

# THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*SCHOOL EVALUATION REPORT*  
**EAST HARLEM SCHOLARS  
ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL**

**EAST HARLEM SCHOLARS  
ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL II**

*VISIT DATE: MARCH 25 – 27, 2025*  
*REPORT DATE: AUGUST 14, 2025*

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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 visits to East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School (“East Harlem Scholars”), and East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School II (“East Harlem Scholars II”) on March 25 – 27, 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 charter 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 Institute provided the school an Accountability Summary that outlines the school’s previous three years of performance, if available, and to the extent to which the school is meeting, coming close to meeting, or not meeting its Accountability Plan goals. Within the performance review, the Institute shares if the school’s renewal is in jeopardy based on the quantitative record of performance. For more information about the school’s performance, see the 2023-24 School Performance Review section below.

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.





## EDUCATION CORPORATION BACKGROUND

# EAST HARLEM SCHOLARS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL



### MISSION

*East Harlem Scholars Academies are public charter schools that prepare students with the skills, strength of character, and emotional well-being to excel academically, lead in their communities, and realize their best possible selves. East Harlem Scholars Academies are operated by East Harlem Tutorial Program, a community-based organization founded in 1958.*

### CURRENT EDUCATION CORPORATION SNAPSHOT

*First School Opened:*  
2011

*Total Number of Charters:*  
Two

*Number of Students Served:*  
1,603

### EDUCATION CORPORATION BACKGROUND

The State University of New York ("SUNY") Trustees approved the original charter for East Harlem Scholars on May 11, 2010 and approved East Harlem Scholars to open and operate East Harlem Scholars II on October 2, 2012 under East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School ("East Harlem Scholars Schools" or the "education corporation"). East Harlem Scholars Schools partners with East Harlem Tutorial Program, Inc. ("EHTP") through a shared services agreement. EHTP, a not-for-profit community-based organization that has served the local neighborhood since 1958, supports each school with academic programming, governance, back office support, and finances. In addition, the organization delivers after-school programming, support to college students, and a teacher residency program.



## EDUCATION CORPORATION BACKGROUND

### East Harlem Scholars Academy

#### Charter School



Opening Year: 2011

Current Enrollment/Grades: 1,077 | K-12

Charter Expiration: July 31, 2028

East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School Elementary & Middle | 2050 Second Avenue, New York, NY | CSD 4 | K-8

East Harlem Scholars Academy High School | 2050 Second Avenue, New York, NY | CSD 4 | 9-12

### East Harlem Scholars Academy

#### Charter School II



Opening Year: 2013

Current Enrollment/Grades: 526 | K-8

Charter Expiration: July 31, 2028

East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School II | 1573 Madison Avenue | CSD 4 | K-8

### KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Strong instructional leadership and a commitment to professional development

-

Data driven instructional best practices

-

Culturally responsive teaching

+

Integration of social emotional learning and community service

+

Importance of families and community

+

Academic intervention

+

College credit acquisition

-

East Harlem Tutorial Program as partner organization

+

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the second year of their current five year charter terms, East Harlem Scholars and East Harlem Scholars II have not yet established a clear track record of meeting the schools' Accountability Plan goals. At the time of the schools' most recent renewal in 2022-23, the SUNY Trustees placed conditions on the renewals of each school requiring them to meet certain academic targets to be eligible to apply for renewal in 2027-28. Currently, the schools are not meeting the conditions. Since the renewal in 2022-23, East Harlem Scholars has produced a mixed and limited record against its high school graduation and college preparation goals. While EHTP leaders, school based leaders, and the board communicate a clear sense of urgency and commitment to improving student outcomes, East Harlem Scholars Schools has yet to demonstrate a clear track record of academic success during this charter term. In addition, the schools' interim assessment and i-Ready results from 2024-25 do not evidence sufficient progress toward grade level standards for all students. Both schools must demonstrate substantial improvement in order to meet the conditions to be eligible to apply for renewal and to meet the SUNY standard to earn renewal.

Following multiple years of staff member turnover and organizational instability, the board identified a new chief executive officer ("CEO") in February 2024 who quickly worked to recruit a chief schools officer ("CSO") to focus on the schools' academic programs. The current EHTP leadership team is developing a strategic plan and has begun establishing clear priorities for the academic program, including implementing high quality instructional materials and aligning on a common vision for culture across the education corporation. As the programmatic changes are in development, the evidence of efficacy based on state assessment results is not yet clear.

During the spring 2025 visit to the schools, the Institute found some evidence of improvement to instructional practice since the renewal visit in fall 2022 and one day evaluation visit in spring 2024. In comparison to the most recent visits, team members observed more purposeful lessons with rigorous activities across some classrooms. Teachers demonstrated improved rapport with students and lessons featured fewer disruptions. Across lessons, most teachers implemented strategies such as positive narration that aligned to leaders' stated instructional priorities. However, the overall quality of instruction remained highly variable across classrooms and some culture problems persisted from recent Institute visits, such as student use of personal technology during instruction at the high school program. While teachers demonstrate commitment to the schools' programmatic changes and students are generally ready to learn, East Harlem Scholars Schools does not implement a sustained, effective coaching system that improves teaching and learning.

## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

### 2023-24 CHARTER PERFORMANCE REVIEW

At the beginning of the Accountability Period,<sup>1</sup> the school developed and adopted an Accountability Plan that set academic goals in the key subjects of English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics. For each goal in the Accountability Plan, specific outcome measures define the level of performance necessary to meet that goal. Throughout the charter term, the Institute examines results for five required Accountability Plan measures on an annual basis and provides an Accountability Summary to each school detailing the school’s progress toward meeting its Accountability Plan goals. Because The New York State Charter Schools Act of 1998 (the “Act”) requires charters be held “accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results”<sup>2</sup> and states the educational programs at a charter school must “meet or exceed the student performance standards adopted by the board of regents”<sup>3</sup> for other public schools, SUNY’s required accountability measures rest on performance as measured by statewide assessments. More information about the required Accountability Plan measures can be found on the [Institute’s website](#).

### East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School

In 2023-24, the second year of its current Accountability Period, East Harlem Scholars did not meet its graduation, college preparation, or mathematics goals. The school came close to meeting its ELA goal. Given this record of performance, the school’s eligibility to apply for and earn renewal is in jeopardy. The school’s renewal conditions require it to meet the target for at least four of seven measures in at least three of five years of its current Accountability Period in both ELA and mathematics. The school did not meet these conditions in either 2022-23 or 2023-24. Therefore, East Harlem Scholars must meet the criteria in the three remaining years of the Accountability Period.

In ELA, East Harlem Scholars came close to meeting its goal in 2023-24. With 40% of the school’s tested students enrolled in at least their second year scoring at or above proficiency on the state’s 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA exam, the school performed far under the absolute target of 75% and five percentage points below the local district average. The school posted an effect size of 0.05, which indicates that the school performed about as expected in comparison to demographically similar schools across the state. East Harlem Scholars posted a mean growth percentile that met the target of 50. The school must continue to demonstrate growth and move more students toward grade level expectations.

In mathematics, East Harlem Scholars failed to meet its goal and did not meet the target for any of the available measures under the goal. Only 28% of tested students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficiency. This level of performance was 47 percentage points below the absolute target and 13 percentage points below the district results. The school performed lower than expected compared to schools enrolling similar proportions of economically disadvantaged students according to the Institute’s comparative performance analysis. The school posted a mean growth percentile five points under the target.

1. 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. In the case of initial renewal, the Accountability Period covers the first four years of the charter term.

2. Education Law § 2850(2)(f).

3. Education Law § 2854(1)(d).



## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

At the high school level, the school did not meet its graduation or college preparation goals in 2023-24. According to the New York State Education Department graduation rate database, only 62% of the school's 2020 Graduation Cohort graduated after four years falling under the absolute target of 75% by 13 percentage points and below the local district's average by 15 percentage points. The school reports that 77% of the 2023-24 graduates matriculated into a two or four year college program in the year following graduation. However, the school failed to report its Graduation Cohort's attainment of measures of college preparation such as passing an Advanced Placement ("AP") exam or earning a Regents diploma with advanced designation for the second consecutive year. The school must identify and report on metrics of college preparation for its graduates in order to demonstrate attainment of its Accountability Plan goal area.

### **East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School II**

In 2023-24, the second year of its current Accountability Period, East Harlem Scholars II did not meet its mathematics goal and came close to meeting its ELA goal. Based on this record of achievement, the school's eligibility to apply for and earn renewal is currently in jeopardy. The renewal conditions require the school to meet the target for at least four of seven measures in at least three of five years of its current Accountability Period in both ELA and mathematics. The school met these conditions in ELA during 2022-23 but not 2023-24. In mathematics, East Harlem Scholars II did not meet the conditions in either year. Therefore, in ELA the school must meet the conditions in at least two of the remaining three years of the Accountability Period. In mathematics, the school must meet the criteria in all three of the remaining years.

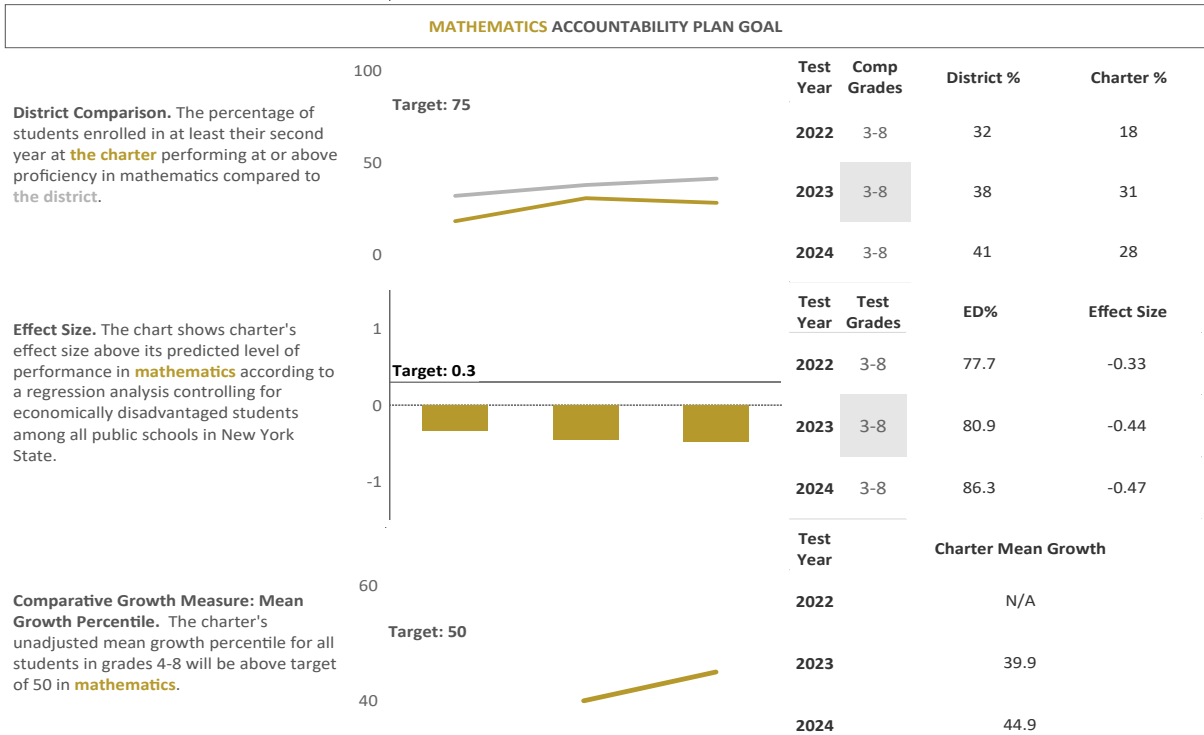
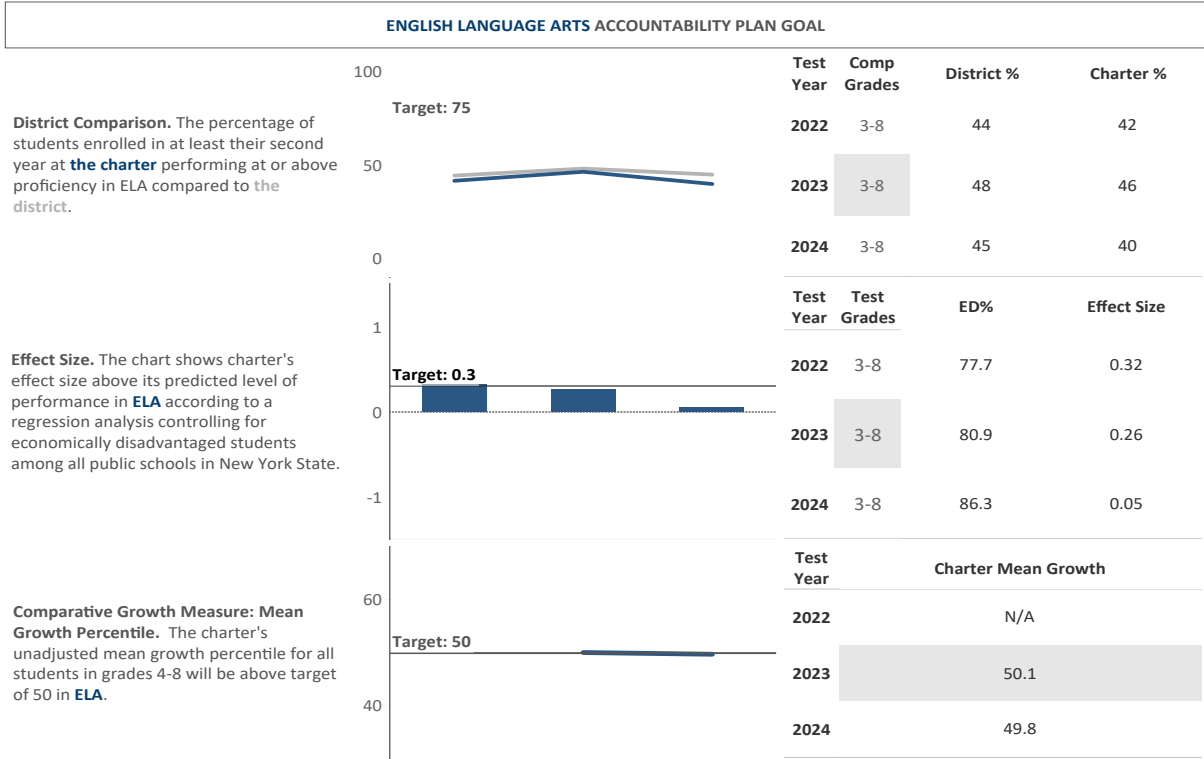
In 2023-24, East Harlem Scholars II came close to meeting its ELA goal. With 41% of the school's tested students enrolled in at least their second year scoring at or above proficiency on the state's 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA exam, the school performed far under the absolute target of 75% and four percentage points below the local district average. The school posted an effect size of 0.01, which was below the target of 0.3 and indicates that the school performed about as expected in comparison to demographically similar schools across the state. East Harlem Scholars II posted a mean growth percentile of 53, which surpassed the target of 50. The school must continue to demonstrate growth and move more students toward grade level expectations.

In mathematics, the school did not meet its goal with only 36% of tested students enrolled in at least their second year scoring at or above proficiency. This level of performance was 39 percentage points below the absolute target and five percentage points below the district comparison. The school performed lower than expected compared to schools enrolling similar proportions of economically disadvantaged students according to the Institute's comparative performance analysis. The school posted a mean growth percentile slightly above the target.



# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

## EAST HARLEM SCHOLARS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

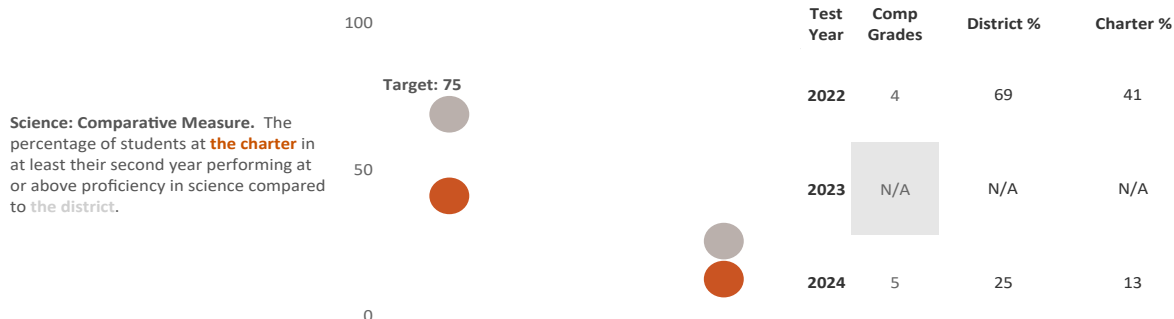




# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

## EAST HARLEM SCHOLARS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

### SCIENCE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL



TESTED PERCENTAGES						
	2022		2023		2024	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
School Tested Number	291	286	270	256	329	320
School Tested %	80.6%	79.2%	75.2%	71.3%	95.1%	92.5%
District Tested %	83.8%	82.8%	77.5%	84.9%	72.4%	80.5%

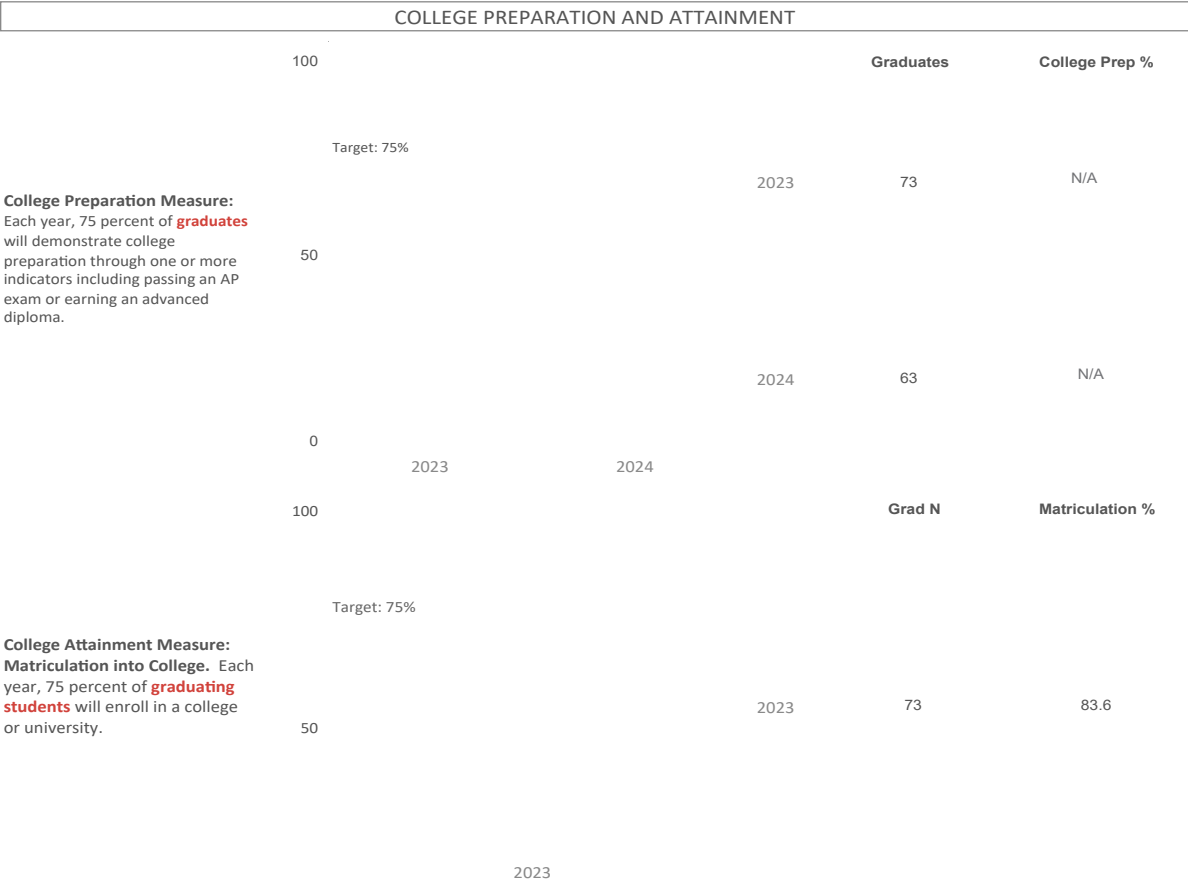
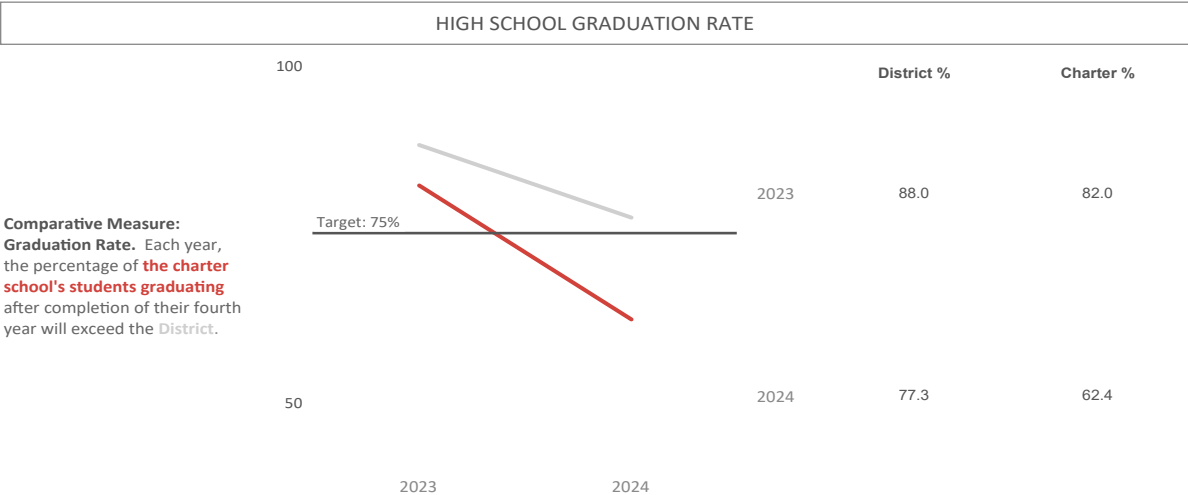
SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE*			
	2022	2023	2024
Students with Disabilities Tested on State Exam	77	75	100
Charter Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	16.9	22.7	21.0
District Percent Proficient	16.1	20.2	19.0
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam	0	103	91
Charter Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress	s	28.2	41.8

\* 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

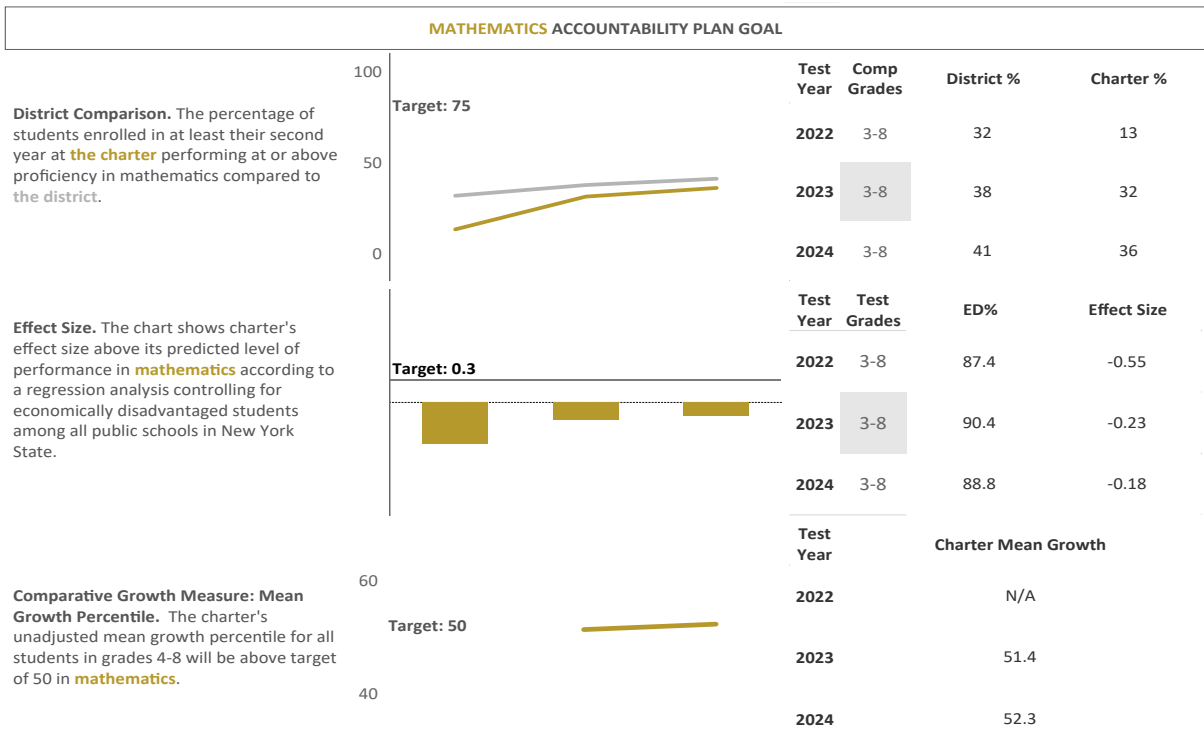
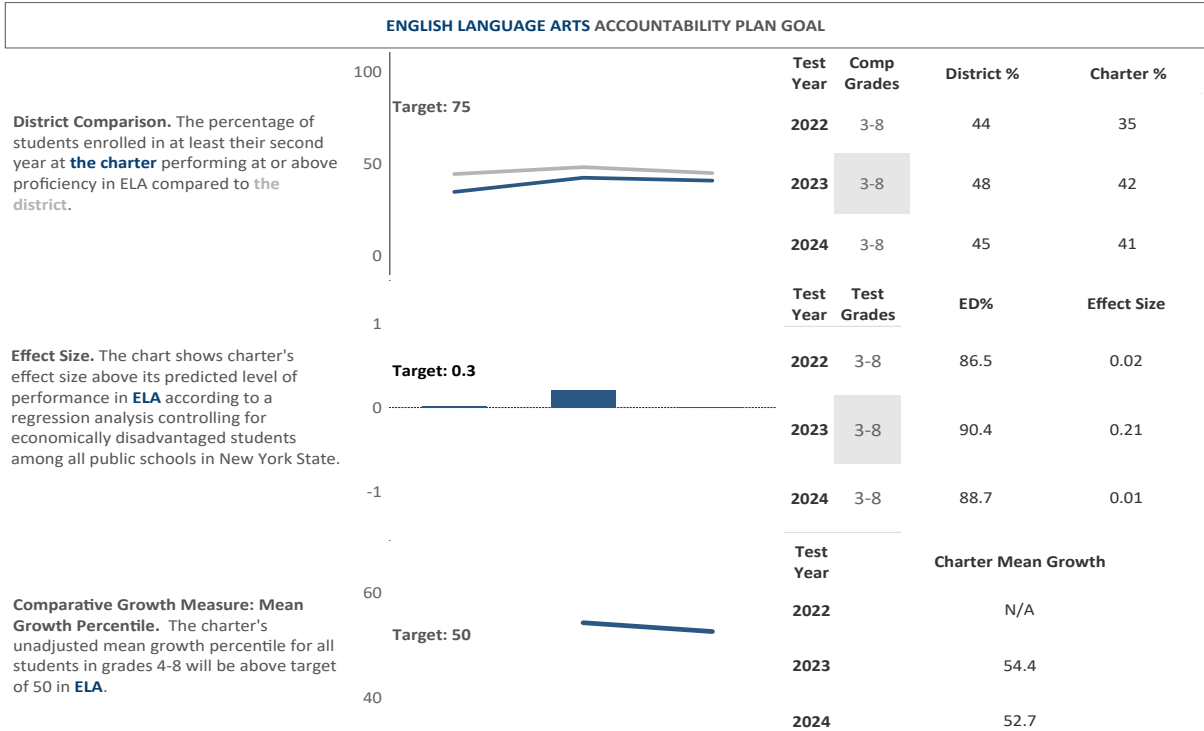
## EAST HARLEM SCHOLARS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL





# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

## EAST HARLEM SCHOLARS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL II



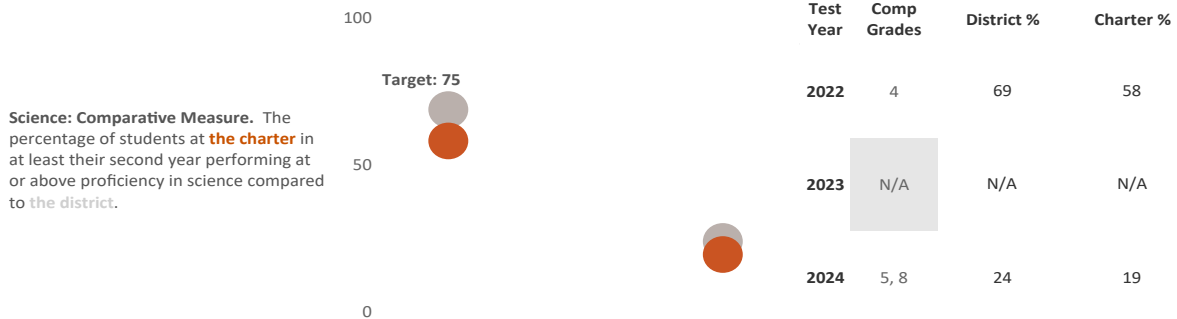




## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

### EAST HARLEM SCHOLARS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL II

#### SCIENCE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL



TESTED PERCENTAGES						
	2022		2023		2024	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
School Tested Number	254	251	270	269	282	279
School Tested %	79.1%	78.2%	91.5%	91.2%	90.7%	89.7%

District Tested %	83.8%	82.8%	77.5%	84.9%	72.4%	80.5%
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#### SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE\*

	2022	2023	2024
Students with Disabilities Tested on State Exam	57	76	70
Charter Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	14.0	18.4	24.3
District Percent Proficient	16.1	20.2	19.0
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam	0	75	59
Charter Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress	5	37.3	40.7

\* 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".

## BENCHMARK SUMMARY

### QUALITATIVE BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The SUNY Renewal Benchmarks, grounded in the body of research from the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University,<sup>4</sup> 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

East Harlem Scholars Schools is developing an assessment system to effectively support teaching and learning. While the schools' assessment battery generates ample data for instructional staff members, the education corporation continues to build its capacity to ensure teachers access these data and make necessary adjustments to pedagogy. Leaders are working to centralize the schools' data systems to ensure actionable data is provided to teachers in a timely fashion. However, teachers across campuses demonstrate varying awareness of where to locate and how to use student data, particularly for special populations. Delays in updating student records and sharing critical information, such as individualized education program ("IEP") status, undermine the school's ability to make data-informed decisions.

The education corporation administers a variety of internally-developed, nationally-normed, and curriculum based assessments that supplement New York State exams. The schools use i-Ready for Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA and mathematics and administer biweekly interim assessments developed by EHTP across all content areas. Teachers regularly implement formative assessments such as "do nows," exit tickets, and quizzes. At the high school level, teachers deliver mid-unit assessments but the organization has not standardized its oversight of these assessments to ensure alignment to state standards and schoolwide expectations.

Leaders provide teachers with access to summative assessment results during network-led professional development sessions following each assessment administration. In contrast to prior years, teachers report improved consistency in receiving assessment data but the timing and expectations for how to respond to these data are unclear. While schoolwide data discussions are held following each assessment cycle, teachers indicate a desire for more explicit expectations for data use and quicker delivery of results to improve the effectiveness of these sessions. The schools do not offer sufficient professional development time devoted to strategies for using assessment data to inform instruction.

Teachers attempt to use assessment data to adjust lesson plans, refine co-teaching strategies, and group students for targeted instruction, though the quality of implementation varies between classrooms. Leaders analyze formative assessment data to identify struggling students, conduct item analysis, and inform broader instructional decisions across the schools. EHTP leaders have started to leverage assessment data to inform their thinking regarding teacher development but have yet to codify a system to use data to evaluate teacher effectiveness or plan formal professional development sessions. While the education corporation has organization-wide goals for data use, the schools have significant opportunities to strengthen the culture of data use. Leaders have yet to hold all staff members accountable to clear expectations for using data to inform instruction. Further, the validity and reliability of the internally-developed assessments remain unclear.

4. 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

### CURRICULUM

East Harlem Scholars Schools establishes some expectations for quality instructional planning but has not implemented systems across the schools to ensure successful implementation. The education corporation continues to modify its curricular framework to support teachers but does not hold them accountable for effectively modifying the materials.

The education corporation's curricular framework is evolving to provide greater structure and consistency across grade levels. In ELA, the education corporation uses Wit & Wisdom in Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> grade and New Visions at the high school program. In mathematics, the schools use Eureka Squared at the elementary level and Illustrative Math in the middle and high school programs. However, teachers do not consistently make the necessary modifications to the curriculum to meet student needs as evidenced by lesson plan review and classroom observations. Teachers report inconsistent ability to differentiate and scaffold the curriculum effectively given the existing planning documents and support systems.

The shared services team and school based leaders are refining the curricular supporting documents including scope and sequence documents, curricular maps, unit plans, lesson templates, and other resources to improve guidance for lesson planning. While these instructional planning tools are accessible to teachers, usage is inconsistent across subjects and schools. Some teachers rely on these tools for lesson execution, but classroom observations reveal inconsistencies between posted objectives and actual instructional activities. Further, lesson plans lack evidence of sufficient differentiation strategies and scaffolding for at-risk subgroups. While formative assessments inform student progress, East Harlem Scholars Schools lacks a systematic approach for integrating assessment insights into curriculum planning.

The schools implement a co-teaching model with lead and inclusion teachers collaborating to plan instruction. However, the schools do not establish clear expectations for co-teaching roles leading to variability in the quality of instructional planning and lesson delivery. The EHTP leadership intends to formalize these expectations ensuring co-teachers share responsibility for small- and whole-group instruction as well as the use of assessment data to inform targeted supports. Currently, leaders do not systematically use student performance data or teacher feedback to make changes to the curricular program or instructional planning protocols. Leaders acknowledge the opportunity to establish a formal process to regularly evaluate curricular alignment and effectiveness.

### PEDAGOGY

High quality instruction is evident in some classrooms across East Harlem Scholars Schools. While leaders emphasize some common elements of effective pedagogical practice, the education corporation has not yet established a shared vision for instructional excellence. As a result, while lessons are generally purposeful and classrooms are focused on academic achievement, teachers inconsistently use effective checks for understanding and struggle to embed higher order thinking into lessons across campuses. The Institute team saw evidence of teacher response to misconceptions with greater consistency at East Harlem Scholars II. While EHTP leaders have begun to establish a system of supports for behavior, leaders don't consistently hold teachers accountable to fidelity of implementation.

## BENCHMARK SUMMARY

In most classrooms, teachers consistently post clear learning objectives, criteria for success, and criteria for thinking to help students understand the purpose of the lesson and what success looks like. While these elements were observed across all campuses, East Harlem Scholars II teachers also included “essential questions,” “focus questions,” “content framing questions,” and “craft questions,” providing an additional layer of instructional clarity and depth.

In a majority of classrooms, teachers sometimes checked for student understanding using a variety of techniques including whole-class non-verbal signals, equity sticks, cold calling, and circulating around the room. However, in several instances, teachers did not meaningfully adjust instruction in response to this real-time data. For example, when half the class signaled confusion or multiple students gave incorrect answers, teachers often continued with the lesson as planned or simply restated the question, rather than re-teaching or addressing misconceptions. Teachers tended to use checks for understanding as procedural or routine tasks, rather than as intentional strategies to assess whether students were truly progressing toward understanding the content.

Teachers continue to struggle with incorporating higher order thinking opportunities into lessons despite the network’s instructional focus on “lesson internalization.” Leaders intentionally shifted away from lesson plan templates emphasizing structure and objectives toward a more reflective planning process asking teachers to consider, “What questions do I need to ask?”, to allow teachers to more deeply internalize and understand what students are expected to achieve. However, this approach has not translated into consistent implementation of higher order questioning across classrooms, indicating a gap between planning expectations and instructional practice.

The network prioritizes a behavior management approach called “notice and response” to empower teachers to effectively manage their classrooms without external support. This strategy encourages teachers to actively observe student behavior and respond appropriately in the moment. However, some teachers do not consistently identify or address off-task or disruptive behaviors, allowing them to persist without intervention. Instead, some teachers rely heavily on narrating positive behaviors as a means to influence student conduct, which is often insufficient in addressing more disruptive or disengaged behavior.

### INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

East Harlem Scholars Schools does not implement a consistent, systematic, or effective coaching program to improve instruction or establish clear expectations for high quality teaching that results in strong academic outcomes. Instructional leaders communicate broad expectations regarding co-teaching, lesson internalization, and the use of criteria for success in lessons. However, leaders have yet to share a common vision of excellence and the education corporation is working to ensure consistency of supports for teachers across schools.

Across the education corporation, leaders do not articulate a unified definition of what high-quality instruction looks like. Leaders at each campus emphasize common elements of strong instruction, such as student engagement, clear learning objectives, and students taking on the cognitive lift. However, leaders across

## BENCHMARK SUMMARY

the programs diverge in how each prioritizes and shares these practices. The organization has not normed expectations with organization-wide goals and priorities to ensure a consistent program across each program. Therefore, leaders prioritize and sometimes have different definitions for the common elements of strong instruction, leading to unclear expectations for high quality teaching practices across the organization.

The absence of a cohesive and actionable vision for high quality instruction across the network contributes to the inconsistent coaching practices observed among building-level instructional leaders. Teachers across the network report wide variation in coaching experiences. These range from a complete lack of coaching to lesson planning support, lesson modeling, student data review, and informal observations with debriefs. This inconsistency highlights the absence of a normed, evidence-based coaching approach aligned to a network-wide, clear definition of high quality instruction.

While the schools provide structured professional development days that offer teachers time to plan curriculum and instruction within and across grade levels, the effectiveness of these sessions remains limited. Following each assessment cycle, leaders schedule schoolwide data discussions. Teachers report the delayed delivery of assessment results and a lack of clear expectations for the outcomes of data days reduce the ability to use data to drive instructional decisions. The education corporation engages with external consultants to build instructional leadership capacity of the schools' assistant principals. Despite this support, leaders have not demonstrated increased effectiveness in improving teaching and learning. During interviews, leaders could not identify student achievement trends by grade level or content area, articulate how data informs coaching goals, or connect student outcomes to specific instructional practices.

### AT-RISK PROGRAM

East Harlem Scholars Schools does not fully meet the educational needs of its at-risk students. While both schools have established procedures for identifying students with disabilities and ELLs, inconsistent information sharing protocols undermine staff members' ability to accurately gauge and respond to the needs of at-risk students. For example, some staff members learned that a student had an IEP weeks into the school year and teachers primarily rely on informal interactions with ELL specialists to obtain instructional strategies or worksheets. As a result of this inconsistent communication, teachers deliver uneven instructional supports and miss opportunities to differentiate instruction based on the most current student information.

Key staff vacancies, long-term leaves, and staffing reorganization impact the ability of East Harlem Scholars Schools to execute at-risk programming effectively. Teacher vacancies and long-term leaves of general education and inclusive learning teachers affect the delivery of at-risk services such as integrated co-teaching ("ICT") and special education teacher support services ("SETSS") across the education corporation. In Kindergarten – 4<sup>th</sup> grade, the schools employ a designated standalone SETSS provider. While in 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade, inclusive learning teachers provide SETSS in addition to serving as the ICT special education teacher, creating schedule challenges for service delivery. The schools have attempted to address staffing challenges through reassignment of resident teachers and inclusive learning teachers and the use of substitute teachers. At one campus, a substitute fills a long-term vacancy for the Kindergarten – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ELL specialist.



## BENCHMARK SUMMARY

The education corporation does not deliver sufficient professional development for serving at-risk populations. The schools do not provide targeted or ongoing training for general education or at-risk program teachers. East Harlem Scholar Schools' professional learning communities ("PLCs") focus on cultural topics and network-wide initiatives rather than the instructional needs of specific student groups. Leaders do not differentiate PLCs by role or student population needs. Teachers receive a calendar of external professional opportunities such as from the Collaborative for Inclusive Education, but participation is self-directed and not aligned with schoolwide goals.

The education corporation has not yet implemented a comprehensive multi-tiered system of supports ("MTSS") and lacks a cohesive, effective Response to Intervention ("RTI") model where students receive interventions at each tier for an established period of observation before escalation to the special education evaluation. Instructional leaders prioritize strengthening tier 1 instruction, but tier 2 and tier 3 interventions are undefined and inconsistently applied across campuses. Although leaders acknowledge the need to define tier 2 and tier 3 supports in the future, the absence of a present structure limits the schools' capacity to identify and address the needs of students struggling academically. At the time of the visit, the schools lacked a formal process to identify student needs and relied on individual staff members reporting concerns to managers. While the schools use programs such as i-Ready to track student progress during dedicated intervention blocks, the tracking tools are not integrated into a clear system for delivering targeted support. During intervention block observations, the visit team observed limited adult engagement and minimal accountability for student participation in tasks.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

East Harlem Scholars Schools' organization does not work effectively to support the delivery of a high quality academic program at the schools. Following a period of significant leadership and staff member turnover, the schools' shared services team is in early phases of establishing the critical systems and structures necessary to run the schools effectively. However, at the time of the site visit, the nascent systems remained inconsistently implemented and overly reliant on individual staff member initiative rather than sustainable organizational processes. Leadership transitions across the education corporation, including several abrupt changes in roles and responsibilities, have resulted in unclear roles, responsibilities, and lines of accountability for some staff members.

In alignment with the EHTP leadership team's priority of codifying common culture norms, East Harlem Scholars Schools has established a discipline system with a bank of strategies teachers are beginning to implement. Instructional leaders have updated the code of conduct across campuses, created a matrix of teacher responses to different tiers of behavior, and increased professional development focus on restorative conversations. The Institute team observed student behavior largely corroborating the schools' efforts. In particular, across lesson observations at East Harlem Scholars II, teachers implemented the school's "Hawk Points" reinforcement system consistently to promote positive student behavior. However, while the Institute team observed student behavior incidents that remained largely low-level in severity, the ultimate efficacy of the systems has yet to be determined. Further, some teachers inconsistently applied the discipline policies across classrooms. For example, in some high school classrooms, students freely used cell phones or head phones during instructional time.

## BENCHMARK SUMMARY

East Harlem Scholars Schools has increased its efforts to maintain adequate enrollment and retain students amid citywide enrollment challenges. The education corporation has centralized some of its enrollment and family engagement functions to coordinate efforts across campuses. The shared services team coordinates with school based staff members to proactively identify and support families considering withdrawal. Before families finalize a decision to leave, school leaders meet with them directly to solicit feedback and address concerns. In addition to new retention strategies, the education corporation has allocated more resources to advertising and community outreach resulting in an increased number of applications compared to the prior year. EHTP leaders and the board attribute the increase in applications at the high school level partially to the stability offered through the acquisition of the high school program's permanent facility following multiple years of location changes. In contrast, the East Harlem Scholars II campus continues to face enrollment challenges, particularly in lower elementary grades. In response, the school launched a targeted social media campaign highlighting the early childhood program.

### BOARD OVERSIGHT & GOVERNANCE

East Harlem Scholars Schools' board is improving its oversight and governance of both charters. Board members are reflective on the current areas of growth for the schools and communicate a sense of urgency about satisfying renewal conditions and meeting Accountability Plan goals. The board is composed of trustees with a variety of backgrounds sufficient to oversee the education corporation, and the board specifically added parents and caregivers of current students to function as an additional source of information about quality of programming on the ground.

In prior years, the board had set priorities primarily aligned to improving the safety, well-being, and social emotional health of students, families, and staff members. While these priorities were merited given the disruptions caused by COVID-19, the board has acknowledged the need to shift the scope of its priorities to academic programming and student enrollment. At the time of the visit, the board articulated clear priorities around increasing student performance and improving recruitment concomitantly and had begun to allocate resources to meeting goals aligned to those priorities. The board articulates a clear theory of action to increase student performance, improve the schools' reputations among families looking for different educational options, increase student enrollment, and ensure long term financial stability of the organization. In service of meeting its goals, the board is working closely with EHTP leadership team to codify a strategic plan.

In contrast to previous years, the board has begun requesting more information with greater frequency from the leadership team. While it had previously relied primarily on the CEO to provide high level updates and a summative report, the board has evolved its practices to receive more granular, real time data that include a variety of student achievement metrics as well as staff member survey results. The board is thoughtful about the need to capture a frank, comprehensive picture about the academic program at both schools and requests reports from multiple members of the leadership team rather than just the CEO. As a result, board members can speak with some greater specificity about the status of the schools compared to previous Institute site visits.

East Harlem Scholars Schools

# Ax

## APPENDICES

PAGES Ax 1-6

## EAST HARLEM SCHOLARS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES<sup>1</sup>

CHAIR	TRUSTEES
William D. Rahm	Joan Solotar
VICE CHAIR	Iris Chen
Hope Knight	David Wildermuth
TREASURER	Saskia Levy Thompson
Brian Gavin	Carolyn Quintana
SECRETARY	
Carlos Morales	

## EAST HARLEM SCHOLARS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL – SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT <sup>2</sup>	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2020-21	769	763	99%	K-10
2021-22	884	785	89%	K-11
2022-23	1,034	764	74%	K-12
2023-24	1,042	844	81%	K-12
2024-25	1,077	866	80%	K-12

## EAST HARLEM SCHOLARS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL II – SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT <sup>2</sup>	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2020-21	520	494	95%	K-8
2021-22	522	442	85%	K-8
2022-23	522	390	75%	K-8
2023-24	526	393	75%	K-8
2024-25	526	331	63%	K-8

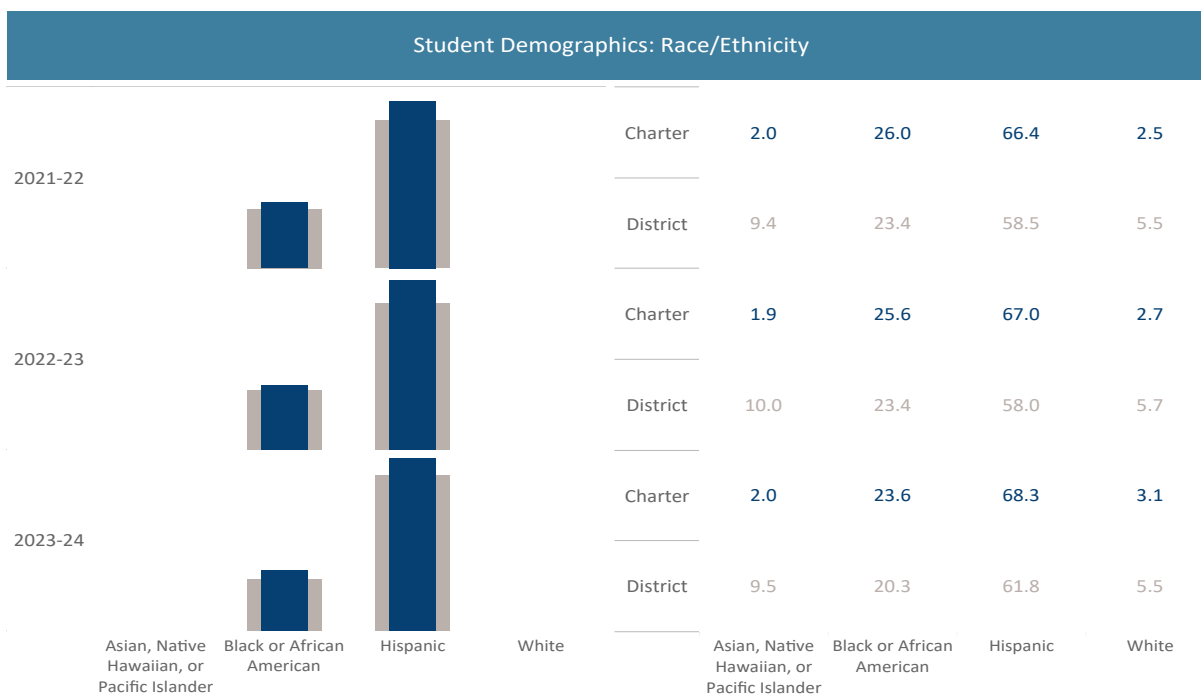
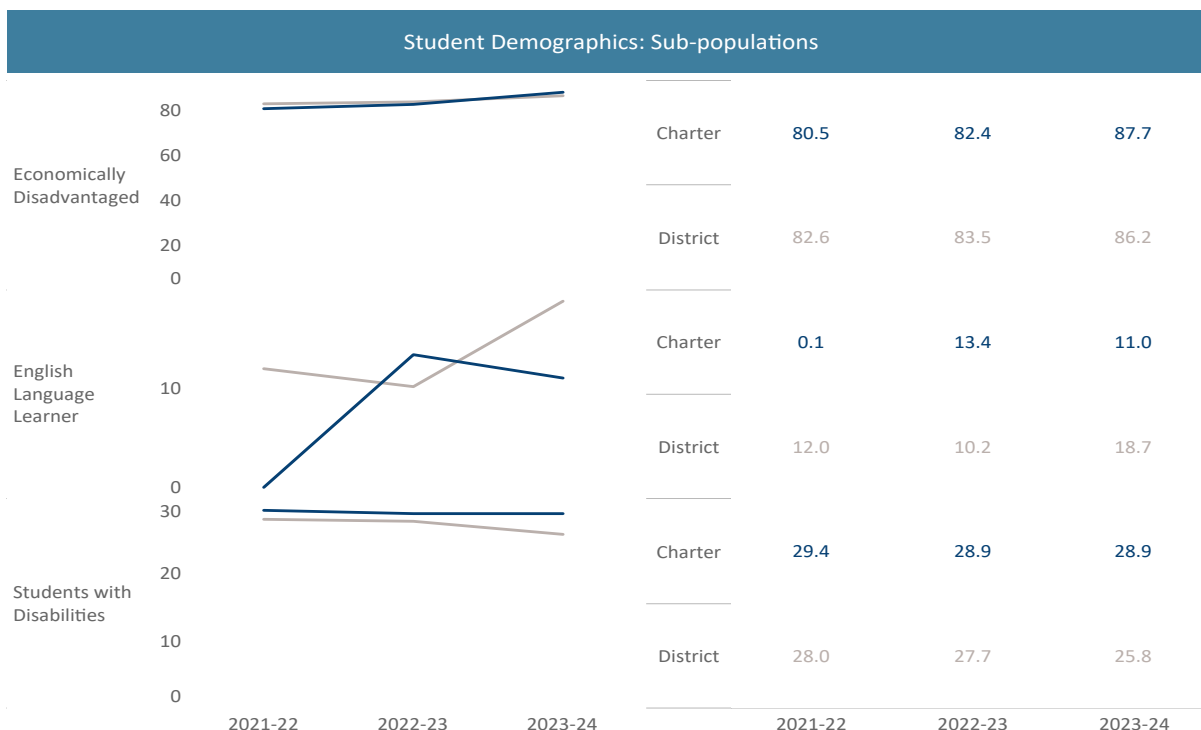
1. Source: The Institute's board records at the time of the visit.

2. Source: Institute's Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)



## East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School

Manhattan CSD 4

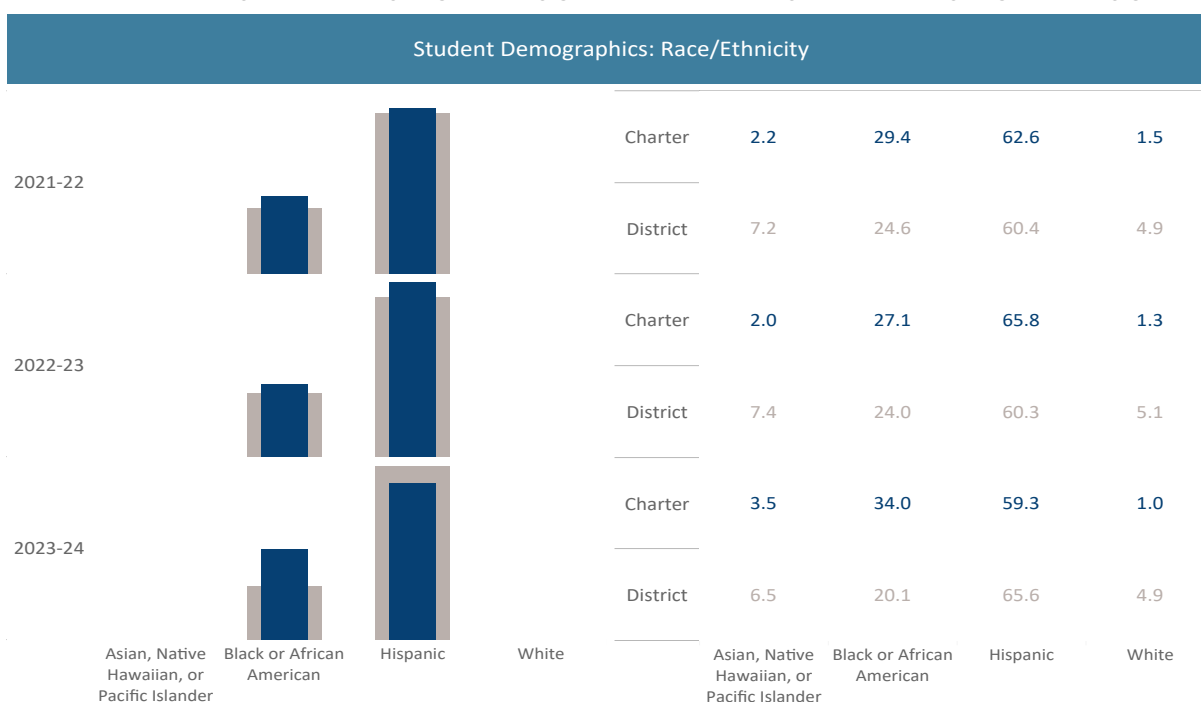
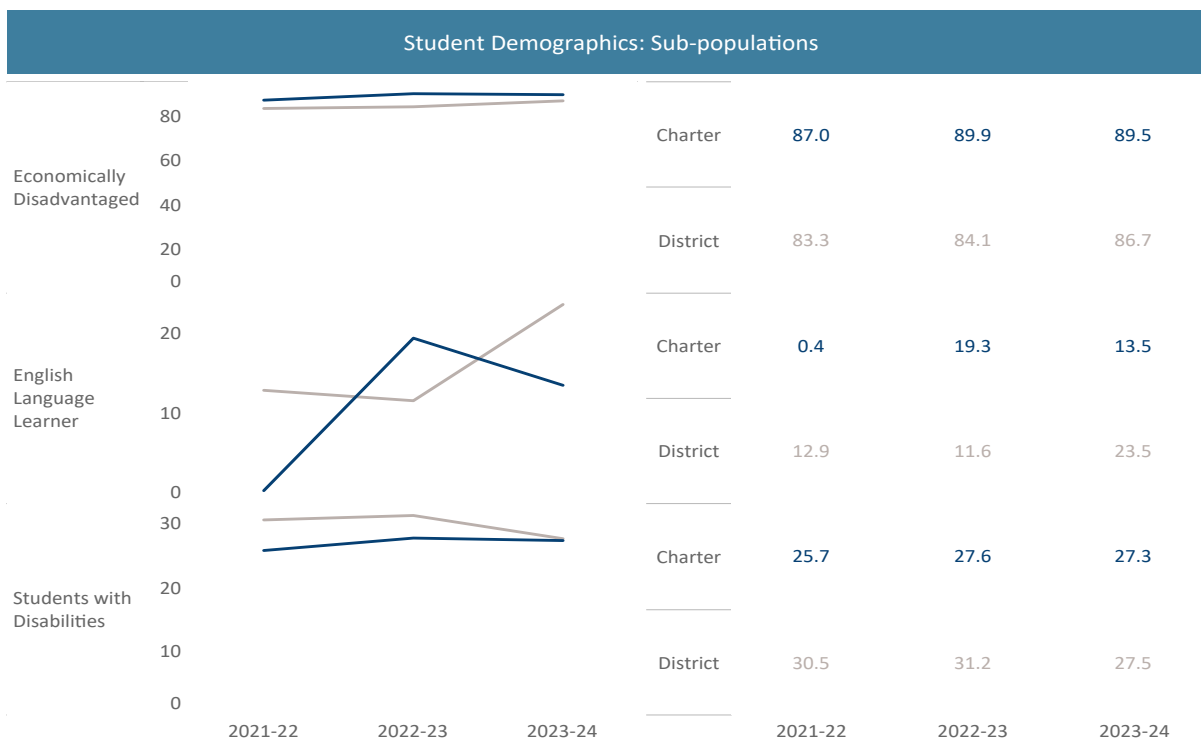


Data reported in these charts reflect BEDS day enrollment counts as reported by the NYSED.



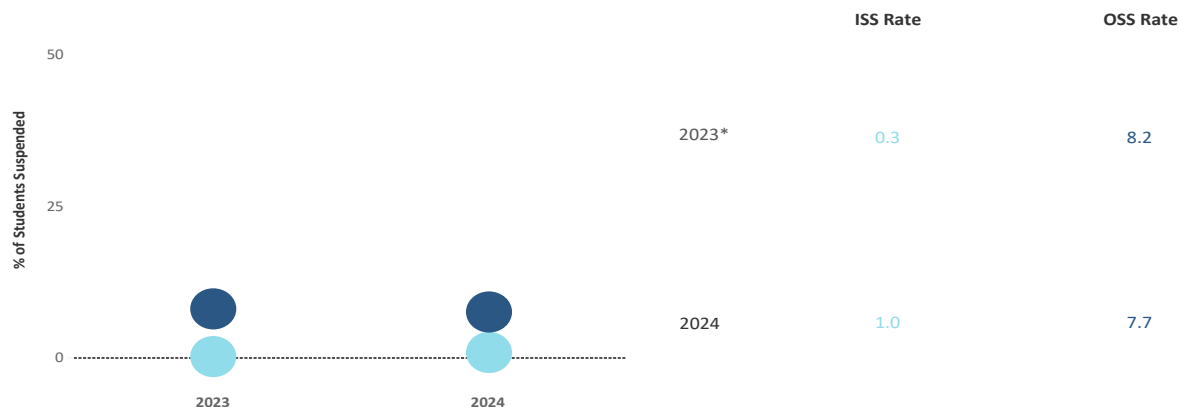
## East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School II

Manhattan CSD 4



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

### East Harlem Scholars Academy 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
2021-22	92.1	
2022-23	81.0	0
2023-24	81.7	

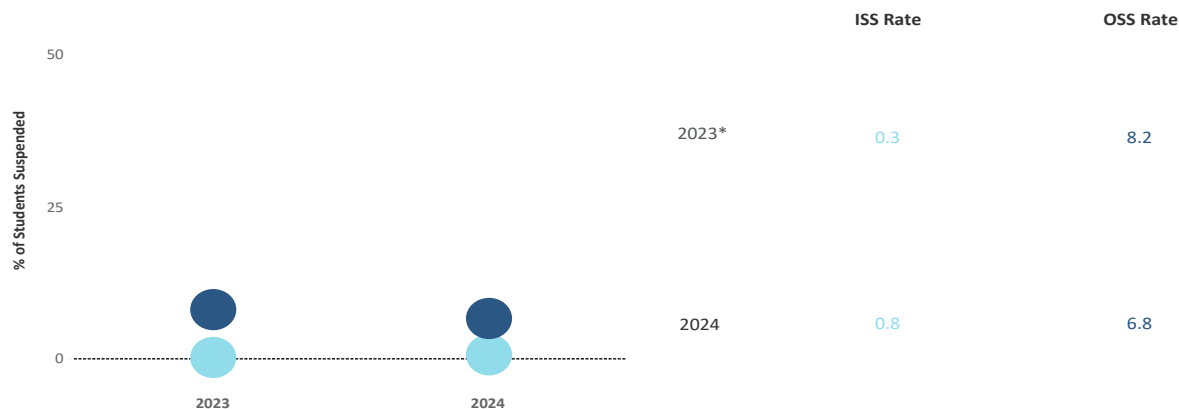
### East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2023-24

		Target	Charter
enrollment	economically disadvantaged	82.8	87.7
	English language learners	13.2	11.0
	students with disabilities	25.3	28.9
retention	economically disadvantaged	89.2	82.7
	English language learners	92.5	90.9
	students with disabilities	87.9	83.6

\*The 2022-23 expulsion, in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspension rates for 2022-23 reflect aggregate data for the entire education corporation

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.

## East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School II



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
2021-22	81.1		
2022-23	79.4	0	0
2023-24	82.5		

### East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School II's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2023-24

		Target	Charter
enrollment	economically disadvantaged	82.8	89.5
	English language learners	13.8	13.5
	students with disabilities	27.7	27.3
retention	economically disadvantaged	86.8	82.6
	English language learners	91.5	79.7
	students with disabilities	86.8	82.4

\*The 2022-23 expulsion, in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspension rates for 2022-23 reflect aggregate data for the entire education corporation.

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
2011-12	East Harlem Scholars - First Year Visit	April 19, 2012
2013-14	East Harlem Scholars - Evaluation Visit	December 11, 2013
2015-16	East Harlem Scholars - Initial Renewal	September 28 - 30, 2015
2017-18	East Harlem Scholars II - Initial Renewal	November 6-7, 2017
2019-20	East Harlem Scholars - Subsequent Renewal Visit	March 4-5, 2020
2022-23	East Harlem Scholars - Renewal Review; East Harlem Scholars II - Renewal Review	October 18-21, 2022
2023-24	East Harlem Scholars - Evaluation	April 3, 2024
2024-25	East Harlem Scholars - Evaluation Visit East Harlem Scholars II - Evaluation Visit	March 25-27, 2025

## CONDUCT OF THE VISIT

DATE(S) OF REVIEW	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
March 25 - 27, 2025	Sinnjinn Bucknell	Managing Director for Accountability
	Kathleen Haywood	School Evaluator
	Vashaunta Harris	External Consultant
	Kelli Peterson	External Consultant

## EAST HARLEM SCHOLARS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL– CHARTER CYCLE CONTEXT

CHARTER TERM	TERM YEAR	ANTICIPATED RENEWAL VISIT
Fourth	Second year of a five year charter term	Fall 2027

## EAST HARLEM SCHOLARS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL II – CHARTER CYCLE CONTEXT

CHARTER TERM	TERM YEAR	ANTICIPATED RENEWAL VISIT
Third	Second year of a five year charter term	Fall 2027

