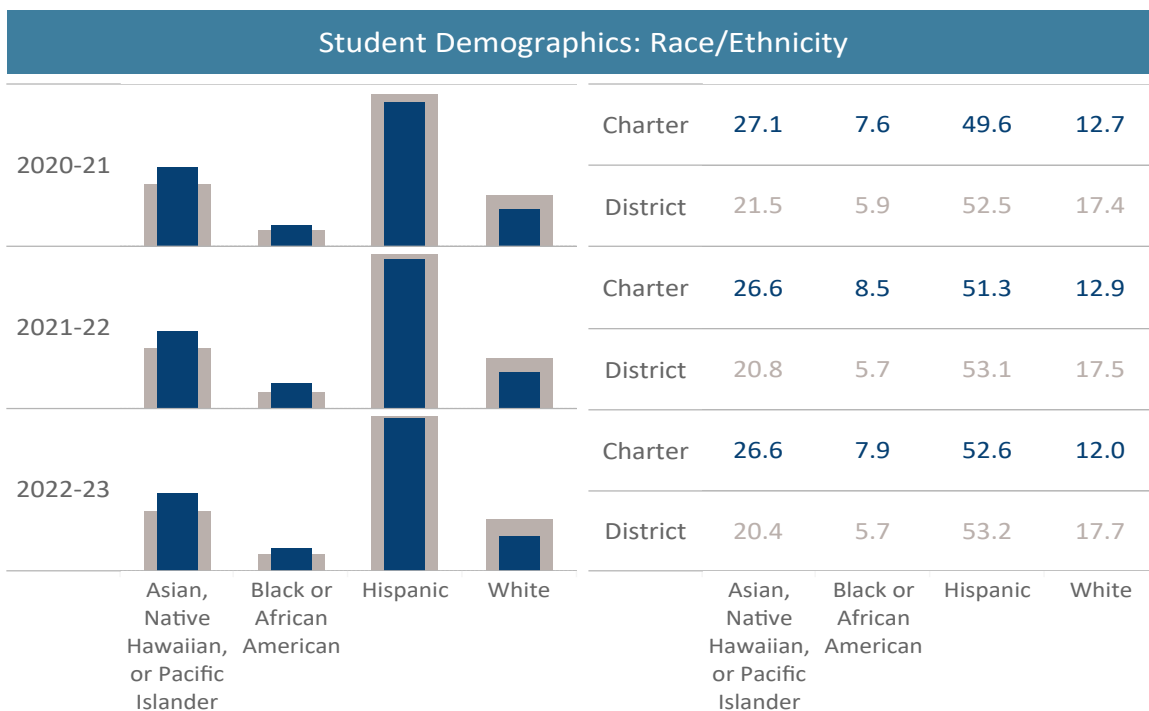
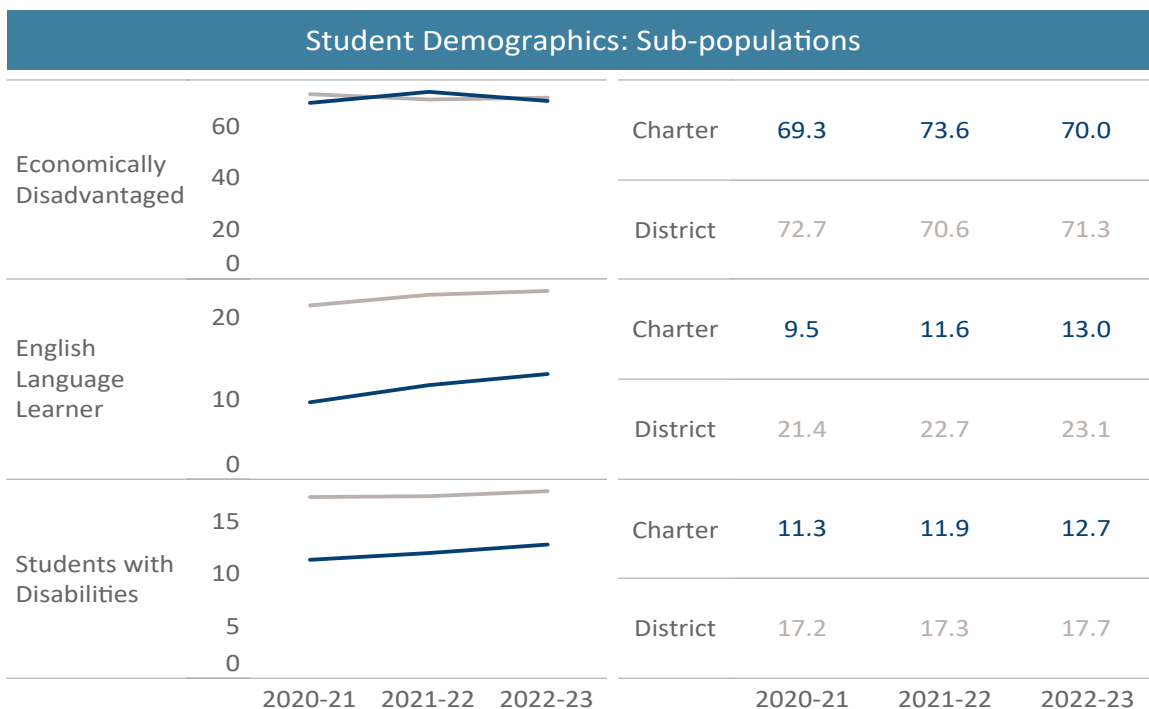
Persistence in Enrollment An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2022-23, 81% of Academy of the City students returned from the previous year. Student persistence data from previous years of the charter term is available in student demographics section of the 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

Academy of the City Charter School

Queens CSD 30

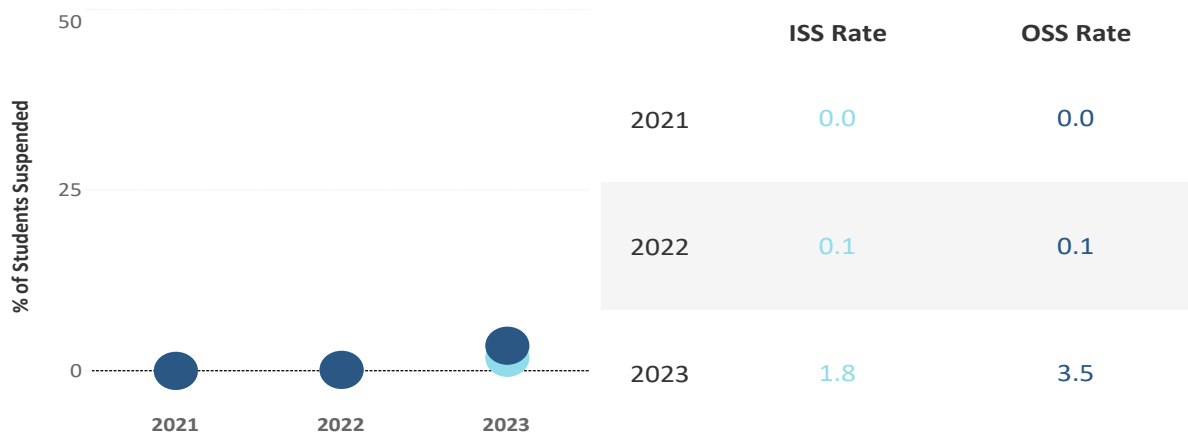


* Data reported in these charts reflect BEDS day enrollment counts as reported by the NYSED.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Academy of the City Charter School

Queens CSD 30



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



2021	2022	2023
0	0	0

Academy of the City Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2022-23

			Target	Charter
enrollment	economically disadvantaged	<div><div></div></div>	84.8	72.0
	English language learners	<div><div></div></div>	21.6	20.8
	students with disabilities	<div><div></div></div>	14.3	10.2
retention	economically disadvantaged	<div><div></div></div>	93.6	80.5
	English language learners	<div><div></div></div>	93.8	80.8
	students with disabilities	<div><div></div></div>	94.1	68.7

* 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.

The Academy of the City makes good faith efforts to meet its enrollment and retention targets. The Academy of the City meets or approaches all enrollment and retention targets for subgroups of students. The charter plans to conduct the following recruitment efforts:

- Posting fliers and placing notices in local newspapers, supermarkets, communities of faith, community centers and apartment complexes including large public housing developments;
- Conducting open houses at the Academy of the City school buildings;
- Creating press releases and engaging in outreach to relevant media outlets including, minority and foreign language media;
- Identifying preschools that serve children with special needs;
- Targeting mailings of application materials to zip codes where a predominance of low income and immigrant families reside;
- Canvassing neighborhoods in the districts, particularly in areas where there are NYCHA housing or other subsidized housing, to further reach economically disadvantaged families. Academy of the City gives an enrollment preference to children who live in NYCHA housing;
- Utilizing social media to market the school;
- Reaching out to community-based organizations that serve populations whose language and ethnic diversity reflect the communities the school serves;
- Engaging parent ambassadors from our parent body to support recruitment efforts, particularly as it relates to ELLs and students with disabilities;
- Translating documents and materials into other languages spoken in the communities served by the school;
- Providing translators for families who do not speak English during in-person events and meetings for prospective families;
- Leveraging relationships with community organizations and agencies that provide services to immigrant families and families of children with disabilities; and
- Advertising in local community newspapers with descriptions of the school's special education and ELL programs.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

IS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION FISCALLY SOUND?

Academy of the City is fiscally sound based on the Institute's analysis 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.³



Academy of the City went through multiple fiscal challenges in recent years due to a lack of permanent leadership, proper budget planning, and unexpected expenditures. The net operating deficit was the capital lease's depreciation, deferred rent, and amortization. The remaining deficit was caused by multiple factors, including the unbudgeted increase in teacher salaries and benefit increases as part of the collective bargaining agreement with the teachers' union. The school hired consultants as interim executive director and chief operating officer resulting in higher than budgeted staff payments. Under inadequate fiscal oversight and in breach of the school's fiscal policies, a staff member unilaterally approved additional spending for school lunch and professional development consultants at the middle school without proper approval.

Although the school maintains enough cash reserves to cover the unexpected operating deficit, the school board and the finance committee recognize the lack of financial oversight and acknowledge that areas that need improvement. The school will partner with a reputable external consultant to provide financial training to the board and school leadership on the financial policies and procedures manual and proper oversight of day-to-day financial operations to monitor spending of the approved expenses and prevent overspending. Academy of the City reported \$2.1 million in net assets at the end of FY 2022 and 2.5 months of cash in hand to cover liabilities due shortly.



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.	+

3. 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

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.

+

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 2020

DOES THE EDUCATION CORPORATION COMPLY WITH FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

The education corporation has complied 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.	+

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Unaudited 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.

+

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.	+

FISCAL ANALYSIS

ACADEMY OF THE CITY 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 2011-12

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
2,325,639	2,579,167	3,714,800	4,369,048	3,606,438
164,040	79,563	142,824	37,090	691,649
-	-	-	-	-
147,656	89,288	2,483	104,504	10,932
-	-	-	-	-
2,637,335	2,748,018	3,860,107	4,510,642	4,309,019
1,218,272	28,602,987	29,641,370	29,254,115	28,373,119
301,785	301,899	376,993	528,525	574,228
4,157,392	31,652,904	33,878,470	34,293,282	33,256,366

175,196	300,597	217,228	198,241	260,757
553,717	570,549	730,932	886,550	1,224,577
-	-	-	-	138,600
-	-	142,324	195,766	211,910
-	-	419,087	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
728,913	871,146	1,509,571	1,280,557	1,835,844
979,174	1,026,717	1,111,939	1,191,163	1,267,685
-	27,495,040	29,062,901	28,203,612	27,991,702
1,708,087	29,392,903	31,684,411	30,675,332	31,095,231

2,449,305	2,260,001	2,194,059	3,612,950	2,161,135
-	-	-	5,000	-
2,449,305	2,260,001	2,194,059	3,617,950	2,161,135
4,157,392	31,652,904	33,878,470	34,293,282	33,256,366

5,904,136	6,220,808	8,551,748	10,322,429	12,027,376
233,256	203,954	301,320	441,315	489,369
143,993	199,654	113,583	-	-
206,427	134,897	150,842	188,764	183,902
17,349	8,148	-	-	772,493
-	-	-	-	-
684,658	867,793	1,180,680	1,621,450	1,923,024
-	-	-	-	94,482
7,189,819	7,635,254	10,298,173	12,573,958	15,490,646

4,831,141	5,846,470	7,686,332	9,111,735	11,749,617
585,594	609,649	812,812	1,069,756	2,305,179
-	-	-	-	-
5,416,735	6,456,119	8,499,144	10,181,491	14,054,796
1,277,853	1,491,219	1,949,865	2,161,976	3,015,548
3,400	5,652	6,120	(800)	3,513
6,697,988	7,952,990	10,455,129	12,342,667	17,073,857
491,831	(317,736)	(156,956)	231,291	(1,583,211)

56,162	71,792	58,747	103,992	114,755
15,132	1,330	-	-	-
7,525	55,310	32,267	5,998	11,641
-	-	-	1,082,610	-
78,819	128,432	91,014	1,192,600	126,396

7,268,638	7,763,686	10,389,187	13,761,558	15,622,042
-	-	-	5,000	(5,000)
7,268,638	7,763,686	10,389,187	13,766,558	15,617,042

570,650	(189,304)	(65,942)	1,423,891	(1,456,815)
1,878,656	2,449,305	2,260,001	2,194,059	3,617,950
-	-	-	-	-
2,449,306	2,260,001	2,194,059	3,617,950	2,161,135

FISCAL ANALYSIS

ACADEMY OF THE CITY 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
680,416	881,092	1,191,356	1,450,280	2,058,345
2,566,237	2,766,932	3,589,540	4,328,976	5,616,826
287,560	246,663	265,568	145,460	168,690
-	-	-	-	-
3,534,213	3,894,687	5,046,464	5,924,716	7,843,861
834,204	943,760	1,132,811	1,283,961	1,732,267
93,224	-	150,597	216,207	229,404
-	-	-	-	-
1,102,715	1,703,331	2,565,792	2,576,555	2,669,267
130,028	76,553	126,068	37,508	107,146
378,530	480,208	446,052	669,839	1,248,971
74,108	102,012	31,769	53,863	133,910
136,870	183,355	217,099	169,096	472,299
139,434	156,079	172,745	728,891	1,297,013
274,662	413,005	565,732	682,031	1,339,719
6,697,988	7,952,990	10,455,129	12,342,667	17,073,857

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
414	420	532	644	728
414	420	532	644	728
410	409	528	641	713
K-5	K-5	K-6	K-7	K-8
-	-	-	-	-

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
14,527	15,307	16,150	16,123	16,844
3.4%	5.1%	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
17,536	18,668	19,494	19,607	21,729
192	314	172	1,860	177
17,728	18,982	19,666	21,467	21,906

Expenses

Program Services
Management and General, Fundraising
TOTAL - GRAPH 3
% of Program Services
% of Management and Other

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
13,212	15,785	16,088	15,876	19,715
3,125	3,660	3,703	3,370	4,235
16,337	19,445	19,791	19,246	23,950
80.9%	81.2%	81.3%	82.5%	82.3%
19.1%	18.8%	18.7%	17.5%	17.7%
8.5%	-2.4%	-0.6%	11.5%	-8.5%
15.3%	22.3%	24.9%	20.5%	17.2%

% 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
10.0	8.5	10.0	10.3	11.5

Faculty to Admin Ratio

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
5.9	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.1

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
3.0	1.3	1.2	2.0	0.5
Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Adequate	Fiscally Adequate	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Needs Monitoring

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
1,908,422	1,876,872	2,350,536	3,230,085	2,473,175
26.3%	24.2%	22.6%	23.5%	15.8%
3.6	3.2	2.6	3.5	2.3
LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	MEDIUM
Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good

Quick (Acid Test) Ratio

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

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
3.4	3.1	2.6	3.4	2.3
LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM
Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good

Debt to Asset Ratio - GRAPH 7

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

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
0.4	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Excellent	Good	Good	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
4.2	3.9	4.3	4.2	2.5
LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM
Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good

FUTURE PLANS



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

Academy of the City implements continues to strengthen its academic program supported by an effective, viable organization. The charter plans to support the ongoing development of the middle school program in a manner that supports its key design elements. As such, the charter's plans for the next charter term are reasonable, feasible, and achievable.

ACADEMY OF THE CITY 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. Academy of the City plans to implement the same core elements of its educational program that enabled the school to meet or come close to meeting its key Accountability Plan goals in the current charter term. The school plans to continue serving Kindergarten – 8th grade students, as well as add ICT teachers to every classroom to meet community demand.

Plans for Board Oversight & Governance. Academy of the City's board members plan to continue to serve the school in managing governance and oversight. The board is actively recruiting new board members and hopes to identify a future board member with education expertise in the next charter term.

Fiscal & Facility Plans. Academy of the City has provided a budget plan for the next charter term that is reasonable and achievable. Each year of the term is projected to provide a surplus and build upon its current cash on hand balance. The budget process used was based on historical revenue and expense trends and reflect conservative assumptions that align with their programmatic and operational plans throughout the next charter term.

Academy of the City currently leases two private facilities to house its elementary school and its middle school and will continue to occupy these facilities through the next charter term.

	CURRENT	END OF NEXT CHARTER TERM
Enrollment	728	735
Grade Span	K – 8	K – 8
Teaching Staff	51	61
Days of Instruction	180	180

Academy of the City

Ax

APPENDICES

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CHARTER
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REPORT
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APPENDIX A: CHARTER SCHOOL OVERVIEW

ACADEMY OF THE CITY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

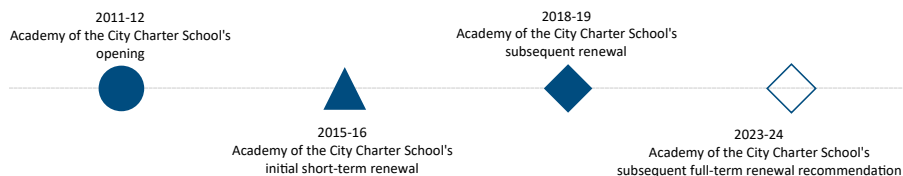
CHAIR	TRUSTEES
Monica Khan-Liriano	Francois Nzi
VICE CHAIR & SECRETARY	Deborah Evangelakos
Michela Nonis	Zaid Mohammed
TREASURER	David Pollak
Stephanie Walker	

CHARTER CHARACTERISTICS

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2019-20	532	528	99%	K – 6
2020-21	644	641	100%	K – 7
2021-22	728	713	98%	K – 8
2022-23	700	736	105%	K – 8
2023-24	728	720	99%	K – 8

APPENDIX A: CHARTER SCHOOL OVERVIEW

TIMELINE OF CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL



CHARTER SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY

SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
2011-12	First Year	April 17, 2012
2013-14	Evaluation Visit	May 7, 2014
2015-16	Initial Renewal Visit	October 13 – 15, 2015
2018-19	Subsequent Renewal Visit	September 25 – 26, 2018
2023-24	Subsequent Renewal Visit	September 28 – 29, 2023

CONDUCT OF THE RENEWAL REVIEW

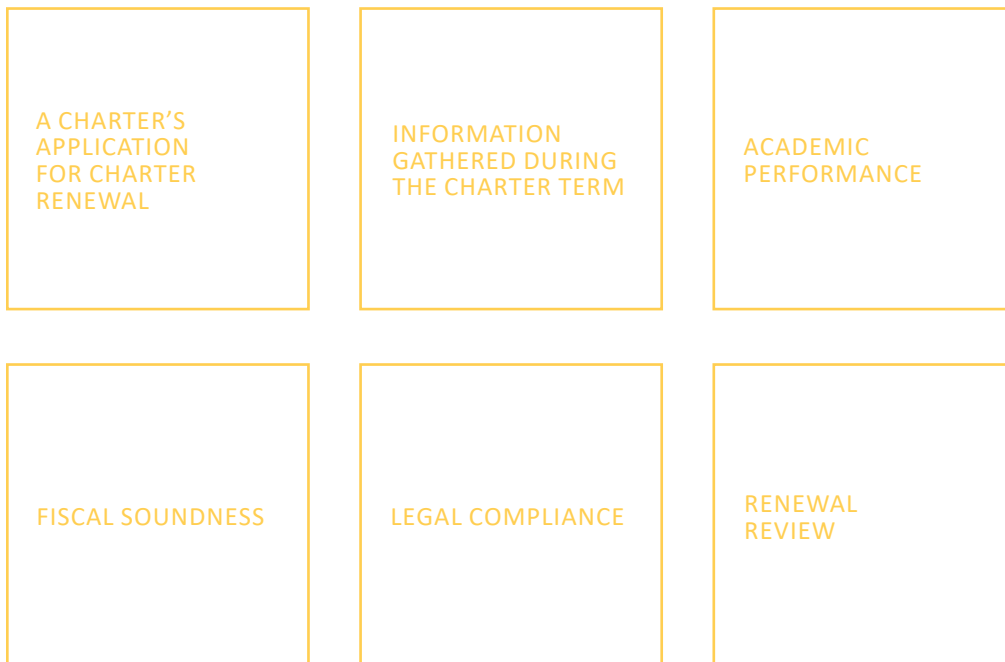
DATE(S) OF REVIEW	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
September 28 – 29, 2023	Erin Allen	Senior Analyst
	Tanya Lewis-Jones	Director of New Charters
	Mary Doyle	External Consultant

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”).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
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