

THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT
SISULU-WALKER CHARTER SCHOOL
OF HARLEM*

*REPORT DATE: JANUARY 14, 2026
VISIT DATE: OCTOBER 2, 2025*



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

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SCHOOL BACKGROUND

SISULU-WALKER CHARTER SCHOOL OF HARLEM

71-111 Convent Avenue, New York, 10027 | Grades: K-5 | Manhattan Community School District (“CSD”) 5



MISSION

The mission of the school is to prepare K-5 students living in and around Central Harlem for matriculation to outstanding public, private and parochial middle and high schools by nurturing their intellectual, emotional, artistic and social development.

SISULU-WALKER CHARTER SCHOOL OF HARLEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES¹

CHAIR

Martez Moore

VICE CHAIR

Minnie Goka

TRUSTEES

Erika Ewing

Rita Hanes

Joe Drayton

CURRENT CHARTER INFORMATION

Year Opened: 1999

Serves: Kindergarten – 5th

Chartered Enrollment: 200

Charter Expires on: August 9, 2026

FUTURE CHARTER INFORMATION

Serves: Kindergarten – 8th

Chartered Enrollment: 351

Charter Expiration: July 31, 2031

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Extended block of instruction in English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics using the workshop model	+
Research-proven, standards-based curricular programs in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies	+
Comprehensive and ongoing staff member development in ELA and mathematics curricula implementation and general classroom strategies	+
Civics education, life skills, and service learning projects to instill the principles of public service and character strategies	+
Developing students’ knowledge of the arts through excellent staff members in music and visual arts	+

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

“+” : This indicator is generally present.

“-” : This indicator is generally not present.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FULL-TERM RENEWAL

The SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) recommends the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem (“Sisulu-Walker”) for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten – 8th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal with a projected total enrollment of 351 students. The Institute makes this recommendation as Sisulu-Walker meets the requirements for renewal set forth in the Policies for Renewal of Not-For-Profit Charter School Education Corporations and Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the “SUNY Renewal Policies”).²

REVISION REQUEST

The Institute recommends the SUNY Trustees approve Sisulu-Walker’s revision request to expand to serve students in 6th – 8th grade. The school presents a clear plan for expanding its current program to serve students in a high quality middle school program. Leaders outline a clear projected budget and staffing plan that aligns with expanding grades and growing enrollment starting with 6th grade in 2026-27. The school did its due diligence to understand the needs of the community and presents a coherent plan to retain 5th grade students into its middle school program, recruit additional 6th grade students, and begin enrolling another section of Kindergarten. Leaders will establish a curriculum that aligns with Sisulu-Walker’s current elementary program. The school will employ the same strategies it has used in its long history to create a high quality middle school program with similar and more content-specific supports. The current facility has the capacity to serve the school’s growth and expansion plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sisulu-Walker continues to meet the SUNY Renewal Benchmarks through strong instructional quality, organizational stability, and mission alignment. Over the charter term, the school has maintained consistent academic performance, effective teaching, and stable leadership. The leadership team is deeply committed to its mission of preparing Central Harlem students for rigorous middle and high school programs.

During the renewal visit, the Institute observed consistent use of standards-aligned curricula, clear lesson structures, and frequent checks for understanding. Teachers effectively implement the school’s literacy and mathematics workshop models with fidelity, emphasizing student engagement, foundational skills, and application of learning. The school’s diagnostic assessments and data cycles inform instructional grouping, responsive reteach, and targeted supports. Leaders and teachers use these data cycles purposefully to drive instructional decisions, professional learning priorities, and student support planning. The recent introduction of University of Florida Literacy Institute (“UFLI”) Foundations curriculum strengthens early literacy instruction with systemic phonics instruction and illustrates the school’s responsiveness to student needs.

Sisulu-Walker’s organizational capacity underpins the strength of its academic program. The long-tenured leadership team provides clear direction and cultivates a professional culture grounded in collaboration, trust, and accountability. High teacher retention ensures instructional coherence and sustained pedagogical practices across classrooms. The school’s successful transition to a new facility during the charter term further illustrates the

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

strength of its operational systems and leadership. Leaders navigated the move with intentional planning and strong community engagement, ensuring continuity of culture and instruction in the new facility. Operational systems including fiscal oversight, compliance, and human resources function effectively and allow leaders to focus on teaching and learning. The board maintains fiscal stability of the school through prudent financial management and consistent oversight across charter terms.

FINDINGS & INFORMATION

Is the school an academic success?

Sisulu-Walker is an academic success, having met its Accountability Plan goals in both ELA and mathematics. Throughout the charter term, the school maintained a consistent record of high student achievement and growth. In ELA, the school's record of achievement was particularly strong, with results that exceeded the targets for all available comparative and growth measures in every year. These outcomes corroborate Sisulu-Walker's effective instructional practices, targeted interventions, and clearly-communicated high expectations for all students. Sisulu-Walker's track record of success is indicative of its capacity to sustain rigorous teaching and increase student achievement over time. The school further demonstrates success in the following ways:

- In ELA, Sisulu-Walker posted high achievement and growth over the term. Notably, in 2024-25, the school increased its overall proficiency rate for all tested students by 19 percentage points from the previous year.
- In mathematics, the school's tested students enrolled in at least their second year posted proficiency rates that exceeded the district in every year of the term by at least four percentage points. Sisulu-Walker also performed higher than expected each year in comparison to demographically similar schools across the state.
- Over the charter term, the school has demonstrated high achievement for its at-risk student population, including students with disabilities. From 2021-22 through 2024-25, the school's students with disabilities outperformed the district's results in both ELA and mathematics. Sisulu-Walker has nearly closed the ELA achievement gap between its overall student population and its population of students with disabilities. In 2024-25, 67% students with disabilities scored at or above proficiency, and 70% of all tested students scored at or above proficiency.

Is the school an effective, viable organization?

Sisulu-Walker is an effective, viable organization, and its board provides consistent strategic oversight. During the charter term, the school maintained strong academic leadership under a long-tenured principal who has led the school for more than a decade. The board has remained stable with several long-serving trustees including one founding member. The board effectively supports Sisulu-Walker's mission to prepare students in Central Harlem for success in middle and high school through a nurturing, academically rigorous environment. The school maintains a strong culture of family and community partnership that contributes to its consistent success with families describing the school as a steady anchor through challenges such as relocation and the pandemic.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Is the school fiscally sound?³

Sisulu-Walker is fiscally adequate based on the Institute’s review of the renewal documentation. The education corporation established robust budgeting processes that account for all school departments to produce accurate revenue and expense projections. The finance team meets with the board monthly to present an enrollment report and discuss results. The education corporation maintained adequate enrollment throughout the current charter term. The 2024-25 annual financial audit did not present any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. Sisulu-Walker maintains a separate bank account with the established amounts for dissolution as required by the charter agreement.

Sisulu-Walker demonstrated adequate financial performance during the current charter term, with net assets of \$0.5 million and 2.4 months of cash on hand as of the 2024-25 school year. Sisulu-Walker experienced minor deficits across each of the five years of the charter term. The school absorbed the financial pressures of the facility move and added transportation costs while maintaining overall fiscal stability. During fiscal renewal discussions, the education corporation attributed its major expenses to staffing, transportation, and consulting. Despite the deficits incurred during the previous charter term, the Institute finds Sisulu-Walker’s current fiscal position to be adequate.

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

Sisulu-Walker’s plans for the future are reasonable, feasible, and achievable. If approved, the school’s expansion and growth plan will allow the school to serve middle school students and increase its elementary enrollment. The school’s expansion plan allows current leaders to maintain the same core instructional program that has resulted in its current success. The school’s record of academic achievement, leadership stability, and operational health position it well to meet the demands of growth while continuing to deliver strong outcomes for Harlem students.

The future budget provided in the renewal documentation contains reasonable revenue and expense projections for the proposed charter term, given the history of the education corporation. The Institute reviewed Sisulu-Walker’s proposal for expansion and believes its fiscal plan is both reasonable and achievable given the documentation provided. Sisulu-Walker currently uses a New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”) non-co-located space and plans to remain in its current facility as it has sufficient space to accommodate increased enrollment.

³. The U.S. Department of Education has established fiscal criteria for certain ratios or information with high – medium – low categories, represented in the table as blue – gray – orange. The categories generally correspond to levels of fiscal risk, but must be viewed in the context of each education corporation and the general type or category of school.

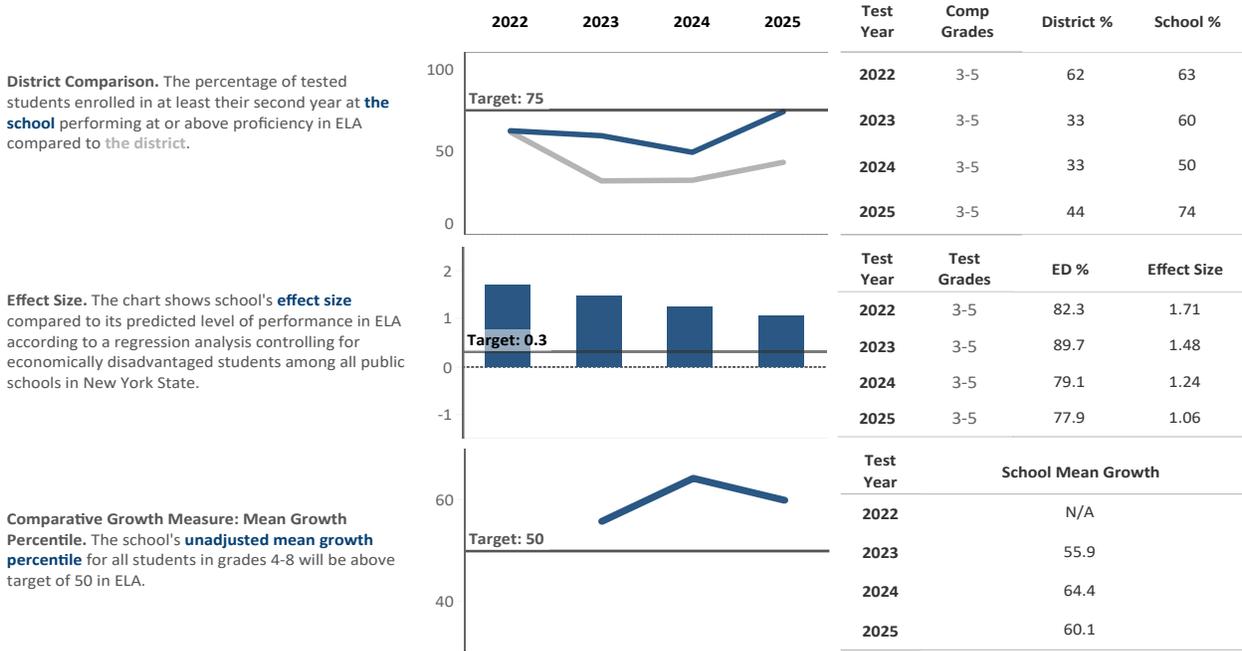


ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

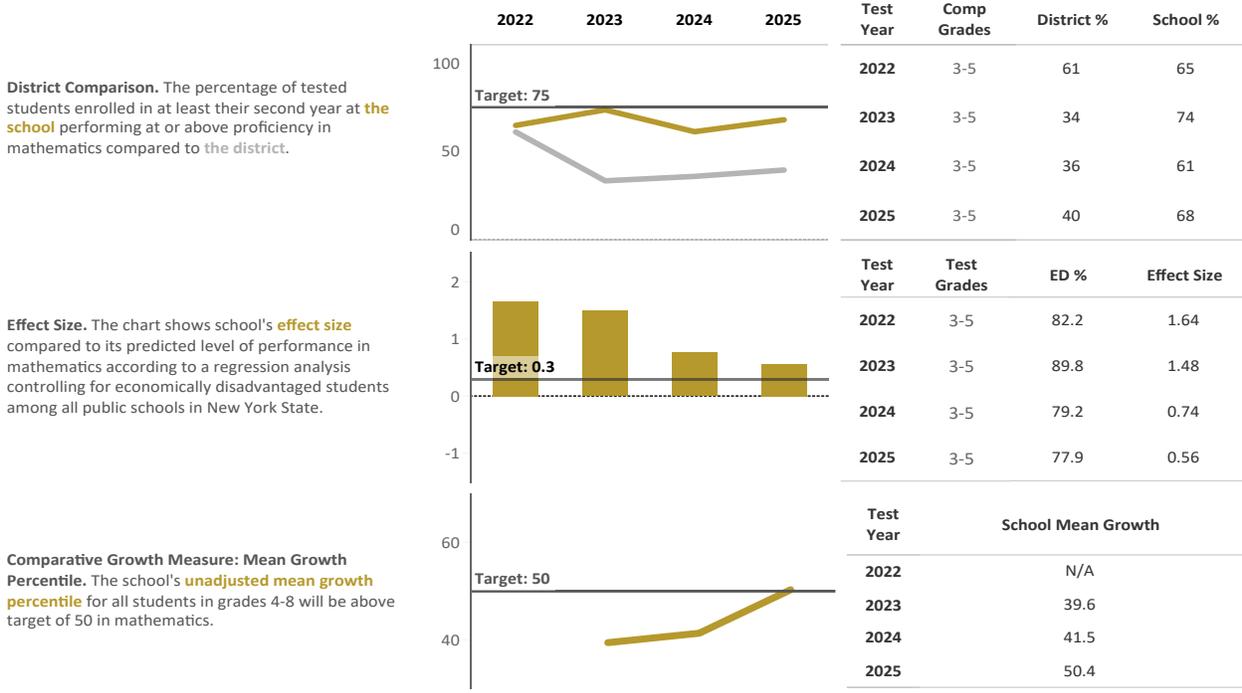
SISULU-WALKER CHARTER SCHOOL OF HARLEM

Manhattan CSD 5*

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL



MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL



*The district of comparison for Sisulu-Walker was Manhattan CSD 3 in 2021-22, and Manhattan CSD 5 in 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25.

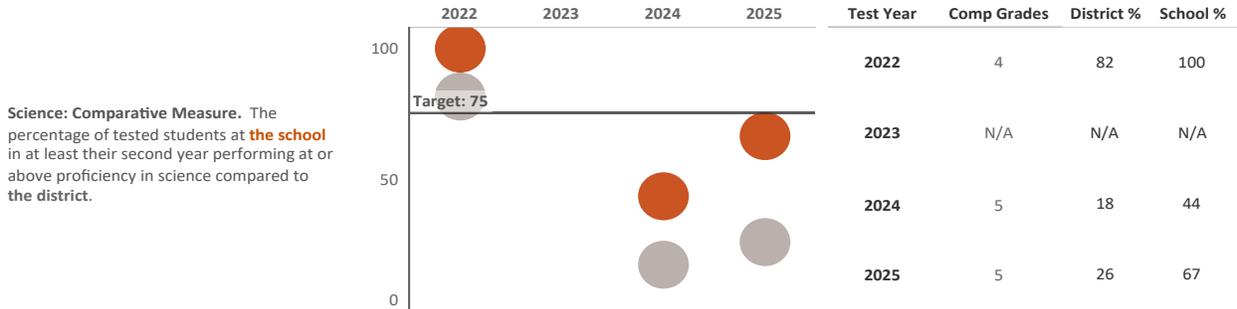


ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

SISULU-WALKER CHARTER SCHOOL OF HARLEM

Manhattan CSD 5**

SCIENCE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL



Science: Comparative Measure. The percentage of tested students at the school in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in science compared to the district.

TESTED PERCENTAGES

	2022		2023		2024		2025	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
School Tested Number (N)	59	61	59	61	68	67	64	64
School Tested %	72.0	75.3	78.7	81.3	85.0	83.8	80.0	80.0
District Tested %	91.9	92.4	80.3	81.0	74.3	79.5	74.8	78.6

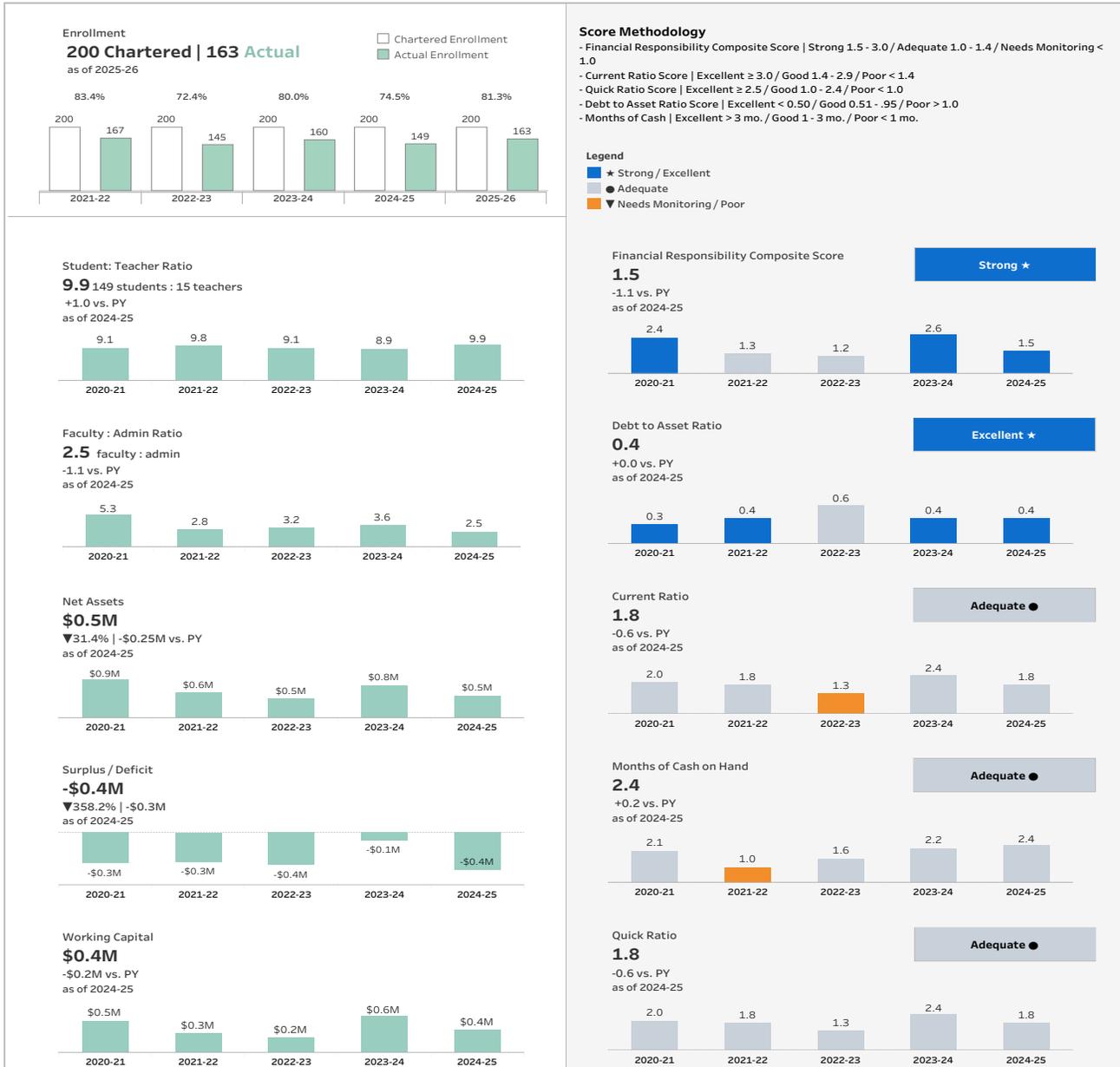
PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS*

	2022		2023		2024		2025	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
Students with Disabilities Tested on State Exam (N)	9	9	10	10	9	10	15	16
School % Proficient on Exam	55.6	55.6	50.0	50.0	44.4	40.0	66.7	43.8
District % Proficient	26.1	28.3	17.0	18.8	17.1	23.1	24.1	22.5

	2022	2023	2024	2025
	Tested on NYSESLAT Exam (N)	5	5	6
School % Making Progress	s	s	0.0	42.9

*Academic outcome data describing the performance of students with disabilities and English language learners ("ELLs") are not tied to separate goals in the charter school's formal Accountability Plan. The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test ("NYSESLAT") is a standardized New York State assessment given annually to students classified as ELLs. Student scores are categorized into five proficiency levels: Entering, Emerging, Transitioning, Expanding, and Commanding (the highest proficiency level). For elementary and middle school students, "Making Progress" is defined as: testing at the Commanding level, or moving up at least one proficiency level from the prior year, or testing at the Expanding level and testing proficient on the NYS ELA exam in that same year. For high school students, "Making Progress" is defined as: testing at the Commanding level, or moving up at least one proficiency level from the prior year. To comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") regulations on reporting education outcome data, the Institute does not report assessment results for groups containing five or fewer students, and indicates such instances with an "s".
**The district of comparison for Sisulu-Walker was Manhattan CSD 3 in 2021-22, and Manhattan CSD 5 in 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25.

SISULU-WALKER CHARTER SCHOOL OF HARLEM



Schools report actual enrollment on a quarterly basis to the Institute, and the actual enrollment for 2025-26 reflects the most recently submitted quarterly submission.

COMPLIANCE REPORTING



HAS THE SCHOOL SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLIED WITH APPLICABLE LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS, AND PROVISIONS OF ITS CHARTER?

The education corporation substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations, and provisions of its charter. During the current charter term, the education corporation demonstrates a clear record of compliance with the terms of its charter including the timely submission of required reporting to the Institute.

ELL Program

At the time of the renewal visit, the Institute noted compliance issues with the ELL program. However, the Institute has worked with the school to correct the issues and will continue to monitor the school's compliance over the next charter term.

Teacher Certification

The Act allows charters to hire up to 15 uncertified lead teachers contingent upon those teachers meeting certain requirements including: two years of Teach for America experience; three years of teaching experience; status as a higher education professor; exceptional experience in a subject; or, teaching science, technology, engineering, and mathematics ("STEM") or career and technical education courses.

To recruit certified teachers, Sisulu-Walker leverages relationships with the City College of New York and Columbia University to post job openings on their internal job boards and share them through alumni networks. The school also requires uncertified teachers to make progress toward certification within five years of hire and to meet established performance standards.

At Sisulu-Walker, three out of the 12 teachers are uncertified, which is within the allowable limit under the Act. All three uncertified teachers meet the additional qualifications under the Act.

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION & ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

To report on parent satisfaction with the school’s program, the Institute used satisfaction survey data, information gathered from a focus group of parents representing a cross section of students, and data regarding persistence in enrollment.

Parent Survey Data

The Institute compiled data from the NYCDOE’s annual family survey. The NYCDOE conducts an annual survey to gauge satisfaction with schools’ programs. In 2024-25, 44% of families responded to the survey. Of those respondents, 95% indicated satisfaction with the school. The Institute recognizes that the low response rate may not be representative of the whole community.

Parent Focus Group

The Institute asks all schools facing renewal to convene a representative set of parents for a focus group discussion. A representative set includes parents of students in attendance at the school for multiple years, students new to the school, students receiving general education services, students with disabilities, and ELLs.

The 13 parents and caretakers in attendance at the focus group indicated high levels of satisfaction with Sisulu-Walker. School staff members regularly communicate with parents and caretakers through a variety of methods, including personalized communication. Parents report that students feel safe, supported, and able to bring their authentic selves to school each day. Parents and families appreciate the school’s focus on building community while implementing consistent security systems and protocols. Families report that leaders are visible and accessible, and they value the frequent opportunities to communicate with the school and participate in classroom activities and school events.

Public Comments

In accordance with the Act, the Institute notified the district in which the charter school is located regarding the school’s Application for Charter Renewal. The full text of any written comments received from the district appears below, which also includes a summary of any public comments.

The NYCDOE held its required hearing on the renewal application for Sisulu-Walker on December 16, 2025. The school leader described the school’s more than 25 year history as New York State’s first charter school and emphasized its focus on academic rigor, strong relationships, and consistent family engagement. The school leader discussed the school’s expansion request and shared that the proposed growth is intentionally gradual to ensure continuity, stability, and appropriate student supports. The proposed middle school program would build on the existing elementary school program and would gradually increase student independence over time.

Enrollment and Retention

Sisulu-Walker makes good faith efforts to meet its enrollment and retention targets. The school comes close to meeting the enrollment targets for students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students. The school continues to reflect on ways to increase its ELL enrollment.

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION & ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

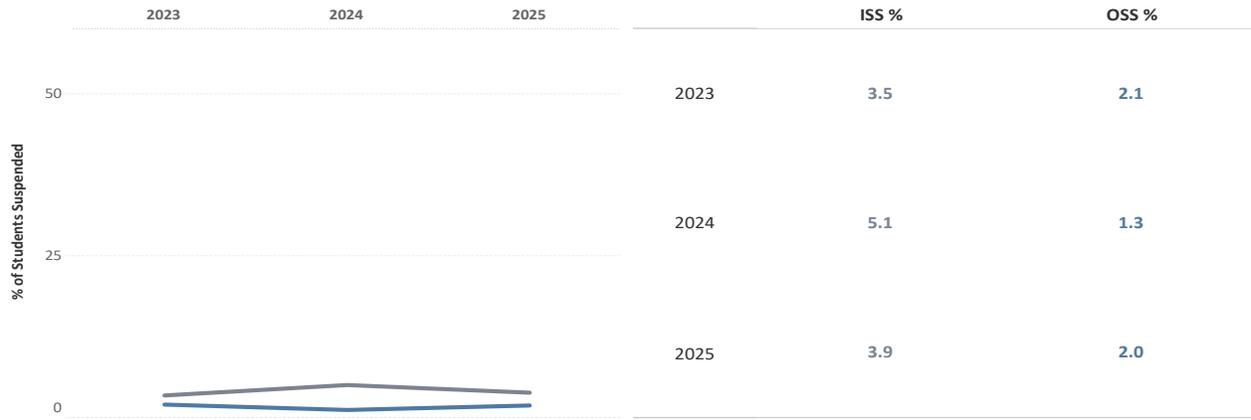
Persistence in Enrollment

An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2024-25, 80% of Sisulu-Walker students returned from the previous year. Student persistence data from previous years of the charter term is available in the student demographics section of the report.

The Institute derived the statistical information on persistence in enrollment from its database. No comparative data from the NYCDOE or the New York State Education Department ("NYSED") is available to the Institute to provide either district or statewide context.

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION & ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem



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 school each year

Year	2023	2024	2025
Expulsions	0	0	0

Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2024-25

		Target %	School %
Enrollment	Economically Disadvantaged	87.6	84.9
	English Language Learners	12.3	6.6
	Students with Disabilities	24.6	24.3
Retention	Economically Disadvantaged	88.5	78.8
	English Language Learners	90.3	60.0
	Students with Disabilities	87.3	72.7

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.

Sisulu-Walker

Ax

APPENDICES

PAGES Ax 1-11

SO^A SCHOOL OVERVIEW	BS^B BENCHMARK SUMMARY	SD^C STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS	FB^D FISCAL BENCHMARKS
PAGE Ax 1	PAGE Ax 2	PAGE Ax 8	PAGE Ax 9

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT ¹	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2021-22	200	167	84%	K-5
2022-23	200	145	73%	K-5
2023-24	200	160	80%	K-5
2024-25	200	149	75%	K-5
2025-26	200	163	83%	K-5

SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY

SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
1999-00	First Year Visit	June 1, 2000
2000-01	Evaluation Visit	May 9, 2001
2001-02	Evaluation Visit	May 28 – 29, 2002
2003-04	Initial Renewal	September 30 – October 2, 2003
2005-06	Subsequent Renewal	November 30, 2005
2008-09	Evaluation Visit	May 5, 2009
2010-11	Subsequent Renewal	November 4, 2010
2015-16	Subsequent Renewal	November 4 – 5, 2015
2020-21	Subsequent Renewal	October 26 – 30, 2020
2025-26	Subsequent Renewal	October 2, 2025

CONDUCT OF THE RENEWAL REVIEW

DATE(S) OF REVIEW	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
October 2, 2025	Desree Cabrall-Njenga	School Evaluator
	Dr. Kathleen Haywood	School Evaluator
	Sinnjinn Bucknell	Managing Director of Accountability
	Alexa Feldman	Director of Performance and Systems Analysis

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

BENCHMARK SUMMARY

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Over its sixth charter term, Sisulu-Walker demonstrated high academic achievement and met its key academic Accountability Plan goals in English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics. Notably, the school exceeded the targets for all required comparative and growth measures in ELA in each year of the term. The school also came close to meeting its science goal and met its Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”) goal during the term.

In ELA, Sisulu-Walker posted a consistent record of high absolute, comparative, and growth results over the term. From 2021-22 through 2024-25, the school’s tested students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficiency on the state’s ELA exam at rates that surpassed the district each year. In comparison to schools across the state enrolling similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students, Sisulu-Walker performed higher than expected to a large degree in ELA in each year. In all years of the term with growth data suitable for analysis, Sisulu-Walker posted a mean growth percentile exceeding the target of 50.

Sisulu-Walker also met its mathematics goal over the term. The school exceeded the targets for its comparative measures in each year from 2021-22 through 2024-25. During those years, the school’s tested students enrolled in at least their second year posted proficiency rates on the state’s mathematics exam that exceeded the district. In comparison to demographically similar schools across New York State, Sisulu-Walker performed higher than expected in mathematics each year. Although the school posted mean growth percentiles under the target in two of three years with available data, Sisulu-Walker’s absolute achievement remained high.

ASSESSMENT

Sisulu-Walker has an assessment system that improves instructional effectiveness and student learning. The school employs a comprehensive and coherent system of assessments that aligns to its curriculum and measures student progress toward state learning standards. The school regularly administers valid and reliable assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum and state performance standards. Teachers administer leveled diagnostic assessments three times each year, as well as unit checks and interim assessments at scheduled intervals to gauge literacy and numeracy development and monitor the effectiveness of instructional interventions. These tools provide actionable data that inform teachers’ lesson adjustments, groupings, and targeted supports for students at varying performance levels.

Following each assessment cycle, teachers participate in collaborative data meetings to identify trends, analyze subgroup performance, and determine instructional next steps. Leaders ensure that teachers include students with disabilities and English language learners (“ELLs”) in progress monitoring cycles by using modified tools and accommodations where appropriate to capture accurate performance data. Professional development sessions reinforce teacher capacity to analyze assessment results and translate findings into responsive instruction. The school makes assessment data readily accessible for all teachers. Teachers use assessment results to meet students’ needs by adjusting classroom instruction, grouping students, and identifying students for special intervention.

School leaders use assessment results to evaluate teacher effectiveness and to develop professional development and coaching strategies. Leaders maintain a comprehensive assessment calendar that structures data-driven practice across the school year. Leaders also use assessment results to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's academic program and to determine priorities for professional development and intervention. The school regularly communicates with parents and families about their students' progress and growth.

CURRICULUM

Sisulu-Walker's curriculum supports teachers with instructional planning. The school provides a coherent instructional framework with clear student performance expectations that ensures vertical alignment across grade levels. Core materials including Fountas & Pinnell, University of Florida Literacy Institute ("UFLI") Foundations, and Eureka Math anchor ELA and mathematics instruction and establish a fixed structure aligned to the New York State learning standards.

In addition to the framework, the school offers supporting tools such as pacing guides, unit plans, and scope and sequence documents that bridge the curriculum to daily instructional planning. Teachers reference these documents consistently and demonstrate a clear understanding of what to teach and when to teach it. Teachers effectively differentiate for students performing above or below grade level using the scaffolds and extensions within the school's curricular framework. While teachers have access to shared planning resources and supplemental materials, the school has not yet centralized documentation of curricular revisions and exemplars. Most adjustments occur through feedback rather than through a unified system that archives models, annotated samples, or unit refinements. Leaders recognize a need to develop a formal process to capture and update curricular materials to strengthen institutional memory, promote consistency across classrooms, and support sustainability during staffing transitions.

The school maintains routines for reviewing and refining the curriculum, though many processes remain informal. Leaders support curriculum implementation through weekly lesson plan review cycles and structured observation and feedback conversations that reinforce fidelity to the curricular resources and strengthen implementation of instructional strategies. Professional development further deepens teacher knowledge in literacy instruction and early reading development. When assessment data highlight areas of need, leaders adjust pacing and provide targeted small group reteaching, demonstrating responsiveness in curriculum management.

PEDAGOGY

High quality instruction is evident throughout Sisulu-Walker. Teachers consistently deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school's curriculum and state learning standards. Lessons follow a predictable structure, with direct instruction, guided practice, and independent application that sustains momentum and maintains student focus on academic outcomes. Teachers frequently check for understanding through whiteboard responses, turn and talks, choral responses, and cold calling. Teachers use responses to adjust instruction in real time. Across classrooms, students demonstrate active engagement through verbal, written, and non-verbal participation including gestures indicating agreement or disagreement with content.

Teachers design lessons that push for analysis and deep understanding of content. They prompt higher order thinking by asking open ended questions, facilitating peer-to-peer discourse, and encouraging students to explain reasoning or defend conclusions. Most teachers narrate desired academic behaviors and model persistence, reinforcing a culture of analytical discussion and rigor. Students regularly articulate their thought processes and demonstrate comprehension at the conceptual level.

Teachers effectively maximize learning time. Teachers ensure transitions between lessons occur smoothly and lesson pacing is deliberate and efficient. Teachers maintain organized classrooms that are resource-rich environments featuring anchor charts, manipulative materials, and student work. These classroom environments reinforce key learning objectives and celebrate student progress. The consistency of instructional delivery across grades reflects a shared pedagogical language and the school's emphasis on literacy and numeracy foundations.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Sisulu-Walker has strong instructional leadership. The principal and the director of special populations establish an environment of high expectations for teacher performance and student achievement. Instructional leaders maintain consistent oversight of instructional quality through systematic coaching, observation, and professional development practices. Teachers across the school report that leadership consistently reinforces expectations for rigorous instruction and professional growth. The leadership structure, consisting of the principal and the director of special populations, effectively supports the development of teachers and sustains a professional culture focused on continuous improvement.

Instructional leaders provide sustained, systemic coaching and supervision that improves teachers' instructional effectiveness. Leaders implement a tiered coaching model aligned to teachers' experience, demonstrated need, and student performance. Tier 1 teachers receive weekly coaching sessions, while tier 2 teachers meet biweekly, and tier 3 teachers meet monthly, with flexibility for additional meetings based on individual goals. Leaders conduct regular classroom observations, both formal and informal, and follow up with written or verbal feedback. The principal and director meet regularly with teachers on their coaching caseloads to review lesson plans, discuss progress toward instructional goals, and address areas for improvement. Instructional leaders maintain multiple trackers to monitor mentoring sessions, observation feedback, and progress toward teacher development goals, ensuring accountability and consistency across the coaching system. The school supplements internal coaching with an external instructional consultant who supports newer teachers and teacher assistants aspiring to transition into teaching roles. Leaders pair teachers new to Sisulu-Walker with established teachers for mentorship. These additional capacity building structures ensure sustained, differentiated support for teachers at varying stages of professional development.

Instructional leaders implement a comprehensive professional development program that strengthens the competencies and skills of teachers. Leaders design professional development sessions aligned to schoolwide instructional priorities and areas of need identified through observation and assessment data. Teachers participate in regular professional development sessions led by the principal, director of special populations, external consultants, or veteran teachers. Sessions focus on strengthening lesson planning, classroom management, and instructional rigor. Teachers apply strategies directly in classrooms and receive feedback ensuring professional development is consistently linked to practice. In addition to internal offerings, Sisulu-

Walker provides external professional learning through partnerships with the New York City Charter Center and the Collaborative for Inclusive Education. This approach expands teacher expertise in both content knowledge and pedagogical practice.

Instructional leaders hold teachers accountable for high quality instruction and student achievement. Leaders use the Danielson Framework for Teaching to evaluate teacher performance against clear, consistent criteria. Evaluations identify strengths and areas for growth that inform individualized coaching priorities. Teachers submit lesson plans two weeks in advance. The principal and director of special populations review lesson plans weekly to provide timely feedback prior to implementation. Leaders monitor implementation through frequent classroom walkthroughs and communicate focus areas weekly via the principal’s newsletter. Through these coordinated systems of evaluation, feedback, and professional development, Sisulu-Walker maintains a coherent instructional leadership framework that ensures continuous teacher improvement .

AT-RISK PROGRAM

Sisulu-Walker meets the educational needs of students struggling academically and students with disabilities, and the school will submit a Corrective Action Plan to improve its ELL program. Sisulu-Walker implements compliant procedures to identify students with disabilities and ELLs. For students struggling academically, multidisciplinary pupil personnel committees (“PPCs”) convene monthly to review academic, behavioral, and social-emotional data and coordinate individualized supports. If students do not make adequate progress after classroom based interventions, teachers refer them to the PPC for additional supports, and the team makes formal referrals to the district Committee on Special Education (“CSE”) as needed.

The school has sufficient intervention programs for students with disabilities and those struggling academically. Sisulu-Walker implements a four-tier response to intervention (“RTI”) framework that provides increasingly intensive supports, reserving tier 4 for students with individualized education programs (“IEPs”). Teachers provide differentiated small group instruction, and Title I coordinators deliver pull out sessions for reading intervention support. To support with mathematics remediation, the school has two mathematics blocks with the second block utilizing more centers-based and hands-on activities. The school uses Reading Recovery for literacy intervention and piloted the UFLI program in 2024-25 with plans to continue implementation for tier 3 and tier 4 literacy interventions. While the at-risk program is comprehensive for students with disabilities and those struggling academically, the ELL program remains in development. During the 2025-26 school year, the school designated a Title I coordinator position to expand supports for students eligible for Title I services including retained students, students living in homeless shelters, and ELLs. Although this initiative represents progress, the Institute did not find sufficient evidence of a fully implemented, research based system to support ELLs across the listening, speaking, reading, and writing domains. The school initiated the Title I coordinator role during the 2025-26 school year, leveraging the established literacy support approach to its ELL population. One school leader holds certification in bilingual education, and a teacher pursuing an English to Speakers of Other Languages (“ESOL”) degree strengthens internal capacity to serve ELLs.

General education and specialized staff members coordinate effectively to meet student needs. Teachers, at-risk program specialists, and instructional leaders collaborate through PPC meetings and Title I articulation sessions to plan interventions, share data, and adjust supports. The Education Modified platform provides centralized access to student IEPs, accommodation guidance, and progress data. The school coordinates with the district for related services.

The school effectively monitors student progress and engages families in intervention planning. Teachers update progress data in Education Modified and discuss outcomes with families during quarterly parent-teacher conferences. The PPC reviews student growth toward individualized and school based goals each month and determines adjustments to interventions based on data. The school provides meaningful professional development to strengthen supports for at-risk students. Sisulu-Walker offers internal sessions focused on differentiation and engagement and sends intervention teachers to the Collaborative for Inclusive Education for targeted training. Professional learning activities connect directly to classroom practice and improve teacher capacity to implement small group instruction and intervention strategies.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Sisulu-Walker’s organization works effectively to deliver the educational program. The school functions as a stable and well-managed organization that sustains its academic program through clear leadership, effective management, and a cohesive professional culture. Under the long standing leadership of its principal who has guided the school for more than a decade, Sisulu-Walker maintains a consistent academic vision centered on literacy and student growth. Leadership distributes responsibilities strategically, ensuring transparent communication and operational coherence across grade levels. While daily management is strong, several operational processes, particularly curriculum documentation, intervention tracking, and professional development planning, depend on individual expertise rather than codified systems. As the school prepares to expand to a middle school program, if approved, leaders recognize the need to formalize protocols and playbooks to codify its systems and ensure sustained organizational effectiveness.

Operational systems in finance, compliance, and human resources work efficiently and align with the school’s mission. Leaders prudently manage resources, prioritizing classroom instruction and academic supports. Teachers describe a collaborative environment marked by professionalism, trust, and mutual accountability. Strong staff member retention contributes to program continuity and reinforces consistency in instructional practice.

Leaders intentionally align professional development with the school’s academic priorities. Leaders use assessment and observation data to plan sessions that strengthen instructional practice and sustain focus on literacy, numeracy, and data driven instruction. Structures such as grade level and multi-grade meetings promote collaboration, vertical alignment, and shared ownership of student outcomes.

BOARD OVERSIGHT & GOVERNANCE

Sisulu-Walker’s board works effectively to achieve the school’s Accountability Plan goals. The board of trustees provides consistent, effective oversight that aligns with the school’s mission and long term goals. Trustees bring deep institutional knowledge and have guided the school through multiple charter terms as well as a major facility relocation. Their stewardship has preserved the school’s fiscal health and stability, contributing to a long record of clean audits and sound financial management.

The board’s membership brings many professional experiences, as well as tenure on the board, to provide effective oversight to the school. The board is working to fill two vacant seats including the treasurer role. The board seeks new members with academic and facilities backgrounds to help expand the board’s expertise.

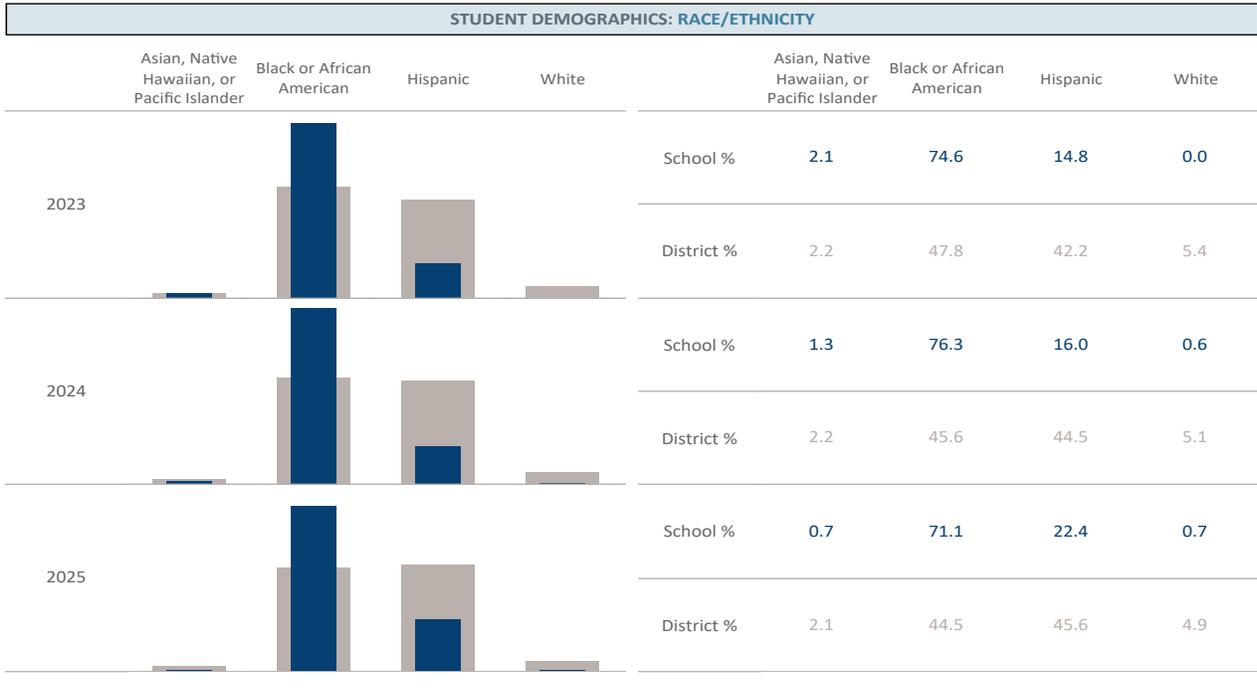
Trustees identify a need to diversify skill sets to strengthen long term governance. Overall, the board’s stability, commitment, and prudent management continue to anchor the school’s success and provide a foundation for sustained excellence.

The board reviews academic, operational, and fiscal reports at each meeting, demonstrating active engagement in decision making. Trustees maintain compliance with governance requirements and employ audit and finance committees to ensure fiscal transparency. Board packets include disaggregated state test results, interim assessment trends, enrollment and persistence data, and budget-to-actual reports that inform questions and decisions. Trustees hold leadership accountable for performance outcomes and strategic priorities while supporting the principal’s professional growth.



Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem

Manhattan CSD 5



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

FISCAL BENCHMARKS SUMMARY



DOES THE EDUCATION CORPORATION OPERATE PURSUANT TO A FISCAL PLAN WITH REALISTIC BUDGETS THAT IT MONITORS AND ADJUSTS WHEN APPROPRIATE?

The education corporation operates pursuant to a long-range financial plan in which it creates realistic budgets that it monitors and adjusts when appropriate. The following elements are generally present:

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
The education corporation has clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures.	+
Board members, charter management, and staff members contribute to the budget process, as appropriate.	+
The education corporation frequently compares its long-range fiscal plan for the charter to actual progress and adjusts it to meet changing conditions.	+
The education corporation routinely analyzes budget variances for the charter; the board addresses material variances and makes necessary revisions.	+
Actual expenses are equal to, or less than, actual revenue with no material exceptions.	-

DOES THE EDUCATION CORPORATION MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE INTERNAL CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES?

The education corporation maintains appropriate internal controls and procedures. The following elements are generally present:

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
The education corporation has a history of sound fiscal policies, procedures, and practices, and appropriate internal controls.	+
The most recent audit report was free of any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal controls.	+

“+” : This indicator is generally present.

“-” : This indicator is generally not present.

“P” : The education corporation is progressing toward this indicator being present.

“N/A” : This indicator is not applicable.

The education corporation reviews and updates its Financial Policies and Procedures Manual (“FPPM”), which covers the charter, on a regular basis. The most recent review of the FPPM is found in the next column. The Institute recommends, as a best practice, that the education corporation review and update its FPPM on an annual basis to ensure current operating systems are reflected.

**OCTOBER
2022**

DOES THE EDUCATION CORPORATION COMPLY WITH FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

The education corporation has complied with financial reporting requirements by providing the SUNY Trustees and NYSED with required financial reports that are on time, complete, and follow generally accepted accounting principles. The following reports will have generally been filed in a timely, accurate, and complete manner:

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
Annual financial statement audit reports, including federal Single Audit report, if applicable.	+
Annual budgets.	+
Un-audited quarterly reports of income, expenses, and enrollment.	+
Bi-monthly enrollment reports to the sending districts and, if applicable, to NYSED including proper documentation regarding the level of special education services provided to students.	N/A
Grant expenditure reports.	+

DOES THE EDUCATION CORPORATION MAINTAIN ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO ENSURE STABLE OPERATIONS?

The education corporation maintains adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations. Critical financial needs of the charter are not dependent on variable income (grants, donations and fundraising). The following elements are generally present:

INDICATORS	EVIDENT?
The education corporation maintains sufficient cash on hand to pay current bills and those that are due shortly.	+
The education corporation maintains adequate liquid reserves to fund expenses in the event of income loss (generally 30 days).	+
The education corporation prepares and monitors cash flow projections.	+
If the education corporation includes philanthropy in its budget, it monitors progress toward its development goals on a periodic basis.	N/A
If necessary, the education corporation pursues district state aid intercepts with NYSED to ensure adequate per pupil funding.	+
The education corporation accumulates unrestricted net assets that are equal to or exceed two percent of the charter’s operating budget for the upcoming year.	+
The education corporation is in compliance with all loan covenants.	N/A



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