

THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

SCHOOL EVALUATION REPORT
**ROCHESTER ACADEMY OF SCIENCE
CHARTER SCHOOL**

VISIT DATE: APRIL 21, 2025

REPORT DATE: AUGUST 14, 2025

SUNY Charter Schools Institute

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Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This School Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school visit to Rochester Academy of Science Charter School (“Roc Sci”) on April 21, 2025. While the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all the [State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks](#) (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”) near the end of a charter term, most mid-cycle charter school evaluation visits focus on a subset of these benchmarks addressing the academic success of the school and the effectiveness and viability of the charter school organization. It provides a framework for examining the quality of the educational program, focusing on teaching and learning (e.g., curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and services for at-risk students), as well as leadership, organizational capacity, and board oversight. The Institute uses the established criteria on a regular basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

The Appendix to the report contains a School Overview with descriptive and historical information about the school, as well as background information on the conduct of the visit. Together this information puts the visit in the context of the school’s current charter term.

This report serves as a summary of the school’s program based on the Qualitative Education Benchmarks. The Institute intends this selection of information to be an exception report in order to highlight areas of concern. As such, limited detail about positive elements of the educational program is not an indication that the Institute does not recognize other indicators of program effectiveness.

While the Institute posts the evaluation report on its website and makes it publicly available, the Institute encourages school leaders to share the report with its stakeholders including, but not limited to, the full board of trustees, staff members, and families.





CHARTER BACKGROUND

ROCHESTER ACADEMY OF SCIENCE CHARTER SCHOOL

545 Humboldt Street, Rochester, NY 14610 | Grades: K-3 | Rochester City School District
150 Floverton Street, Rochester, NY 14610 | Grades: 9-10 | Rochester City School District



MISSION

Roc Sci will provide an excellent Kindergarten — 12th grade academic experience that ensures all students are prepared for college and careers of the highest potential as academically, socially, emotionally, and physically wellrounded and contributing citizens.

CURRENT CHARTER

Opened:
2022

Serves:
Kindergarten – 3rd;
9th – 10th

Chartered Enrollment:
432

Charter Expiration:
July 31, 2027

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (“STEM”) infused program



Data driven decision making and continuous improvement



Challenging curriculum



Closing the gaps by providing instructional supports for all students



Character development, social emotional, physical well-being, and healthy lifestyles



Teacher training



Parents as partners



College for all



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SUNY trustees approved Roc Sci on October 7th, 2021 as a replication of the New York State Board of Regents authorized Buffalo Academy of Science Charter Schools (“Buff Sci”), two STEM focused educational programs serving students in Buffalo. A shared services team supports the Buff Sci and Roc Sci schools with curriculum development, facilities, data collection and reporting, fiscal management, and human resources.

In its third year, Roc Sci is building strong systems and procedures in replication of the Buff Sci schools. The shared services team is adapting its management structures to support three schools across two cities. The board is currently ensuring that it is hiring staff members in both cities, and it will continue to monitor and evaluate personnel deployment between both cities to ensure each school has equitable supports from the shared services team.

School leaders work closely with teachers to ensure the school is developing purposeful, high quality instruction. Teachers design small group instruction as part of its intervention program and effectively support student learning. Leaders have a clear system for supporting and coaching teachers across both the elementary and high school programs. Both programs have some elements of intervention in place such as daily intervention blocks built into the schedule. The shared services team and Roc Sci high school leaders recognize the incoming 9th grade students come to the school with significant achievement gaps, moreso than the Buff Sci schools have experienced. While the program schedule allocates time to build foundational skills in algebra and English language arts (“ELA”), the high school program does not yet have a comprehensive support program, including effective differentiated instruction, to develop students’ grade level skills.

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

QUALITATIVE BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, grounded in the body of research from the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University,¹ describe the elements in place at schools that are highly effective at providing students from low-income backgrounds the instruction, content, knowledge, and skills necessary to produce strong academic performance.

ASSESSMENT

Roc Sci has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning. In its initial charter term, the school regularly administers valid and reliable assessments replicating the effective Buff Sci assessment practices. The school administers a wide range of assessments to gather diagnostic, formative, and summative student performance data. For both mathematics and ELA, the school administers benchmark assessments composed of released New York State test items and IXL. For early literacy, the school implements foundational literacy assessments. This suite of assessments provides leaders and teachers with adequate data to make instructional decisions. At the elementary level, teachers report having clear access to student achievement data to help with making pedagogical changes. However, teachers at the high school level report more inconsistent access to data to support differentiation and data driven instruction.

Elementary teachers effectively use assessment results to meet student needs. At the elementary level, the principal and literacy coordinator work with grade level teams to analyze and create action steps based on recent assessment administrations. Through these cycles, teachers determine small student groupings and adjust when new data suggests students have mastered a concept or skill. At the high school level, the school changed the schedule to accommodate additional periods for remediation in ELA and mathematics to support closing achievement gaps for incoming 9th grade students. This schedule change requires students to be in primarily core-content classes throughout the school day, and the school attempts to build more enjoyable activities, such as a robotics course, during the afterschool program. The high school program does not yet sufficiently differentiate instruction based on student data.

CURRICULUM

Roc Sci is developing the school's curriculum to support teachers with instructional planning. Roc Sci uses a set of curricular programs, both commercially available and open source programs, to inform a curricular framework with clear student performance expectations and alignment to state standards. To support closing achievement gaps at the high school level, the school postponed its electives curriculum and implements an additional period for technical writing and applied algebra I as electives in 9th and 10th grade. Roc Sci teachers work closely with leaders in either grade level or content area team meetings to discuss the scope and sequence of topics and lesson design. For example, at the elementary level, the literacy coordinator works closely with teachers to distill the many elements of Wit & Wisdom to design a cohesive ELA experience for students.

1. An extensive body of research, including a [report from Harvard](#) and a [report from the United States General Accounting Office](#), identifying and confirming the correlates of effective schools exists dating back four decades.

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

Based on the systems in place to support teachers with curricular planning, teachers know what to teach and when. Teachers report high levels of support for lesson planning. Based on a review of lesson plans, teachers plan purposeful and focused lessons. While both programs have structures in place to support remediation and intervention, teachers do not yet maximize on practices for differentiation to fully close achievement gaps presented by students, especially at the high school level.

PEDAGOGY

Roc Sci is working to implement high quality instruction across all grade levels and content areas. In most observed lessons, teachers delivered clear, standards-aligned objectives and supporting activities. The school implements a co-teaching model with multiple adults in some classrooms, but the Institute did not observe a variety of differentiated instruction to maximize support for all learners.

Teachers use various strategies to check for understanding, such as cold calling on students for responses, providing one-to-one support, and administering exit tickets. Using these strategies, Roc Sci is developing systems and processes that enable teachers to make real-time adjustments to instruction and meet all student needs. Teachers do not consistently monitor student progress during independent and group work, which results in some students finishing assigned work without an extension activity, opting out without redirection, or struggling to persist through the activities with limited opportunities for remediation or intervention. Roc Sci has access to high quality curricular resources, but few teachers use instructional time to promote critical thinking skills, develop real life connections, or probe for deeper understanding of concepts.

Roc Sci teachers establish warm, welcoming environments in each classroom that maintain a culture focused on academic achievement. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to engage students and minimize behavioral disruptions. Most teachers deliver instruction with sufficient pacing and implement clear routines that allow students to focus on the academic content.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Roc Sci provides partially effective instructional leadership that promotes teacher growth, particularly in the elementary program, but lacks consistency and content-specific support in the high school. Instructional leaders at Roc Sci hold weekly planning meetings, conduct classroom observations, and participate in professional development aligned with literacy priorities and student data. The elementary program exhibits greater coherence with leaders focused on teachers' ability to deliver a clear implementation of the Science of Reading through Foundations and LETRS-aligned strategies. Coaches provide regular support focused on lesson internalization, instructional clarity, and student outcomes. This sustained coaching results in greater consistency in practice in the early grades.

At the high school program, instructional leadership is less developed. Teachers report limited access to subject-specific coaching in ELA, minimal support for co-teaching models, and a lack of structured development around differentiation and higher order thinking. Leaders do not yet provide robust feedback and growth opportunities to improve teacher practice. Roc Sci leaders recognize these gaps and have initiated a pipeline of instructional coaches and targeted development sessions to address uneven support.

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

AT-RISK PROGRAM

Roc Sci is developing its at-risk program to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners (“ELLs”), and students struggling academically. The school uses compliant procedures to identify students with disabilities and ELLs. Roc Sci utilizes a multi tiered system of supports (“MTSS”) to assess the academic and non-academic needs of students and provide interventions for students struggling academically. To address student needs, the school implements collaborative structures, such as grade level team meetings and huddles, where specialists, social workers, teachers, and support staff members review data to ensure a continuum of interventions and services.

The elementary program offers a robust MTSS framework that includes universal screenings at tier 1 using the LETRS Word Reading Survey and Acadience Oral Reading Fluency assessments for 2nd and 3rd grade. Literacy specialists, teachers, and the elementary literacy coordinator collaboratively review screening data, classroom performance, and observations to identify students who may require additional support. Students making adequate progress continue with tier 1 instruction and monitoring, while students needing more support receive tier 2 interventions. In tier 2, classroom teachers provide research-based interventions in small groups, assess student needs, set goals, and document progress. Students may continue in tier 2 or move to tier 3 for intensive support, which involves individualized support by specialists, comprehensive assessments, and an individualized intervention plan with progress monitoring.

At the high school level, the school inconsistently implements MTSS interventions and Response to Intervention (“RTI”). The high school noted an increase in students requiring tier 2 and 3 interventions and has identified the need to expand individualized learning opportunities to close achievement gaps. While the primary structure for RTI is offered in applied mathematics and literacy courses, the Institute observed inconsistencies in the application of differentiation and targeted support across high school classrooms.

For students with disabilities, the elementary program offers integrated co-teaching (“ICT”) and consultant teacher services. The high school offers consultant teacher services and a resource room. The students’ home districts provide any related services. For ELLs, an ELL coordinator and ELL teachers provide push-in and pull-out services ensuring students receive instructional support. ELL service providers collaborate with teachers to address student needs, modify materials, and provide accommodations for students to access content.

Roc Sci demonstrates inconsistencies in its elementary and high school at-risk programs, including the use of screeners and diagnostics, access and utilization of student data, the design and implementation of interventions, and adequate training and professional development to help teachers identify and meet the needs of students. This missed opportunity to provide cohesive and comprehensive support across all grade levels hinders the school’s overall capacity to effectively meet the diverse needs of at-risk students and ensure progress and success for all learners.

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Roc Sci's organization works effectively to deliver the educational program. Roc Sci demonstrates effective organizational capacity through a clear leadership structure, aligned operational systems, and intentional efforts to build its leadership bench, though support for new and specialized staff remains uneven. The shared services team provides effective support to the Roc Sci operational teams, leading to effective operations across both school sites. With strong operations in place, instructional leaders have the ability to primarily focus on supporting the academic program. The school recruits and retains high quality teachers through its instructional fellowships and partnerships with local colleges and organizations including SUNY New Paltz. Instructional leaders recognize a need to improve onboarding for teachers who join after the start of the year and special education teachers. Leaders are working to adapt supports to ensure teachers have high quality examples of practices such as co-teaching strategies, RTI procedures, and guidance for delivering interventions.

Roc Sci is developing a strong school culture with clear disciplinary procedures in place. The shared services team and Roc Sci school leaders prioritize building a warm, welcoming environment and a culture of respect across both programs. As evidenced by classroom observations, Roc Sci is effectively developing these two priorities as teachers and students demonstrate respect toward one another and amongst each other. The school has also developed a culture where adults proactively check in on students to understand any social emotional needs that may arise.

BOARD OVERSIGHT & GOVERNANCE

The Roc Sci board works effectively to meet the school's Accountability Plan goals. The board of trustees provides effective oversight that supports the school's growth and mission-aligned programming. Board members demonstrate strong commitment to replicating the high expectations and data-informed culture of the Buff Sci campuses while adapting to Rochester's unique community needs. The board monitors academic performance and enrollment trends, engages with financial oversight through separate budgets, and supports leaders in addressing challenges such as high school facilities and competition from other local schools. The board expressed concern about sustaining growth, maintaining service quality across campuses, and building a local governance presence in Rochester. It is actively exploring facilities solutions, evaluating its own effectiveness through retreats and outside consultants, and pursuing a strategic planning process to strengthen future oversight. The board recognizes the urgency of building capacity, recruiting additional trustees, and ensuring academic and financial sustainability as the school expands.

Roc Sci

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APPENDICES

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ROCHESTER ACADEMY OF SCIENCE CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES¹

CHAIR	TRUSTEES
Ismet Mamnoon	Dr. Onur Nacakgedigi
VICE CHAIR	Betty Jean Grant
Dr. David Banks	Dr. Yashodhra Satchidanand
TREASURER	
Dr. Mustafa Gokcek	
SECRETARY	
Karen T. Wallace	

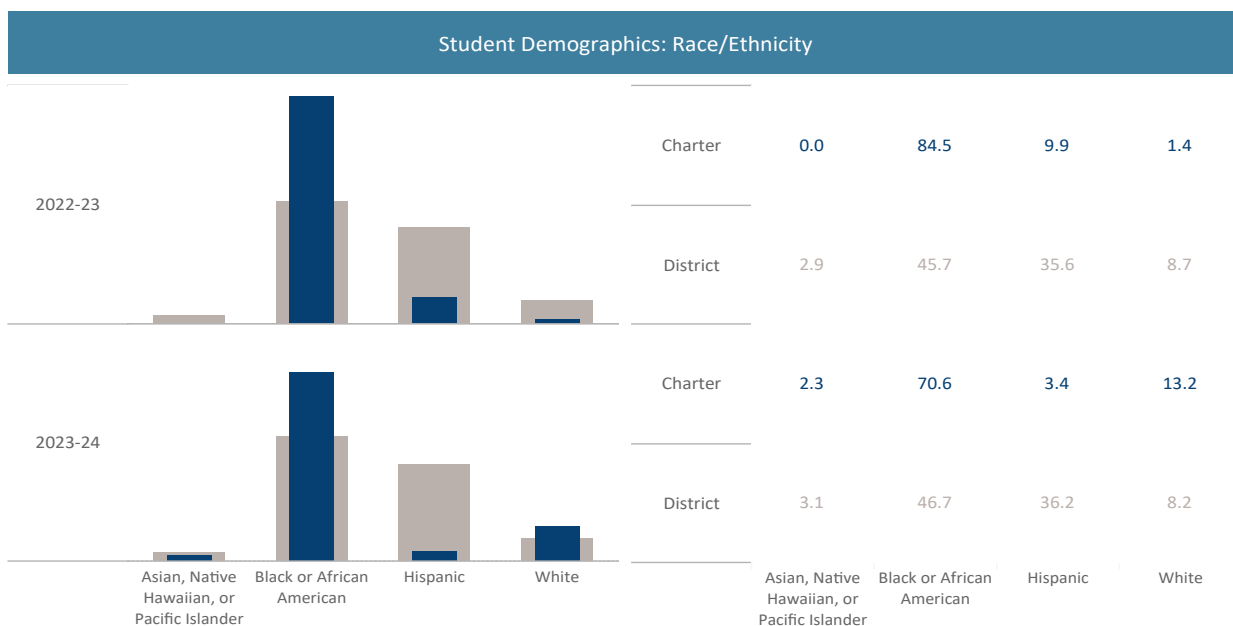
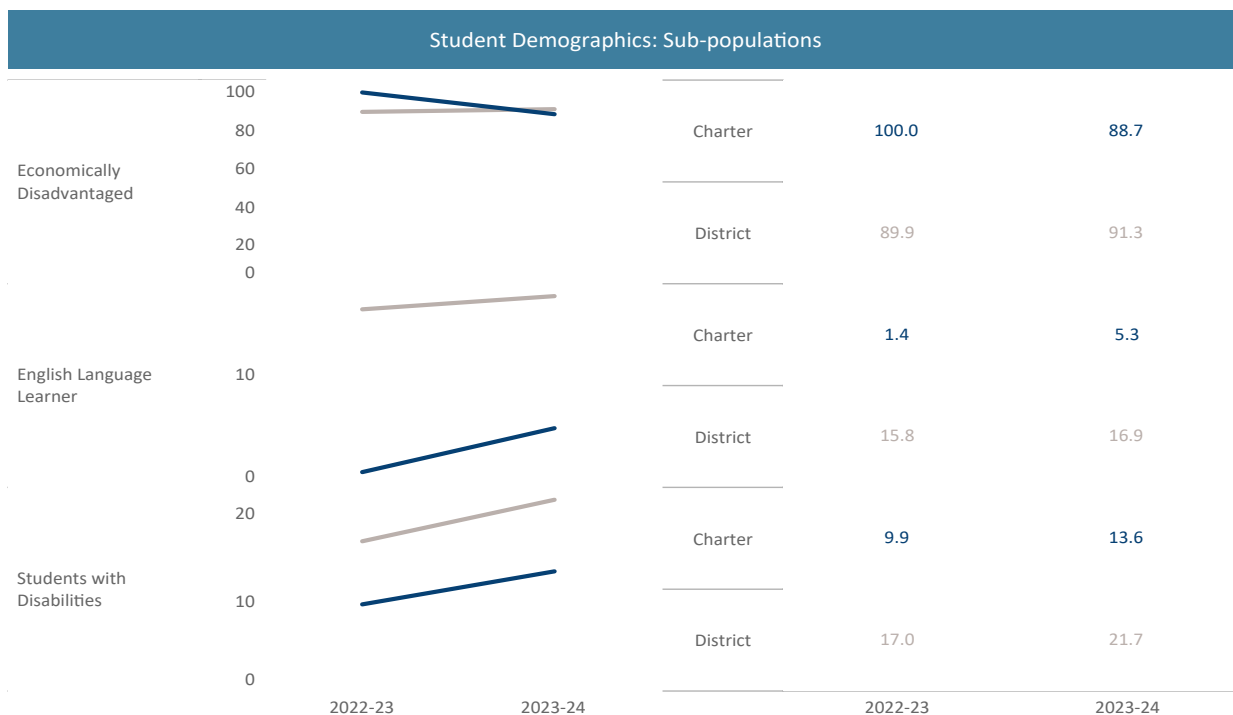
CHARTER CHARACTERISTICS

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT ²	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2022-23	88	75	85%	K-1
2023-24	248	241	97%	K-2, 9
2024-25	432	389	90%	K-3, 9-10

1. Source: The Institute’s board records at the time of the visit.
2. Source: Institute’s Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

Rochester Academy of Science Charter School

Rochester City School District

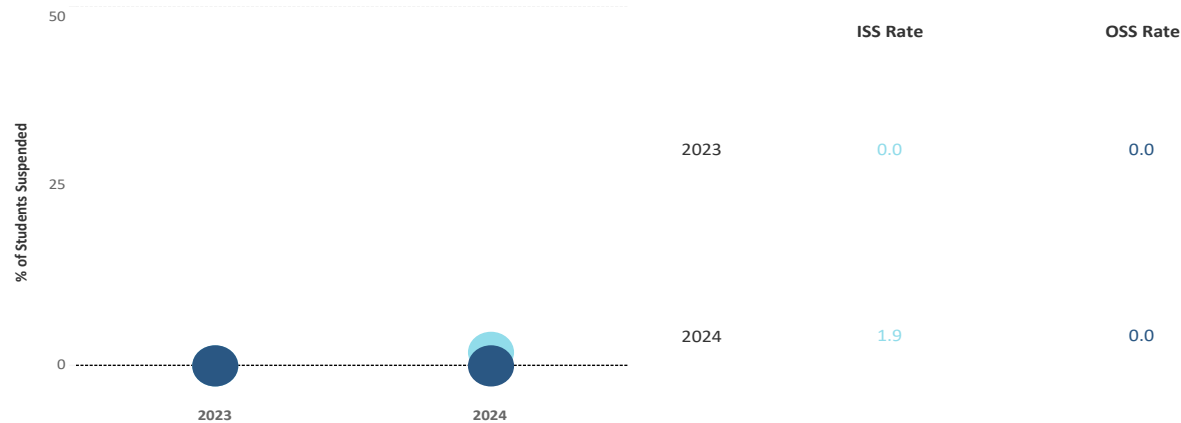


Data reported in these charts reflect BEDS day enrollment counts as reported by the NYSED.

APPENDIX A: SCHOOL OVERVIEW



Rochester Academy of Science Charter 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	
		2023	2024
2023-24	85.9	0	1

Rochester Academy of Science Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2023-24

		Target	Charter
enrollment	economically disadvantaged	87.5	88.7
	English language learners	15.4	5.3
	students with disabilities	16.6	13.6
retention	economically disadvantaged	94.3	85.9
	English language learners	94.4	100.0
	students with disabilities	93.9	57.1

Discipline data above reflect information reported by the education corporation and validated by the Institute. Enrollment and retention data reflect available BEDS day information as reported by the NYSED.



CHARTER SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY

SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
2022-23	First Year Visit	May 23, 2023
2024-25	School Evaluation Visit	April 21, 2025

CONDUCT OF THE VISIT

DATE(S) OF REVIEW	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
April 21, 2025	Andrew Kile	Director for School Evaluation
	Desree Cabrall-Njenga	School Evaluator
	Kennesha Kelly	External Consultant

CHARTER CYCLE CONTEXT

CHARTER TERM	TERM YEAR	ANTICIPATED RENEWAL VISIT
Initial	Third Year of a Five Year Charter Term	Fall 2026

