



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH
MATH, ENGINEERING, AND SCIENCE ACADEMY (MESA)
CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL 2

BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The applicants originally submitted a proposal (the “Original Proposal”) to establish the Math, Engineering, and Science Academy Charter High School 2 (“MESA 2”) to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) on January 9, 2019 in response to the Institute’s 2019 Request for Proposals (the “RFP”), which was released on behalf of the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) on December 12, 2018. After a thorough review process consistent with the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (the “Act”), the Institute found the Original Proposal rigorously demonstrated the criteria detailed in the RFP, which align with the Act.

The SUNY Trustees voted to approve the Original Proposal for MESA 2 on March 4, 2019. At the same meeting, the SUNY Trustees voted to approve 12 other proposals for new charters in New York City. At the time of the SUNY Trustees’ vote to approve the Original Proposal, there were only seven charters available to grant in New York City, consistent with amendments to the Act in 2015 which restricted the total number of charter schools the SUNY Trustees and New York State Board of Regents (the “Board of Regents”) were permitted to approve to open within New York City.

The Act requires charter authorizing bodies to establish a preference scoring rubric based on statutory and authorizer standards in order to prioritize new charter proposals in the event that the number of proposals meeting the authorizing entity’s standards exceeds the maximum number of charters available. The RFP identified the Institute’s preference scoring rubric, including the required preference criteria detailed in Education Law § 2852(9-a), as well as the SUNY Trustees’ additional criteria. The Institute implemented its established evaluation and review process to assign a preference score to each proposal recommended for approval. The Original Proposal for MESA 2 earned a preference score of 22 preference points. Based on the overall preference score order for all 13 proposals recommended for approval at the March 4, 2019 meeting, there was an insufficient number of charters available to award MESA 2 a charter at the time.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Institute released the 2023 RFP on behalf of the SUNY Trustees on February 10, 2023. Within the 2023 RFP, the SUNY Trustees reserve the right to “hold additional rounds in the year,” and state that “only in the event that additional charters become available for the Trustees to grant in New York City in 2023 will the Institute identify and publish an additional application schedule for New York City under this RFP.”

In May 2023 and deemed effective April 1, 2023, amendments to the Act made 14 charters available to grant to applicant groups in New York City. As a result of these charters being made available, the Institute issued a Supplement to the 2023 RFP (the “RFP Supplement”) on June 21, 2023 identifying an additional application round for proposals to open charters in New York City solely to the applicant groups whose proposals were approved pursuant to the 2019 RFP but not granted a charter.



The applicants submitted the updated proposal to establish MESA 2 to the Institute on August 9, 2023 in response to the 2023 RFP Supplement. The Institute makes copies of applications available [on its website](#).

MESA 2 intends to operate in a private facility located in New York City Community School District (“CSD”) 20 in Brooklyn. The proposed school will open in August 2025 with 125 students in 9th grade, and ultimately grow to serve 490 students in 9th- 12th grade during its first charter term. MESA 2 will admit new students and fill seats that become available as the result of attrition through 10th grade. The school will replicate the highly effective instructional program implemented at Math, Engineering, and Science Academy Charter High School (“MESA”), currently authorized by the Board of Regents.

After a thorough review process consistent with the Act, the Institute finds that the updated proposal for MESA 2 rigorously demonstrates the criteria detailed in the Institute’s 2019 RFP, which align with the Act.

Based on the updated proposal, as amended by the applicants, and the foregoing:

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the updated proposal to establish the Math, Engineering, and Science Academy Charter High School 2.



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FINDINGS

Based on the comprehensive review of the proposal and interviews of the applicants and the education corporation board of trustees, the Institute makes the following findings.

1. The charter school described in the proposal meets the requirements of the Act and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations as reflected in (among other things):
 - the inclusion of appropriate policies and procedures for the provision of services and programs for students with disabilities and English language learners (“ELLs”);
 - the required policies for addressing the issues related to student discipline, personnel matters, and health services;
 - an admissions policy that complies with the Act and federal law;
 - the inclusion of by-laws for the operation of the education corporation; and,
 - the inclusion of an analysis of the projected fiscal and programmatic impact of the school on surrounding public and private schools.
2. The applicants have demonstrated the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner as reflected in (among other things):
 - the provision of an educational program that meets or exceeds the state performance standards;
 - the articulation of a culture of self-evaluation and accountability at both the administrative and board level;
 - the student achievement goals articulated by the applicants;
 - appropriate rosters of educational personnel;
 - a sound mission statement;
 - a comprehensive assessment plan;
 - the provision of sound startup, first-year, and five-year budget plans;
 - a plan to acquire comprehensive general liability insurance to include any vehicles, employees, and property;
 - evidence of adequate community support for, and interest in, the charter school sufficient to allow the school to reach anticipated enrollment;
 - the inclusion of descriptions of programmatic and independent fiscal audits, with fiscal audits occurring at least annually;
 - the inclusion of a school calendar and school day schedule that provide at least as much instructional time during the school year as required of other public schools; and,
 - the inclusion of methods and strategies for serving students with disabilities in compliance with federal laws and regulations.
3. Granting the proposal is likely to: a) have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school; b) improve student learning and achievement; and, c) materially further the purposes of the Act. This finding is supported by (among other things):
 - an innovative science, technology, engineering, and math (“STEM”) curriculum that provides students with the skills and habits necessary to succeed in college and beyond;
 - the inclusion of a robust professional development program for instructional staff prior the start of each school year and throughout the year;

- a strategic approach to college preparation which includes effective remediation programs for entering 9th grade students and a comprehensive curriculum that helps students and families prepare for and navigate the college application and financial aid processes;
 - an effective dual leadership model in which the principal oversees the academic program while the school director manages financial and operational aspects of the school; and,
 - a well developed standards-based grading system that builds student self-efficacy and helps teachers understand more precisely how to improve each student’s learning.
4. The proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, for students with disabilities, ELLs, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch (“FRPL”) program as required by Education Law § 2852(9-a) (b)(i).
 5. The applicants have conducted public outreach for the school, in conformity with a thorough and meaningful public review process prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, to solicit community input regarding the proposed charter school and to address comments received from the impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students in conformity with Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(ii).
 6. The Institute has determined that the proposal rigorously demonstrates the criteria and best satisfies the objectives contained within the RFP, and, therefore, is a “qualified application” within the meaning of Education Law § 2852(9-a)(d) that should be submitted to the Board of Regents for approval.

The Institute developed the 2023 RFP “in a manner that facilitate[d] a thoughtful review of charter school applications, consider[ed] the demand for charter schools by the community, and s[ought] to locate charter schools in a region or regions where there may be a lack of alternatives and access to charter schools would provide new alternatives within the local public education system that would offer the greatest educational benefit to students,” in accordance with Education Law § 2852 (9-a)(b). The Institute also posted the draft 2023 RFP for public comment and responded to same.

The Institute conducted a rigorous evaluation of the proposal under consideration including academic and fiscal soundness, and legal reviews. In addition, the Institute engaged independent consultants to evaluate the proposal based on the criteria set forth in the RFP.

As of October 4, 2023, there are 14 charters available for the SUNY Trustees and Board of Regents to approve in New York City.

BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION

MESA opened its doors in 2012 under the authorization of the Board of Regents and currently serves 510 students in 9th – 12th grade. The school is co-located in a New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE” or the “district”) space at 231 Palmetto St., Brooklyn in CSD 32. MESA earned a full-term renewal, which was approved by the Board of Regents in June 2023. The current charter term enables the school to operate through June 30, 2028.

MESA seeks to open a second high school in CSD 20 based on its existing track record of success and significant community need and demand. MESA 2 primarily seeks to serve the students and families of the Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Bath Beach, Sunset Park and Bensonhurst communities, where there are few non-selective high performing high school options and no charter school options. In 2021-22, CSD 20’s overall graduation rate was only 80%, compared to 93% at MESA. As a school accepting all new students in 9th grade, MESA 2’s innovative STEM curriculum, effective systems for remediation, and commitment to college readiness will provide a strong school option to students and families in CSD 20.

MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

The MESA 2 mission is as follows:

MESA 2 will provide a rigorous education that equips each student with the ability to succeed in college and in life. MESA 2 students will develop a passion for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and, through a comprehensive college readiness program, develop critical thinking and self advocacy.

MESA 2 will implement the following key design elements:

- **Standards-Based Grading.** MESA2’s grading system will focus exclusively on student mastery of learning goals measured through multiple forms of formative and summative assessments. Students will become accustomed to tracking their own progress on assessments, empowering them with understanding of and ownership over their performance in each course. The school will evaluate habits such as preparedness, punctuality, behavior, attendance, and effort with separate weekly grades called E-Scores.
- **Universal Design for Learning (“UDL”).** MESA 2 will utilize UDL, a set of curriculum design principles that incorporate three features: multiple means of representation of material to students, multiple means of action and expression, and multiple means of engagement. The aspect of choice embedded in UDL planning empowers students to find aspects of classroom content that interest them and approach learning from a place of strength, which is particularly beneficial for students with disabilities and ELLs.
- **STEM Block.** Students in 9th grade will have a double period of STEM Block twice per week, while students in 10th – 12th grade will have a single period of STEM block five times per week. STEM Block provides an inquiry-based complement to core mathematics and science courses. The STEM Block at MESA 2 will make mathematics and science accessible to the school’s most at-risk students including students with disabilities and ELLs, who may have trouble deciphering

the technical language and abstract concepts of traditional science and mathematics curricula. The kinesthetic nature of STEM Block will make STEM subjects more accessible to students who have not yet developed the language or computational skills to navigate traditional textbook- and classroom-based learning .

- **College Bound.** College Bound is a project-based course designed to increase college awareness and readiness from the first day of 9th grade. MESA 2 students will take College Bound in 9th, 11th, and 12th grades. The class provides an opportunity to teach students the difference between meeting minimum high school graduation requirements and the high standards of achievement required to succeed at a four-year college. MESA 2 will provide dedicated college counselors for 11th and 12th grade students, as well as an alumni counselor to support graduates through college.
- **9th Grade Writing Seminar.** Every MESA 2 freshman will take a 9th grade writing seminar that focuses on building basic arguments through writing. 9th grade writing seminar will also teach basic spelling, sentence structure, writing conventions, and grammar. Students who need more intensive literacy support as identified by diagnostic data will take Wilson Reading or Lit Lab, a daily support class that combines literacy supports with pre-reading texts covered in English language arts (“ELA”).
- **Advisory.** MESA 2 will incorporate advisory four times per week. Advisories are structured around common core anchor standards in speaking, listening, and writing, allowing students to develop these skills in a safe, supportive, and structured environment. Topics covered in advisory revolve around ethics and character development. Advisory will also allow students to build relationships with peers and teachers.
- **Calendar.** MESA 2 will institute a year-round calendar with 180 instructional days in the school year. During the breaks in February, April, and July, MESA 2 will hold intersessions, optional sessions during which students may take classes for remediation or enrichment. Intersessions are comprised of small group classes based on student and teacher interests in both academic and extracurricular fields, such as music, art, and athletics. Students that demonstrate the need for further instructional support will attend remedial classes during intersession. This calendar design allows MESA 2 to mitigate the effects of knowledge and skill loss over the summer.
- **School Day.** MESA 2’s school day provides about 27% more instruction in core classes per week than district schools. MESA 2’s school day will also start and end later than district schools, supporting the developmental needs of students. Research has shown that a later start for high school students improves attendance and performance.
- **Common Planning Time.** Early release on Wednesdays will provide teachers with two hours of professional development and common planning time each week. MESA 2 will also have three full professional development days and a full grading day at the end of each trimester.

- **Instructional Coaching.** While the principal will provide instructional leadership and give evaluative feedback to teachers, MESA 2 will employ directors, department leaders, department coaches and assistant principals who will give developmental, formative feedback. The coaches will observe every teacher at least weekly and debrief with those teachers to promote high-quality planning, classroom management, delivery of instruction, and assessment.
- **Minimal Administrative Duties.** In order to ensure successful implementation of standards-based planning and assessment, teachers will have minimal administrative duties outside of the classroom.
- **Organizational Structure and Capacity.** MESA 2's organizational structure is designed to maximize support for teachers. Like MESA, MESA 2 will utilize a two-leader model with one leader who serves as the chief liaison between the school and its external stakeholders, thus allowing the other leader to focus entirely on instruction. An executive director and superintendent will report to the board of trustees, and the co-leaders of MESA 2 will report to the executive director and superintendent.

CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE

MESA 2 will offer approximately 180 days of instruction each year. The first day of instruction for the 2025 school year will be on or around August 18, 2025, and the last day will be on or around June 26, 2025. Subsequent school years will follow a similar calendar. The school day will begin each morning at 9:00 A.M. and end at 4:15 P.M. MESA 2 will provide students with more than 1,066 hours of instruction per year, an 8% increase over the state minimum of 990 hours for 7th – 12th grade mandated by Education Law § 2851(2)(n) and 8 NYCRR § 175.5, and provided at the majority of schools within the NYCDOE.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

MESA 2 will adopt the existing curriculum from the original MESA, which is aligned to New York State Learning Standards. The existing curriculum contains resources to ensure leaders and teachers know what to teach, and when and how to teach it including curriculum maps, scope and sequences, unit plans, lesson plans, and assessment materials.

MESA 2's core instructional values are centered on cognitive engagement and college readiness. The school believes that students should experience rigorous curriculum and instruction that provides appropriate levels of cognitive engagement for all ability levels. The curriculum is differentiated to provide opportunities for all students to master grade level skills and concepts. MESA 2 will implement its academic program as follows.

ELA (Reading and Writing)

MESA 2's ELA curriculum will use the MESA teacher-developed curriculum. The ELA program emphasizes explicit instruction that addresses conventions of grammar, usage, mechanics of academic language, and writing processes through the use of engaging text and interactive technology, which allows for teachers to gather formative standards-based grading data from virtual assessments that correspond to concepts covered in the text and allow for individualized instruction. Units of study address a wide range of genres and culminate in end-of-unit assessments that emphasize deep understanding of how expert readers and

writers interpret texts, make meaning, and express ideas clearly and effectively. Teachers will administer ongoing reading diagnostic assessments that identify each student’s independent reading level and comprehension skills, as well as weekly writing diagnostics that assess student proficiency in narrative, expository, and informational compositions.

Given the low proficiency rates in ELA for 8th graders in the district where MESA 2 seeks to be located, the school will utilize multiple tiers of remedial supports to address all students’ needs. Students in need of intensive literacy support will take Wilson Reading or “Lit Lab,” a daily integrated co-teaching support class that combines literacy supports with pre-reading texts covered in ELA. Beginning in Year 4, MESA 2 will offer Advanced Placement (“AP”) literature and AP language and composition to high performing ELA students. Following the trajectory of the original school, MESA 2 will also offer honors ELA 10 to high-performing sophomores.

Mathematics

MESA 2’s rigorous core mathematics program is based on developing the key college-level skill of forming conjectures and drawing real-world connections to content. Students will hone problem-solving skills independently and through collaboration and discussion of mathematical concepts. In 9th – 12th grade, students will study algebra I, geometry, algebra II, pre-calculus, and statistics using MESA’s internally developed curriculum. Beginning in Year 4, MESA 2 will offer AP calculus to high performing mathematics students. Students will also have the opportunity to take statistics, combinatorics, and other mathematics courses through the City University of New York’s (“CUNY’s”) College Now program.

To meet the needs of students of all abilities, MESA 2 will provide honors algebra as well as algebra special education teacher support services (“SETSS”) to incoming 9th grade students who need additional mathematics support. The school will also provide “Transitions to Geometry” and “Transitions to Algebra II” as intermediary courses for students who need support passing Regents examinations.

Science

MESA 2 selected its science program based on the criteria of its compatibility with UDL, clarity of content, and an inquiry-based, exploratory approach that fosters investment in the scientific process. In order to maximize the rigor and quality of the science program, MESA 2 has also adopted the principles of the Next Generation Science Standards. Through a dynamic and interactive science program, students will sharpen college-ready critical thinking skills by evaluating and synthesizing hypotheses, data, and analyses. MESA 2 will offer AP biology to high-performing 12th grade students. Students will also have the opportunity to take molecular biology, environmental science, and other science courses through CUNY’s College Now program.

Social Studies

The goal of MESA’s social studies curriculum, which MESA 2 will utilize, is to help students become culturally aware self-advocates. Students will evaluate, reflect, and draw text-to-self connections with a robust library of primary and secondary resources. Beginning in 9th grade, MESA 2 will build students’ automaticity around analysis of non-fiction texts through document based question (“DBQ”) essays that actively engage students’ interest in history and civics. DBQs are critical components of the global history and United States history Regents exams that students will take in 10th and 11th grade, respectively. MESA 2 will also offer honors global studies, AP United States history, and AP world history to high-performing students.

STEM

STEM is a unique discovery- and project-based course that builds upon the curriculum developed by MESA staff and draws from the talent and depth of knowledge within MESA 2's STEM staff members. Students will constructively form connections to and build learning upon content in their core mathematics and science courses by collaborating with partners and small groups while solving a complex question, problem, or challenge. MESA 2 will use MESA's STEM curriculum, which is now completely aligned to the Project Lead the Way ("PLTW") Biomedical Sciences sequence of classes. Students will complete the first three years of the PLTW sequence: principals of biomedical science, human body systems, and medical interventions.

Foreign Language

Beginning in Year 2, MESA 2 will offer 10th- 12th grade students the option of taking either Spanish or French courses aligned to the standards of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. MESA 2 will use MESA's teacher generated curriculum, which has a blended focus on covering reading, writing, and conventions of the language while exploring culture and diversity of the Spanish- or French-speaking world. Students taking Spanish will also have the opportunity to take AP Spanish.

College Bound

College Bound is a project-based course designed to increase college awareness and readiness from the first day of 9th grade. The college bound curriculum helps students understand the college application and career preparation process and develop academic and professional skills not explicitly covered in other areas of the curriculum, such as how to build a college list, how to write college essays, navigating the financial aid process, and building study habits required to succeed in college. MESA 2 will have college counselors for 11th and 12th grade student who will support students through workshops and individual counseling meetings.

Advisory

MESA 2 students will take advisory four days per week. Advisory will provide a safe, non-invasive environment for students to practice speaking and listening in an intimate setting. Advisory will focus on developing students' social-emotional learning skills. The advisory curriculum covers a range of topics from personal financial literacy, interview skills, and resume building to empathy and decision-making through leadership development.

EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Please see Appendix B for information regarding the renewal history, academic performance, and student discipline for the education corporation's existing school.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE

MESA 2's culture is based on the belief that students learn best in an environment of safety and structure, and in fact desire such an environment. In order to help students develop habits of college readiness, the school will provide constant positive reinforcement for effort, work, citizenship, and behavior. MESA's culture is built around the research-based and well-regarded Love & Logic model that is clear with structures, rules, and expectations while also flexible and responsive to student needs. The work of the school's deans and counseling team is primarily focused on helping students internalize the high behavioral expectations that the school sets and rising to meet those expectations. MESA 2 will hire a full-time director of school culture who will administer the discipline policy and oversee all positive reinforcement initiatives.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

MESA 2 will replicate the dual leadership structure of the original MESA school, in which a principal and school director share school management responsibilities. This shared leadership structure allows the principal to focus on the academic program and teacher oversight while the school director manages operations and finance. During Year 1, the school co-leaders directly oversee and manage all instructional staff. Additionally, during Year 1, a director of school culture, director of operations, and special education coordinator will support the principal and school director in their respective areas of expertise. By Year 5, the principal and school director will oversee a leadership team that includes a director of school culture, director of operations, director of special education, dean of students, college guidance department leader, and counseling department leader.

Upon the opening of MESA 2, the founders and current principal and school director of the existing MESA school will transition into supervisory roles as superintendent and executive director, respectively. In these roles, the founders will oversee the management of both MESA and MESA 2, supporting and developing the leaders of each school to ensure that the systems and structures that have led to the success of the original school are in place as MESA grows.

GOVERNANCE

The by-laws of MESA 2 indicate that the proposed education corporation board will consist of no fewer than five and no more than 15 voting members. The proposed members of the board of trustees are set forth below:

1. Angel Cortes, Board Chair

Mr. Cortes is a commercial truck driver with AirWeld, a community resident, and the parent of a current MESA student. He earned an associate's degree in marketing from CUNY's Kingsborough Community College.

2. Jacques Pierre, Vice-Chair

Mr. Pierre is senior vice president and general counsel at U.S. Retirement & Benefits Partners, Inc., with over 15 years of experience in the legal field. He has been an adjunct professor at Montclair State University. He is a former high school history teacher and community resident. He earned a bachelor of arts degree from Wesleyan University in American and African American studies and a juris doctorate from Rutgers University School of Law.

3. Chet Mancini, Secretary

Mr. Mancini is an engineering manager with Carta, Inc., who has over 10 years of experience in the computer science and engineering field. He earned a bachelor of science in computer science from Wheaton College and a master of engineering in computer science from the School of Engineering at Cornell University.

4. Agatha Patterson, Treasurer

Ms. Patterson is a senior account executive with Microsoft. She holds a Bachelor's of Arts degree from Ponomia College and a Master's of Business Administration from the University of Virginia.

5. Arun Yang, Trustee

Mr. Yang is a RVP/Engagement lead with Salesforce with ten years of experience in business development. He is also a former Teach for America corps member. He earned a bachelor of arts degree in International Relations from Tufts University and a master's of science in education from Relay Graduate School of Education.

6. Malik Thompson, Trustee

Mr. Thompson is the senior director of Understood for All, a nonprofit organization, and formerly held positions at IBM and Acquis Consulting Group. He earned a bachelor of science degree in Industrial Engineering and Management Science from Northwestern University.

7. Raul Rubio, Trustee

Mr. Rubio is a community coordinator for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Mr. Rubio has been coordinator of the Bushwick Community Partnership Program. Mr. Rubio holds a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Maryland.

8. Kym Ward Gaffney, Trustee

Ms. Ward Gaffney is the global vice president of leadership, learning, and inclusion at Avenues World Holdings LLC. She has leadership development and human resources expertise as well as experience in student mentoring, and is a community resident. She earned a bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering from Howard University and a master of business administration degree from New York University.

10. Jennifer Stewart, Trustee

Ms. Stewart is the managing partner at JStar Holding. She has investment experience in a multiple of industries including healthcare, manufacturing, business and financial. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from Pennsylvania State University and a Master of Science in Business Administration from Harvard Business School.

11. Melissa Sexton, Trustee

Ms. Sexton is the chief risk officer at BNY Mellon Wealth Management. She is an accomplished risk management executive with three decades of experience. Ms. Sexton has a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics and Economics from Boston University and a graduate certificate in Unix and C/C++ from Illinois Institute of Technology.

12. Maureen Ryan, Trustee

Ms. Ryan is chief financial and operating officer at the Gateway School, and previously held leadership finance roles at EdisonLearning, Inc. She has 30 years of experience in business and finance. Ms. Ryan holds a bachelor of arts degree from California State University, Northridge, and a master of public administration from Columbia University.

13. Claudia Granados, Trustee

Ms. Granados is a seasoned government relationships professional who currently serves as founder of The Carnelian Group, LLC. She has over 20 years of experience in political and government relations. Ms. Granados holds a bachelor of arts from the University of California, Los Angeles.

FACILITIES

MESA 2 will seek private rental space in CSD 20 which will accommodate the MESA 2 student body at full capacity. At this time, no specific rental space has been identified although several potential locations have been located. The proposed board, if approved, will work with appropriate real estate professionals in assessing and selecting a facility that suits both the program and fits within a feasible and conservative budget. The school will submit required application for rental assistance in CSD 20 to the DOE.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of MESA 2 on the district is summarized below.

Charter Year	A. Expected Number of Students	B. Basic Charter School Per Pupil Aid	C. Projected Per Pupil Revenue (AxB)	D. Other District Revenue (SPED, Food Service, Grants, etc.)	E. Total Project Funding from District to Charter School (C+D)	F. New York City School District Budget	G. Projected District Impact (E/F)
Year 1 (2025-26)	125	17,626	2,203,250	733,918	2,937,168	37,500,000,000	0.0001%
Year 5 (2029-30)	490	17,626	8,636,740	1,155,663	9,792,403	37,500,000,000	0.0003%

*The NYCDOE budget was derived from the [NYCDOE’s website](#).

The Institute finds that the fiscal impact of the proposed school on the district, charter, and nonpublic schools in the same geographic area will be minimal. In the event that the school opens with a slightly higher enrollment, the Institute has determined that the fiscal impact of the proposed school on the district, public charter, public district, and nonpublic schools in the same geographic area will also be minimal.

The Institute reviewed the school’s proposed startup and fiscal plans and supporting evidence for each year of the proposed charter term. The Institute finds the budgets and fiscal plans are sound and that sufficient startup funds will be available to the new charter school.

The Institute analyzed the existing school operating under another authorizer and found that audited financial statements reflected a financially strong position for the last three years. MESA’s budgets and audits reflect a strong financial position on which to pursue replication and a well-managed approach to financial oversight.

A fiscal dashboard reporting the last three years of operations based on audited financial statements of the existing charter school is presented in Appendix C.

NOTIFICATION & PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Institute notified the district as well as public and private schools in the same geographic area of the proposed school about receipt of the proposal, and the proposal was posted on the Institute's website for public review. The district scheduled a public hearing pertaining to the proposed school for October 5, 2023, and will provide the Institute with a summary of comments made at the hearing. Should the district make the summary of public comments available prior to the October 12, 2023 Committee meeting, the Institute will share the information with members of the Committee at that time. The Institute carefully reviews and considers all public comments received prior to finalizing its recommendation. Additional information about public comments is provided in Appendix A.

PREFERENCE SCORING

Education Law § 2852(9-a) requires authorizers to establish a scoring rubric and grant priority to applications meeting both statutory and authorizer standards. The purpose of the preference criteria is to prioritize proposals in the event that the number of proposals meeting the SUNY Trustees' requirements exceeds the maximum number of charters to be issued. The RFP identified the minimum eligibility requirements and mandated preference criteria required by Education Law § 2852(9-a), as described in greater detail below, as well as SUNY's additional criteria.

In accordance with the 2023 RFP, applications approved pursuant to the 2019 RFP that have not yet received a charter shall receive a new preference score pursuant to the criteria in the 2023 RFP. These previously approved applications will receive up to 30 additional preference points in descending order consistent with the scores they received based on the 2019 preference scoring criteria. For example, the highest-scoring application based on the 2019 preference scoring criteria will receive 30 additional preference points, the second highest-scoring will receive 29 additional preference points, and so on. The MESA 2 proposal met the eligibility requirements, as evidenced by the following:

- the proposal was sufficiently complete, i.e., it included a Transmittal and Summary form, Proposal Summary, and responses to all RFP requests as prescribed by the Institute;
- the proposal included a viable plan to meet the enrollment and retention targets established by the SUNY Trustees for students with disabilities, ELLs, and students who are eligible to participate in the FRPL program (as detailed in Request 5); and,
- the proposal provided evidence of public outreach that conforms to the Act and the process prescribed by the SUNY Trustees for the purpose of soliciting and incorporating community input regarding the proposed charter school and its academic program (as detailed in Request 4).

As MESA 2's proposal submission met the eligibility criteria, the Institute's evaluation continued with a full review of the proposal, an interview of the application team and proposed board of trustees, and requests for clarification and/or amendments to the proposal. The review process then continued with an evaluation of the proposal in relation to the nine Preference Criteria contained in the RFP for which proposals can earn credit as described in the RFP's Preference Scoring Guidance. The Preference Criteria, which in addition to eligibility criteria and the overall high standards established by the SUNY Trustees, include the demonstration of the following in compliance with Education Law §§ 2852(9-a)(c)(i)-(viii):

- increasing student achievement and decreasing student achievement gaps in reading/language arts and mathematics;
- increasing high school graduation rates and focusing on serving specific high school student populations including, but not limited to, students at risk of not obtaining a high school diploma, re-enrolled high school drop-outs, and students with academic skills below grade level;
- focusing on the academic achievement of middle school students and preparing them for a successful transition to high school;
- utilizing high-quality assessments designed to measure a student’s knowledge, understanding of, and ability to apply critical concepts through the use of a variety of item types and formats;
- increasing the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness;
- partnering with low-performing public schools in the area to share best educational practices and innovations;
- demonstrating the management and leadership techniques necessary to overcome initial start-up problems to establish a thriving, financially viable charter school; and,
- demonstrating the support of the school district in which the proposed charter school will be located and the intent to establish an ongoing relationship with such school district.

Pursuant to the RFP, in compliance with the requirements for new charter applications set forth in Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(i-ii), (g), the Institute recommends the SUNY Trustees approve the application for one new charter as proposed. MESA 2 earned a score of 51.75 preference points out of a maximum of 75.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its review and findings, the Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the updated proposal to establish Math, Engineering and Science Academy (MESA) Charter High School 2 to open in August 2025.

APPENDIX A:

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE SUNY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THROUGH OCTOBER 4, 2023

On or about August 18, 2023, in accordance with Education Law § 2857(1), the Institute notified the district as well as public and private schools in the same geographic area of the proposed school about receipt of the proposal to establish MESA 2. The notice reminded the district that the New York State Commissioner of Education's regulations require the school district to hold a public hearing within 30 days of the notice for each new charter application. The district scheduled a public hearing pertaining to the proposed school for October 5, 2023 and will provide the Institute with a summary of comments made at the hearing. Should the district make the summary of public comments available prior to the October 12, 2023 Committee meeting, the Institute will share the information with members of the Committee at that time. A redacted copy of the initial MESA 2 proposal was also posted on [the Institute's website](#) for public review.

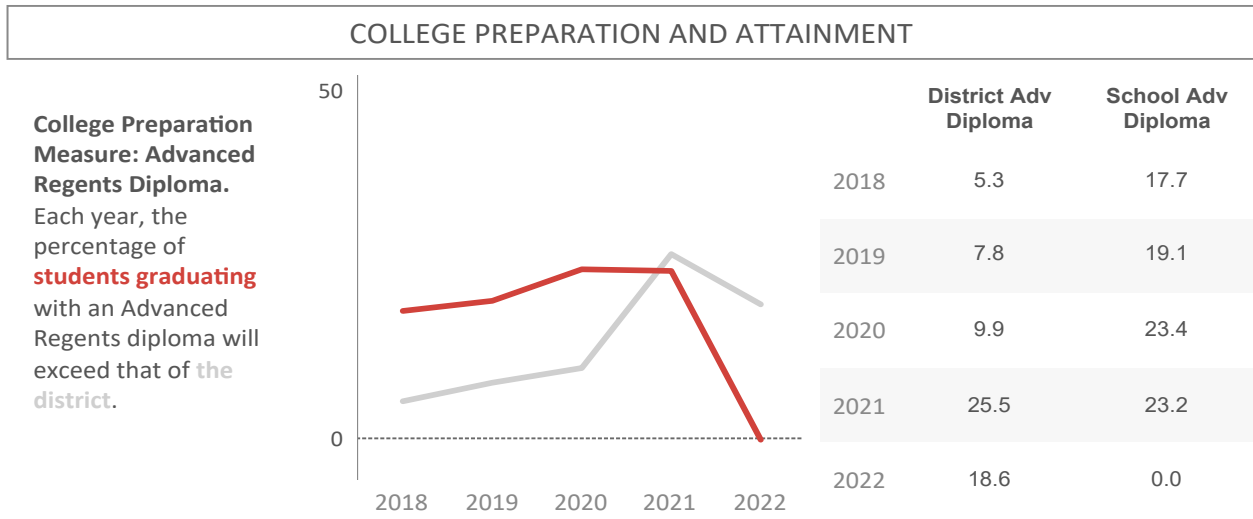
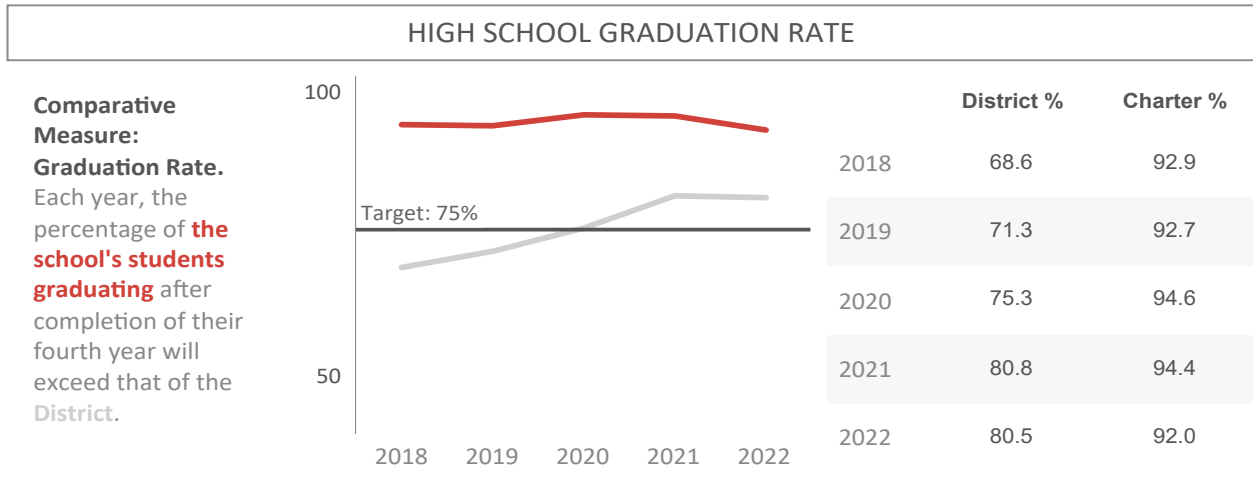
The Institute received independent public comments in the form of letters of support for MESA 2 from several elected officials and community residents, including: United States Representative Nicole Malliotakis; Stephen Stowe, President of CSD 20's Community Education Council, Yiatin Chu, District 20 resident and parent; Vito LaBella, CSD 20 resident and parent and former CEC member; and Kim Jalet, CSD 20 resident and parent.

To date, the Institute has not received any direct comments pertaining to the proposed school.

APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

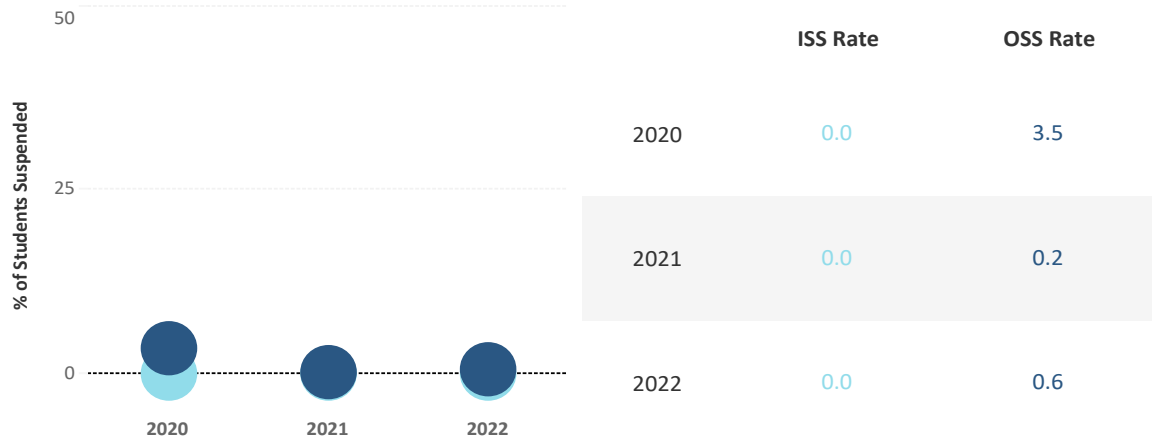
Math, Engineering, and Science Academy Charter High School

Brooklyn CSD 32



APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Math, Engineering and Science Academy Charter High School



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
1	0	0

Math, Engineering and Science Academy Charter High School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2021-22

		Target	Charter
enrollment	economically disadvantaged	90.6	83.2
	English language learners	18.2	15.2
	students with disabilities	17.7	16.0
retention	economically disadvantaged	84.3	99.0
	English language learners	90.0	92.9
	students with disabilities	83.2	100.0

APPENDIX C: FISCAL DASHBOARD

Math, Engineering, and Science Academy (MESA) Charter High 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**

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Cash and Cash Equivalents - GRAPH 1	2,078,554	2,448,516	3,579,999	4,563,009	5,042,221
Grants and Contracts Receivable	363,819	88,794	335,696	248,324	1,036,102
Accounts Receivable					
Prepaid Expenses	95,507	76,061	44,033	97,336	54,266
Contributions and Other Receivables					
Total Current Assets - GRAPH 1	2,537,880	2,613,371	3,959,728	4,908,669	6,132,589
Property, Building and Equipment, net	332,635	443,125	350,061	196,461	227,682
Other Assets	75,307	76,213	76,519	76,781	76,858
Total Assets - GRAPH 1	2,945,822	3,132,709	4,386,308	5,181,911	6,437,129

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**

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	101,414	108,635	141,420	130,711	216,861
Accrued Payroll and Benefits	380,799	388,218	553,194	387,609	373,695
Deferred Revenue					
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt					
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable					
Other			1,138,700		9,045
Total Current Liabilities - GRAPH 1	482,213	496,853	1,833,314	518,320	599,601
Deferred Rent/Lease Liability				1,138,700	
All other L-T debt and notes payable, net current maturities					
Total Liabilities - GRAPH 1	482,213	496,853	1,833,314	1,657,020	599,601

Net Assets

Without Donor Restrictions
With Donor Restrictions

Total Net Assets

Total Liabilities and Net Assets

Without Donor Restrictions	2,463,609	2,635,856	2,539,194	3,499,934	5,830,028
With Donor Restrictions			13,800	24,957	7,500
Total Net Assets	2,463,609	2,635,856	2,552,994	3,524,891	5,837,528
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	2,945,822	3,132,709	4,386,308	5,181,911	6,437,129

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

Resident Student Enrollment	7,738,165	8,183,884	8,711,441	8,829,243	9,100,763
Students with Disabilities					
Grants and Contracts					
State and local	28,801	45,068	21,432	39,210	33,067
Federal - Title and IDEA					
Federal - Other	373,913	320,938	376,543	468,026	1,308,708
Other				56,370	25,502
NYC DoE Rental Assistance					-
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program					-
Total Operating Revenue	8,140,879	8,549,890	9,109,416	9,392,849	10,468,040

Expenses

Regular Education
SPED
Other

Total Program Services

Management and General
Fundraising

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

Regular Education	5,477,554	6,042,081	6,914,263	6,509,722	7,027,037
SPED	1,603,038	1,592,545	1,505,612	1,297,303	1,570,314
Other					
Total Program Services	7,080,592	7,634,626	8,419,875	7,807,025	8,597,351
Management and General	769,870	786,697	837,290	767,972	936,418
Fundraising	87,621	76,088	74,728	53,017	99,571
Total Expenses - GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4	7,938,083	8,497,411	9,331,893	8,628,014	9,633,340

Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations

Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations	202,796	52,479	(222,477)	764,835	834,700
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Support and Other Revenue

Contributions
Fundraising
Miscellaneous Income
Net assets released from restriction

Total Support and Other Revenue

Contributions	32,369	38,788	101,110	207,062	339,237
Fundraising	26,948	25,755	19,420		
Miscellaneous Income	9,247	55,225	19,085		
Net assets released from restriction					1,138,700
Total Support and Other Revenue	68,564	119,768	139,615	207,062	1,477,937

Total Unrestricted Revenue

Total Temporally Restricted Revenue

Total Revenue - **GRAPHS 2 & 3**

Total Unrestricted Revenue	8,209,443	8,669,658	9,249,031	9,599,911	10,807,277
Total Temporally Restricted Revenue					
Total Revenue - GRAPHS 2 & 3	8,209,443	8,669,658	9,249,031	9,599,911	10,807,277

Change in Net Assets

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

Prior Year Adjustment(s)

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

Net Assets - Beginning of Year - GRAPH 2	271,360	172,247	(82,862)	971,897	2,312,637
Prior Year Adjustment(s)	1,707,221	2,192,249	2,463,609	2,635,856	3,524,891
Net Assets - End of Year - GRAPH 2	1,978,581	2,364,496	2,380,747	3,607,753	5,837,528

APPENDIX C: FISCAL DASHBOARD

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

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
675,676	846,894	679,531	734,223	865,013
3,207,507	4,237,406	3,865,828	4,261,107	4,184,044
1,189,824	1,164,540	872,360	782,212	1,107,258
5,073,007	6,248,840	5,417,719	5,777,542	6,156,315
1,108,692	1,520,361	1,216,148	1,605,864	1,636,411
121,069	164,946	134,560	187,854	177,416
37,450	36,560	45,608	60,469	
153,932	123,544	130,511	11,038	144,565
497,696	475,307	536,813	499,559	630,188
96,578	26,616	69,664	21,110	61,282
595,995	533,646	692,146	280,328	659,985
218,669	180,560	230,918	171,093	141,055
34,995	21,513	23,324	13,157	26,123
7,938,083	9,331,893	8,497,411	8,628,014	9,633,340

Total Expenses

CHARTER ANALYSIS

ENROLLMENT

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

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
500	500	500	500	500
500	500	500	500	500
472	476	491	505	510
K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12
K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12

Primary School District: NYC CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

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

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

Revenue

Operating
Other Revenue and Support
TOTAL - GRAPH 3

17,248	17,962	18,553	18,600	20,526
145	252	284	410	2,898
17,393	18,214	18,837	19,010	23,423

Expenses

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

15,001	16,039	17,148	15,459	16,858
1,817	1,813	1,857	1,626	2,031
16,818	17,852	19,006	17,085	18,889
89.2%	89.8%	90.2%	90.5%	89.2%
10.8%	10.2%	9.8%	9.5%	10.8%

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

% of Revenue Expended on Facilities

3.4%	2.0%	-0.9%	11.3%	24.0%
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Student to Faculty Ratio

-	-	-	-	-
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Faculty to Admin Ratio

-	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
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Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - GRAPH 6

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

3.0	2.9	2.9	1.9	2.7
Fiscally Strong	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)

2,055,667	2,116,518	2,126,414	4,390,349	5,532,988
25.0%	24.4%	23.0%	45.7%	51.2%
5.3	5.3	2.2	9.5	10.2
LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW
Excellent	Excellent	Good	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)

5.1	5.1	2.1	9.3	10.1
LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW
Excellent	Excellent	Good	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)

0.2	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.1
LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
Excellent	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.)

3.1	3.5	4.6	6.3	6.3
LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW
Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

www.newyorkcharters.org

H. Carl McCall SUNY Building
353 Broadway

Albany, New York 12246

518-445-4250