



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSAL TO GRANT THE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL 2
THE AUTHORITY TO OPERATE
THE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL BRENTWOOD ELEMENTARY
AND
THE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL BRENTWOOD MIDDLE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The board of trustees of The Academy Charter School 2 (“The Academy 2” or the “education corporation”), a not-for-profit charter school education corporation authorized by the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) to operate The Academy Charter School – Wyandanch (“The Academy – Wyandanch”), seeks the authority to operate two additional charter schools to be located in private facilities in the Brentwood Union Free School District. The Academy 2 education corporation submitted the proposals for authority to operate The Academy Charter School Brentwood Elementary (“The Academy – Brentwood ES”) and The Academy Charter School Brentwood Middle (“The Academy - Brentwood MS”) to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) on April 8, 2025, in response to the Institute’s [2025 Request for Proposals \(the “RFP”\)](#), released on behalf of the SUNY Trustees on March 10, 2025. The Institute makes copies of applications [available on its website](#).

The shared services team which supports The Academy – Wyandanch also supports two other SUNY-authorized charter schools under the authority of The Academy Charter School (“The Academy”), a multicharter education corporation with the authority to operate The Academy Charter School (“The Academy – Hempstead”) and The Academy Charter School – Uniondale (“The Academy – Uniondale”).

The Academy – Brentwood ES will open in September 2026 with 175 students in Kindergarten – 2nd grade, will add students in elementary grades each year, and ultimately serve 550 students in Kindergarten – 5th grade during its first charter term. The Academy – Brentwood MS will open in September 2026 with 125 students in 6th grade, will add students in middle school grades each year, and ultimately serve 450 students in 6th – 8th grade during its first charter term. Both proposed schools will backfill in all grades throughout the school year. The schools will replicate the highly effective instructional program implemented at the other schools operated by The Academy and The Academy 2. As applicable, information regarding the renewal history, academic performance, and student discipline for the existing schools is presented in Appendix B.

The schools will have the support of The Academy’s shared services team in the areas of curriculum and instruction, operations, law, and finance. Members of the shared services team, such as the chief academic officer (“CAO”), chief operations officer (“COO”), and chief financial officer (“CFO”) will provide school leaders with training and guidance related to their areas of expertise.

After a thorough review process consistent with the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the “Act”), the Institute finds that the proposals for The Academy 2’s authority to operate The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy Brentwood - MS rigorously demonstrate the criteria detailed in the Institute’s 2025 RFP, which align with the Act.

Based on the proposals, as amended by the applicant, and the foregoing:

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the proposal to grant The Academy Charter School 2 the authority to operate The Academy Charter School Brentwood Elementary and The Academy Charter School Brentwood Middle.

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FINDINGS

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

1. The charter schools described in the proposals meet the requirements of the Act and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations as reflected in (among other things):
 - the inclusion of appropriate policies and procedures for the provision of services and programs for students with disabilities and English language learners (“ELLs”);
 - the required policies for addressing issues related to student discipline, personnel matters, and health services;
 - an admissions policy that complies with the Act and federal law;
 - the inclusion of by-laws for the operation of the education corporation’s board of trustees; and,
 - the inclusion of an analysis of the projected fiscal and programmatic impact of the schools on surrounding public and private schools.
2. The applicant has demonstrated the ability to operate the schools in an educationally and fiscally sound manner as reflected in (among other things):
 - an educational program that meets or exceeds the state performance standards;
 - a culture of self-evaluation and accountability at both the administrative and board level;
 - the student achievement goals articulated by the applicant;
 - appropriate rosters of educational personnel;
 - a sound mission statement;
 - a comprehensive assessment plan;
 - sound start-up, first-year, and five-year budget plans;
 - a plan to acquire comprehensive general liability insurance to include any vehicles, employees, and property;
 - evidence of adequate community support for, and interest in, the charter schools sufficient to allow the schools to reach anticipated enrollment;
 - descriptions of programmatic and independent fiscal audits, with fiscal audits occurring at least annually;
 - school calendar and school day schedule that provide at least as much instruction time during the school year as required of other public schools; and,
 - methods and strategies for serving students with disabilities in compliance with federal laws and regulations.
3. Granting the proposals is likely to: a) have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter schools; b) improve student learning and achievement; and, c) materially further the purposes of the Act. This finding is supported by (among other things):
 - a proven track record of success in launching, operating, and growing charter schools serving predominantly high-need students in the region;
 - the support of an experienced shared services team that provides back-office services in the areas of operations, finance, budgeting, human resources, staff and student recruitment, and compliance;
 - a seasoned board of trustees with the community relationships and experience necessary to support multiple schools during the startup and operation phases of development; and,

- a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (“STEM”)-focused academic program designed to prepare students for success in middle and high school as well as in-demand jobs and careers.
4. The proposed charter schools would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, of students with disabilities, ELLs, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch (“FRPL”) program as required by Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(i).
 5. The applicant has conducted public outreach for the schools, in conformity with a thorough and meaningful public review process prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, to solicit community input regarding the proposed charter schools and to address comments received from the impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students in conformity with Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(ii).
 6. The Institute has determined that the proposals rigorously demonstrate the criteria and best satisfy the objectives contained within the RFP, and, therefore, are “qualified applications” within the meaning of Education Law § 2852(9-a)(d) that should be submitted to the New York State Board of Regents (the “Board of Regents”) for approval.

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

The Institute conducted a rigorous evaluation of the proposals under consideration including academic and fiscal soundness, and legal reviews. In addition, the Institute engaged independent consultants to evaluate the proposals based on the criteria set forth in the RFP. Pursuant to its protocols, the Institute conducted an interview with the founding team, including the applicant, the proposed board of trustees, and key The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS leadership. Trustee Joseph Belluck, Chairman of the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee, also met with the founding team.

BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION

The SUNY Trustees approved the original charter for The Academy in January 2009. The education corporation’s first school, The Academy – Hempstead, opened its doors in the fall of 2009 and currently serves 1,926 students in Kindergarten – 12th grade. In 2017, The Academy applied for and the SUNY Trustees granted a second school located in the nearby Uniondale Union Free School District. The Academy – Uniondale opened its doors in the fall of 2018 and currently serves 1,666 students in Kindergarten – 12th grade.

In 2021, The Academy sought to replicate by establishing a new not-for-profit charter school education corporation, The Academy 2, which has the authority to operate The Academy – Wyandanch. The Academy – Wyandanch opened its doors in the fall of 2022 and currently serves 703 students in Kindergarten – 7th grade.

The Academy and The Academy 2 have demonstrated the capacity to achieve strong student outcomes, with high proficiency rates across the schools in ELA and mathematics that consistently exceed the district comparisons. From 2021-22 to 2023-24, the three schools across the education corporations posted ELA proficiency rates for tested students enrolled in at least their second year that exceeded their comparison district results by at least 29 percentage points each year. In mathematics, the schools outperformed the district proficiency rates by at least 16 percentage points over the same period. Notably in 2023-24, both The Academy – Hempstead and The Academy – Uniondale exceeded the targets for all five required measures under the mathematics goal. That year, 77% of The Academy – Hempstead’s tested students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficiency on the state’s mathematics exam exceeding the district results by 49 percentage points.

At the high school level, the schools have produced a strong track record of high graduation and college matriculation rates. Over their charter terms, The Academy – Hempstead and The Academy – Uniondale posted four year graduation rates that consistently exceeded the SUNY absolute target of 75% and the local district results. Notably in 2023-24, The Academy – Uniondale graduated its first cohort of students and exceeded the absolute target by 21 percentage points and the district rate by seven percentage points. Both schools matriculated students into two and four year college programs following graduation at rates that exceeded the target of 75% over the term.

The Academy 2 seeks to open two additional schools in the nearby high-need community of Brentwood: The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS. The proposed schools will replicate the highly successful model implemented at other schools operated by The Academy and The Academy 2.

MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS mission states:

To create world-class competitive scholars who will learn today, lead tomorrow and serve in the future. The Academy schools will graduate students with the content mastery and life skills needed to move into the top five percent of their middle and high school classes. To accomplish this, The Academy Charter Schools offer an exceptional interdisciplinary curriculum in a technology-rich environment that challenges students to explore connections across subjects and use experiential learning to bridge gaps between theory and practice.

The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy – Brentwood MS will implement the following key design elements:

- **Extended Learning Time:** The schools will operate on a longer schedule including an eight-hour instructional day from 8:00 AM- 4:00 PM over no less than 180 days. This extended schedule is designed to allow teachers to use longer instructional periods to build literacy and numeracy skills.
- **Moderate Class Size and Low Teacher to Student Ratios:** Class sizes at The Academy schools typically range from 25 to 27 students per class in each grade. All elementary classes have two instructional staff members, which enables teachers to provide targeted support tailored to students’ specific needs.
- **Standards-Based Instruction:** The schools will implement the highly successful academic program currently in use at the education corporations’ other schools, which incorporates research-based and standards aligned curricular programs. Core content areas are closely aligned with the standards for each field of study, and teachers implement content-aligned instructional practices.

- **Ongoing Support for Teachers:** Teachers at the schools will receive ongoing professional development, including pre-service training, in-service training and coaching, and consultant based or off-site specialized trainings. The goal of the robust professional development program is to provide teachers and instructional leaders with the content knowledge needed to effectively teach all students. The schools will differentiate teacher training such that both novice and veteran teachers receive support tailored to their specific needs. The school schedule allows for teachers to have regular meetings to collaborate and engage in professional development.
- **Character Development:** The academic model includes a focus on character development in alignment with the education corporation’s mission, including participation in service projects in upper grades.

CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE

The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS will offer approximately 181 days of instruction each year. The school day will begin each morning at 8:00 A.M. and end at 4:00 P.M. The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS will provide students with more than 1,350 hours of instruction per year, which exceeds the required 900/990 hours mandated by Education Law § 2851(2)(n) and 8 NYCRR § 175.5.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The proposed schools will replicate the highly successful academic program currently in place at The Academy – Hempstead, The Academy – Uniondale, and The Academy – Wyandanch. Using a variety of research-based programs aligned to New York State standards, teachers will implement a rigorous curriculum framework that develops elementary students’ foundational skills and prepares them for success in middle school, high school, and college. Through this academic program, the existing schools have demonstrated strong student outcomes, with a consistent track record of achieving proficiency rates in ELA and mathematics exceeding the overall proficiency rates of their districts of location and the state as a whole.

The Academy and The Academy 2 implement an interdisciplinary academic program with a strong emphasis on STEM to prepare students for in-demand jobs and careers in those fields. The applicants selected this model to provide students with foundational academic skills that will set them up for success in middle school, high school, college, and career in order to enhance social mobility and strengthen community engagement. In addition to core academic subject areas, students receive daily instruction in the arts including visual art, music, and drama. Students also receive instruction in character education. At all levels, classrooms have a low student-to-teacher ratio to ensure students receive the individualized attention necessary to be successful.

English Language Arts (“ELA”) (Reading and Writing)

Students at The Academy – Brentwood Elementary and the Academy – Brentwood Middle will receive ELA instruction based on the balanced literacy model, which teaches reading comprehension and phonics decoding strategies using authentic literature at multiple text levels. Teachers will provide standards-based instruction using read-aloud and various modes of reading and writing including shared, guided, and independent. In 3rd – 5th grade, students will receive instruction in spoken word, which develops students’ self-expression skills and exposes them to diverse artists.

Mathematics

The Academy – Brentwood Elementary and The Academy – Brentwood Middle will provide mathematics instruction based primarily on Envision Math, a research-based commercial program aligned with New York State standards. Teachers will develop students’ numeracy and operations skills through the implementation of software-based programs and manipulatives designed to enhance students’ conceptual understanding of mathematical ideas. Mathematics lessons will incorporate review of the previous day’s lesson, direct instruction, small group work, and enrichment.

Science

Daily science instruction at the elementary and middle school levels will align with New York State Next Generation Science Standards. Teachers will implement commercial curricula from McGraw-Hill to provide lessons in multiple fields of study including earth, physical, and life sciences. Instruction at all levels is inquiry-based and hands-on, incorporating frequent opportunities to participate in laboratory activities. In addition, students complete science projects and participate in a science exposition.

Social Studies

Students at The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS will receive daily instruction in social studies through the Pearson My World program, a commercial curriculum aligned with the New York State Social Studies Framework. In addition to social studies content, teachers will provide interdisciplinary instruction developing students’ literacy skills including speaking, reading, and writing.

At-Risk

The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS will implement a robust Response to Intervention (“RTI”) program to identify and support students struggling academically. Through continuous progress monitoring, regular assessments, and monthly child study team (“CST”) meetings, teachers determine the appropriate tier level of support and, if necessary, refer students for evaluation for special education services. Students struggling academically receive interventions and accommodations such as one-one-one tutoring and small group pull-out support. At the elementary and middle school levels, the schools implement programs such as Fountas and Pinnell, STAR Reading, and STAR Math to identify and support students struggling academically and students with disabilities. The schools provide integrated co-teaching (“ICT”) classes and special education teacher support services (“SETSS”) as well as related services as required by students’ individualized education programs (“IEPs”). In ICT classrooms, a general education teacher and special education teacher collaborate to provide high-quality instruction differentiated for the needs of individual students. ELLs receive both stand-alone and push-in support to develop language acquisition skills. Teachers provide intervention services for ELLs in 45-minute blocks for a total of 180-450 minutes per week depending on students’ language skill levels.

STEM

The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS will provide STEM instruction for all students using the Project Lead the Way program. This commercial curriculum emphasizes the use of technology in the classroom and develops students’ research and presentation skills, preparing students to engage in higher level STEM courses in middle and high school.

Arts, Music, and Theatre

Students at The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS will have weekly arts instruction. Arts instruction will incorporate visual art, music, and drama and provide opportunities for students to engage in creative self-expression while developing applicable skills.

Physical Education

Students at the schools will take health and physical education classes aligned with New York State standards. In addition to participating in athletic activities including competitive sports, students will learn how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and access resources in their community to pursue an active life.

EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Please see Appendix B for information about the existing schools' academic performance.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE

The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS will utilize a variety of programs and activities to establish a culture of accountability and respect. Teachers and school leaders will employ an RTI process to identify students with behavioral needs and implement research-based strategies to support them. Counseling services are available at all levels to support students' social and emotional well-being and growth. Structural components such as a daily morning meeting reinforce a sense of community among students. Additionally, the schools will implement Second Step, a social-emotional learning ("SEL") program that incorporates lessons, teacher-facilitated group meetings, and mindfulness to develop students' social-emotional skills, such as self-awareness, empathy, conflict resolution, and decision-making.

Notably, the schools will provide programming aimed at mitigating student involvement in gangs. In 4th - 8th grade, the schools will implement Gang Resistance Education and Training ("GREAT"), a curriculum that educates students on the consequences of gang involvement.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS will replicate the leadership structure in place at the education corporations' existing schools. The principals of each school will retain primary oversight for the effective execution of the school's mission and vision. In the first year of operation, the elementary school will have a principal who has the support of a behavior specialist, special education coordinator, mathematics coach, and ELA coach. Starting in the second year of operation, there will be a principal of the lower elementary school (Kindergarten – 2nd grade) and the upper elementary school (3rd – 5th grade). The middle school will have a single principal who in Year 1 will have the support of an instructional coach, deans, and a special education coordinator. The proposed schools will receive support from The Academy's shared services team, which provides guidance in the areas of curriculum and instruction, operations, legal services, and finance. The Academy's CAO, deputy CAO, and the directors of academic intervention services, counseling and student support, assessment, and student support services will provide the principals with support in their areas of expertise.

GOVERNANCE

The bylaws indicate that the education corporation board will consist of no fewer than 9 and no more than 13 voting members. The proposed members of the board of trustees are set forth below:

1. Robert Stewart, Board Chair

Mr. Robert Stewart serves as the Senior Pastor of Calvary Tabernacle. Prior to this role, Mr. Stewart served as the Chief Operating Officer of Calvary Tabernacle. Mr. Stewart is a graduate of The Genesis School of Theology, the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, and William Jessup University.

2. Dawn West-Bloise, Vice-Chair

Dawn West-Bloise serves as a Financial Consultant for Capital One Financial Advisors. Prior to this role, Ms. West-Bloise served as a Customer Sales Representative/Licensed Branch Representative with KeyBank.

3. Dale James, Treasurer

Dale James currently serves as the Bermuda-domiciled Class E Pensions and Annuities Reinsurer for Warwick RE Limited. Prior to this role, Mr. James served as the Vice President, Corporate Finance & Chief Risk Officer with Alleghany Corporation. Mr. James is a graduate of the University of the West Indies and Columbia Business School.

4. Dr. Roger Ball, Trustee

Dr. Roger Ball currently serves as the District Presbyter at the Church of God of Prophecy Northeast Region USA & Bermuda, as well as the Executive Pastor with Family Worship Center. Prior to these roles, Dr. Ball served as the Senior Pastor and Founder at Family Worship Center. Dr. Ball is a graduate of Mercy College and Fordham University.

5. Carol Beckles, Trustee

Carol Beckles serves as the Director, Case Management, at the Brooklyn Hospital Center. Prior to this role, Ms. Beckles held several additional positions at the Brooklyn Hospital Center, including Staff Nurse, Senior Staff Nurse, Assistant Patient Care Coordinator, Case Manager/Utilization review/Discharge Planner, and Nurse Manager Case Management. Ms. Beckles is a graduate of SUNY State University of New York Health Science Center for Brooklyn and Adelphi University.

6. Dorothy Burton, Trustee

Dorothy Burton, Esq. serves as the Attorney in Charge at the Law Office of Dorothy M. Burton PC. Ms. Burton is a graduate of University of Greenwich.

7. Marie Graham, Trustee

Marie Graham, Esq., CPA serves as the Large Business & International, Team Coordinator, Revenue Agent with the Internal Revenue Service. Prior to this role, Ms. Graham served as a Senior Associate with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. Ms. Graham is a graduate of Baruch College and Hofstra University School of Law.

8. Roderick Roberts, Trustee

Roderick Roberts serves as the Senior Pastor/Ministry Development Leader for Ramah Christian Center. Prior to this, Mr. Roberts served as a Sales/Marketing Consultant for Robinson Energy. Mr. Roberts is a graduate of HFA Theological Institute.

9. Stephen Rowley, Trustee

Stephen Rowley serves as an Adjunct Lecturer for the New York State Equal Opportunity Center. Prior to this role, Mr. Rowley served as a Senior Staff Assistant/Chart Reviewer for New York State University Hospital. Mr. Rowley is a graduate of Hunter College.

10. Claudette Harrison, Trustee

Claudette Harrison serves as the Accounts Payable Supervisor for the Town of Hempstead. Prior to this role, Ms. Harrison held several positions with the Town of Hempstead, including Union President and Payroll Supervisor.

FACILITIES

Historically, the existing schools have leased facilities that meet schools’ needs for the first several years of operation. In the long term, the education corporations’ goal is to identify permanent spaces for their schools. To date, the shared services team has developed multiple high-quality facilities for their existing schools. The founding team of the proposed schools has significant experience in selecting and acquiring facilities in the region. The founding team is working with community partners to identify viable locations for the school upon authorization.

FISCAL IMPACT

The total projected fiscal impact of the two schools on the district based on total combined enrollment is summarized below.

Charter Year	A. Expected Number of Students	B. Basic Charter School Per Pupil Aid	C. Projected Per Pupil Revenue (AxB)	D. Other District Revenue (SPED, Food Service, Grants, etc.)	E. Total Projected Funding from District to Charter School (C+D)	F. Brentwood Union Free School District Budget	G. Projected District Impact (E/F)
Year 1 (2026-2027)	300	18,655	5,596,500	953,530	6,550,030	603,274,281	1.1%
Year 5 (2030-2031)	1,000	18,655	18,655,000	6,868,514	25,523,514	603,274,281	4.20%

The Institute finds that the fiscal impact on the district, charter, and non-public schools in the same geographic region will be limited. The Brentwood Union Free School District has been rated “no designation” for the past two fiscal years from the New York State Office of the State Comptroller’s Fiscal Stress Monitoring System. This is the lowest possible designation, indicating the district was not susceptible to fiscal stress based on current reporting. Notably, the Brentwood Union Free School District would also likely be eligible to receive transitional aid for charter schools payments based on the proposed enrollment of the proposed schools. Transitional aid for charter schools provides payments to public school districts to help manage and offset fixed costs when families choose to enroll their students at public charter schools. These transitional aid payments are not reflected in the chart above as they are calculated and paid based on actual enrollment numbers of resident students at charter schools. However, the Institute notes that such transitional aid payments to the district would further reduce the already limited fiscal impact.

The Institute has reviewed the proposed start-up and fiscal plans, along with the supporting documentation, for the proposals to grant authority for The Academy 2 to operate The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS. Based on a comprehensive fiscal review, the Institute finds the proposed budgets are fiscally sound and reasonable. If the schools are approved, the Institute strongly recommends continued efforts to meet fundraising goals and maintain expenses in line with the proposed budgets to ensure fiscal stability.

The Institute also reviewed proposed consolidated education corporation budgets incorporating current and planned growth and found the budgets suitably conservative and realistic, rooted in assumptions of steady growth and with projected expenses remaining below revenues across all years. The budgets are intentionally conservative, assuming flat per-pupil funding throughout the five-year charter terms. The addition of \$4 million in committed grant funding, disbursed over five years, further strengthens the financial outlook by providing a cushion for reserves, improving cash flow management, and addressing contingency needs.

The Institute also fully reviewed the fiscal dashboard and current fiscal position of the existing education corporations. The Academy education corporation, which has the authority to operate The Academy – Hempstead and The Academy – Uniondale, reflects an adequate fiscal position across all metrics on the dashboard with consistently strong enrollment and positive trends in net assets and working capital, demonstrating the shared services team’s capacity for effective long term fiscal planning. The Academy 2 education corporation, which has the authority to operate The Academy – Wyandanch, reflects an overall poor fiscal composite score. The Institute closely analyzed The Academy 2’s fiscal position and notes the deficits and low working capital are commonly seen in a school in its first charter term such as The Academy – Wyandanch, and are also driven by actual enrollment that, while consistently above the 80% collar, is slightly under the chartered enrollment. The Institute will continue to closely monitor the fiscal health of both education corporations.

Based on the foregoing, the Institute concludes the proposed budgets and fiscal plans for The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS are reasonable, feasible, and fiscally sound.

NOTIFICATION & PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Institute notified the district as well as public and nonpublic schools in the same geographic area of the proposed schools about receipt of the proposals, and posted them on the Institute’s website for public review. The district held a public hearing pertaining to the proposed schools on June 3, 2025. The Institute carefully reviews and considers all district and public comments received prior to finalizing its recommendation. Any district comments and a summary of public comments is provided in Appendix A.

PREFERENCE SCORING

Education Law § 2852(9-a)(c) requires authorizers to establish a scoring rubric and grant priority to applications meeting both statutory and authorizer standards. The purpose of the preference criteria is to prioritize proposals in the event that the number of proposals meeting the SUNY Trustees’ requirements exceeds the maximum number of charters to be issued. The RFP identified the minimum eligibility

requirements and mandated preference criteria required by Education Law § 2852(9-a)(c), as described in greater detail below, as well as SUNY’s additional criteria. The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS proposals met the eligibility requirements, as evidenced by the following:

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

As The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS’s proposal submissions met the eligibility criteria, the Institute’s evaluation continued with a full review of the proposals, an interview of the application team and proposed board of trustees, and requests for clarification and/or amendments to the proposals. The review process then continued with an evaluation of the proposals in relation to the 9 Preference Criteria contained in the RFP for which proposals can earn credit as described in the RFP’s Preference Scoring Guidance. The Preference Criteria, in addition to eligibility criteria and the overall high standards established by the SUNY Trustees, include the mandatory objectives set forth in Education Law §§ 2852(9-a)(c)(i)-(viii).

Pursuant to the RFP, in compliance with the requirements for new charter applications set forth in Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(i-ii), (g), the Institute recommends the SUNY Trustees approve the applications for two new charters as proposed. The Academy Charter School Brentwood Elementary earned a score of 22.75 preference points out of a maximum of 39. The Academy Charter School Brentwood Middle earned a score of 22.75 preference points out of a maximum of 39. Based on these scores and the other information and findings set forth herein, the Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the applications for The Academy Charter School Brentwood Elementary and The Academy Charter School Brentwood MS, which do not exceed the statutory limit in Education Law § 2852(9)(a).

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its review and findings, the Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the proposals to grant The Academy Charter School 2 the authority to operate The Academy Charter School Brentwood Elementary and The Academy Charter School Brentwood Middle.

APPENDIX A:

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE SUNY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THROUGH OCTOBER 7, 2025

On or about May 5, 2025, in accordance with Education Law § 2857(1), the Institute notified the district as well as public and private schools in the same geographic area of the proposed schools about receipt of the proposals to establish The Academy – Brentwood ES and The Academy - Brentwood MS. The notice reminded the district that the New York State Commissioner of Education’s regulations require the school district to hold a public hearing within 30 days of the notice for each new charter application. Redacted copies of the proposals were also posted on the [Institute’s website](#) for public review.

The district scheduled a hearing pertaining to the proposed schools for June 3, 2025 and provided the Institute a summary of comments made. At the hearing, several people spoke in opposition to the proposals including the district superintendent, Deputy NYS Assembly Speaker Philip Ramos, NYS Regent Felicia Thomas-Williams, the board of education president, the Long Island Latino Teachers Association, district students, and three district staff members. These speakers alleged the district does not lack innovation, charter schools allow for uncertified teachers, and charter schools lack transparency. In addition, eight community members submitted written comments in opposition as part of the public hearing, while three community members submitted written comments in support.

The applicant provided evidence of support in the form of 170 signatures and six letters of support from community members. The applicant also received a letter of support from Town of Babylon Supervisor Rich Shaffer and Town of Babylon Deputy Supervisor/Councilman Antonio Martinez. Over 400 statements of impact from current students, parents, and alumni of The Academy and The Academy 2 schools were submitted, highlighting positive academic and social experiences. The Institute also received one email in support of the proposal citing concerns about declining academic competitiveness and safety in the district schools and the need for additional school options.

The Institute received a letter in opposition to the proposals from Senator Monica R. Martinez, 4th Senatorial District, citing the high graduation rates at the local district high schools and their offerings, such as the Seal of Biliteracy and expanded student services. Senator Martinez argued for strengthening the district schools rather than redirecting resources to charter schools.

The Institute also received a letter in opposition to both proposed schools in the district from Legislator Rebecca L. Sanin, Suffolk County Legislator, 16th District. Legislator Sanin expressed concerns regarding the proposed schools’ financial impact on district schools, insufficient community support, lack of meaningful collaboration with the district, and equity and access concerns, alleging The Academy’s existing schools enroll disproportionately fewer ELLs and students with disabilities than surrounding districts.

The district sent a letter in opposition alleging the charter school proposals would result in unnecessary duplication of services, that the applicants failed to communicate with the district or meaningfully engage the community, and that the financial impact on the district would cause additional strain. The letter included three community petitions in opposition with a collective total of 3,781 signatures, 15 individual petitions against the proposals, and several letters and emails from community members and organizations opposing the charters. A copy of the letter is included below.

The Institute also received 25 emails in opposition to the proposals alleging there is no need or demand for the charter schools and that they would pull funding from existing district programs.

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June 17, 2025

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Re: The Academy Charter School Brentwood Elementary School and The Academy Charter School Brentwood Middle School (Brentwood UFSD)

Introduction:

This firm, Bond, Schoeneck & King, PLLC, serves as general counsel for the Brentwood Union Free School District and the Brentwood Union Free School District Board of Education (the “Board”) (collectively, the “District”).

On behalf of the District, we write to formally express the District’s strong opposition to the charter school proposals submitted by Academy Charter School II (“Academy Charter”) for the establishment of two charter schools within the District: The Academy Charter School Brentwood Elementary School (grades K-2, expanding to K-5) and The Academy Charter School Brentwood Middle School (grade 6, expanding to grades 6-8) (collectively, the “Charter Proposals”). The Charter Proposals are currently under review by the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York (“SUNY”), as part of the 2025 SUNY Request for Proposals.

Current Elementary and Middle Schools in the District:

- East Elementary School
- Frank J. Cannon Southeast Elementary School
- Gail E. Kirkham Northeast Elementary School
- Hemlock Park Elementary School
- Laurel Park Elementary School
- Loretta Park Elementary School
- North Elementary School
- Oak Park Elementary School
- Pine Park Elementary School
- Southwest Elementary School

- Twin Pines Elementary School
- East Middle School
- North Middle School
- South Middle School

Student Demographics:

2023-24	Brentwood Union Free School District
Total Enrollment	17,902
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%
Black or AA	7%
Hispanic or Latino	87%
White	3%
Multiracial	1%

2023-24	Brentwood Union Free School District
Total Enrollment	17,902
ELL %	37%
ELL w/ IEP %	21%
SWD %	16%
Economically Disadvantaged	87%
SIFE Total	670

Background:

On May 5, 2025, the District received SUNY’s Notice of Receipt of and Pending Action on New Charter School Proposals (the “Notice”). In accordance with the Notice and New York State Education Law, on June 3, 2025, the District convened a public hearing to consider the Charter Proposals submitted by Academy Charter. What transpired over the course of the evening was more than public comment—it was a compelling, community-wide rejection of the Charter Proposals, and an unflinching defense of the District, equity, and student opportunity.

The District’s Superintendent of Schools, Wanda Ortiz-Rivera, opened the hearing with clarity and conviction. She reminded attendees that Brentwood is the largest suburban school district in New York State, educating more than 18,000 students—over 6,500 of whom are English Language Learners (“ELLs”). She emphasized that Brentwood is not a district in need of outside intervention, but one already engaged in metamorphic work from within. With pride, she described the District’s expanding portfolio of programs, including dual-language education, early college access, career and technical certifications, wraparound services, and the nationally recognized

Graduation PLUS+ strategic plan. “We are not waiting for innovation,” she stated. “We are driving it.” In her view, and in the view of many speakers who followed, the Charter Proposals are not alternatives, they are threats to an educational system already fulfilling its mission.

That message was echoed by Deputy Speaker Phil Ramos of the New York State Assembly. A graduate of Brentwood schools, Assemblyman Ramos spoke passionately about the specific dangers of charter expansion under the guise of educational choice. He explained that such efforts are too often propelled by hedge funds and private interests that prey on communities of color, such as Brentwood. Ramos cited the Hempstead Union Free School District (“Hempstead UFSD”) as a cautionary tale, an example of a district destabilized by unchecked charter growth, where critical programs and funding were lost to private operators. Brentwood, he warned, could face a similar fate, with nearly \$100 million in public funds potentially diverted by 2032. “We believe in Brentwood,” Ramos declared.

Later in the evening, the President of the Hempstead UFSD Board of Education, Victor Pratt, affirmed Assemblyman Ramos’s concern. Mr. Pratt recounted how charter schools infiltrated the Hempstead UFSD, drained its resources, and left public schools struggling to survive. With visible emotion, he described the expansion of charters as a “parasite,” and, more starkly, as a “cancer” consuming the health of the district’s public education system. His testimony served as a dire warning of what the Brentwood community must avoid.

Testimony continued with Dafny Irizarry, founder and president of the Long Island Latino Teachers Association. Ms. Irizarry offered a meticulous critique of the Academy Charter application, pointing out glaring deficiencies such as redacted resumes, allowances for uncertified staff, vague references to bilingual programming, and an overall lack of transparency. She argued that the proposal contributed nothing that the District does not already offer and often exceeds. “This isn’t innovation,” she said. “It’s duplication, with a devastating price tag.”

The hearing’s most compelling testimony came from the District’s students themselves. One Air Force Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (“AFJROTC”) cadet spoke of how the program instilled confidence, leadership, and discipline, helping her earn scholarships and Division I athletic opportunities. Another student from the Community, Obligation, Professionalism, and Achievement (“COPA”) Club described the creative and intellectual support she receives, while a third highlighted how project-based learning and Graduation PLUS+ allowed him to discover his voice and prepare for college. These students embodied the promise and success of the District’s schools, offering living proof of a district already achieving the kinds of outcomes that charter schools only claim to deliver.

From fiscal responsibility to instructional excellence, the case against the Charter Proposals was robust. Stacy O’Connor, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, outlined the financial toll the proposals would take, citing threats to existing programs and increased tax burdens.

Dr. Vincent Leone, Director of Programs and Policy, then delivered a systematic dismantling of the Academy Charter applications, pointing out its failure to meet SUNY’s Request For Proposal requirements, particularly its complete lack of collaboration with the District. He also

reaffirmed the District’s strategic Graduation PLUS+ program, an innovative core strategic plan that has received laudatory acclaim across the state.

Matthew Gengler, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education, brought that plan to life. He described students earning industry credentials, engaging in early college coursework, participating in civic action, and leading real-world projects through Graduation PLUS+. His testimony underscored that the District is not waiting to prepare students for the future. It is doing so today, with proven success and community-driven purpose.

New York State Regent Felicia Thomas-Williams, herself a former Brentwood principal, offered a powerful reflection on the District’s longstanding commitment to equity and excellence. She voiced her full confidence in the District’s ability to lead and innovate without the need for charter intervention.

Testimony closed with voices from every sector of the community: educators, parents, alumni, and local leaders, including Robert Vecchio, Executive Director of the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association. Mr. Vecchio reminded attendees that charter schools are private entities, lacking the accountability and transparency of public institutions, and that the District’s existing programs, including Virtual Enterprise, AFJROTC, and science research, are public models that charter schools cannot replicate.

Throughout the hearing, the message was consistent and unmistakable: the District is not broken and it is certainly not failing. It is thriving because of the hard work of its educators, the vision of its leadership, and, most importantly, the grit of its students and families. The proposed charter schools are not a solution. They are a threat to the District’s progress.

As the evening ended, the District’s Board of Education President, Eileen Felix, captured the spirit of the room with grace and urgency. Ms. Felix expressed gratitude for every voice that rose to defend the district, acknowledged those who offered constructive critique, and issued a clear call to action. “This is not merely a policy decision,” she said. “It is a moral one.”

A true and accurate copy of the June 3, 2025 hearing transcript is attached hereto as **Exhibit A**. A true and accurate copy of the June 3, 2025 District Power Point Presentation is attached hereto as **Exhibit B**. A true and accurate copy of the June 3, 2025 sign-in sheet is attached hereto as **Exhibit C**. True and accurate copies of the June 3, 2025 public comments are attached hereto as **Exhibit D**.

Legal Framework:

The New York State Charter Schools Act of 1998 authorizes a system of charter schools to accomplish the following objectives:

- (a) Improve student learning and achievement;
- (b) Increase learning opportunities for ALL children, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;

- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators, and other school personnel;
- (e) Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and
- (f) Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

New York State Education Law § 2850(2).

The statute further provides that an application for a charter school shall not be approved unless the charter entity—here, SUNY—finds that:

- (a) the charter school described in the application meets the requirements set out in this article and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations;
- (b) the applicant can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner;
- (c) granting the application is likely to improve student learning and achievement and **materially further** the purposes set out in Education Law § 2850(2);

...

In reviewing applications, the charter entity is encouraged to give preference to applications that demonstrate the capacity to provide comprehensive learning experiences to students identified by the applicants as a risk of academic failure.

(Emphasis added). Education Law § 2852(2).

Furthermore, Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(i) states, in pertinent part, that the charter entity shall not consider any application which does *not rigorously demonstrate that the proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants of free and reduced price lunch program*. When developing such targets, SUNY shall ensure that (1) such enrollment targets are comparable to the enrollment figures of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district; and (2) such retention targets are comparable to the rate of retention of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district.

Additionally, Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(ii) states, in pertinent part, that the charter entity shall not consider any application which does *not rigorously demonstrate that the applicant has conducted public outreach in conformity with a thorough and meaningful public review process* prescribed by SUNY to solicit community input regarding the proposed charter school and to address comments received from the impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students.

In light of the statutory framework established by the New York Charter Schools Act, including the rigorous standards set forth in Education Law §§ 2850 and 2852, the District has

conducted a comprehensive review of the Charter Proposals. This review considered not only the legal requirements but also the broader educational impacts on its students, families, and staff. The Charter Proposals fail to meet the essential criteria for approval, including demonstrable capacity to serve at-risk student populations, adherence to enrollment and retention targets, and meaningful community engagement. Due to the Charter Proposals grave deficiencies, the District respectfully requests that SUNY reject the Charter Proposals or require that the Charter Proposals be withdrawn.

1. The Charter Proposals Do Not Provide the Legally Required Equity and Access:

(a) Target Students

The District has made measurable and sustained progress in closing achievement gaps and expanding access to high quality instruction for all students, as evidenced by NYSED data. In contrast, the Charter Proposals lack a clear plan to serve, enroll, and retain ELL students, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students, which are populations that are central to the District's mission and explicitly targeted by New York State Education Law.

As previously stated, Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(i) requires that charter schools enroll and retain a comparable number of ELLs, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students. In the 2023–2024 school year, the District served a student population that was 87% economically disadvantaged, 37% ELLs, and 16% students with disabilities. These figures reflect the District's deep commitment to educational equity. The Charter Proposals, however, are devoid of any substantive strategy to meet or exceed SUNY's enrollment and retention targets for these student groups. Even more troubling is the track record of Academy Charter's existing schools (in Wyandanch, Hempstead, and Uniondale), which consistently fall short of meeting these same targets.

- **Wyandanch:**
Academy Charter School 2 enrolled only 74.6% economically disadvantaged students (vs. a *target* of 91.9%), 9% ELLs (vs. 37.7%), and 8% students with disabilities (vs. 12.9%).
- **Hempstead:**
While meeting its economic disadvantage target, Academy Charter School Hempstead enrolled just 24% ELLs (vs. 39.3%) and 5% students with disabilities (vs. 8.1%).
- **Uniondale:**
Academy Charter School Uniondale enrolled 65.4% economically disadvantaged students (meeting its target), but only 8.6% ELLs (vs. 26.8%) and 6.8% students with disabilities (vs. 10.8%).

The proposed Brentwood campuses are expected to meet even higher targets. For the proposed Academy Charter Brentwood Middle School, the target enrollment figures are 86.6% economically disadvantaged students, 44.8% ELLs, and 13.9% students with disabilities. For the proposed Academy Charter Brentwood Elementary School, the target figures are 84.4% for economically disadvantaged students, 53.5% for ELLs, and 12.9% for Students with Disabilities.

Given Academy Charter’s consistent underperformance across multiple districts, there is no evidence to suggest that the Proposed Charters will succeed where others have significantly failed. The consistent underperformance across multiple campuses, particularly in the categories of ELLs and students with disabilities, demonstrates a troubling pattern of noncompliance with this legal and moral obligation.

Moreover, the District serves a substantial number Students with Interrupted or Inconsistent Formal Education (“SIFE”). In the 2023-2024 school year, the District served 670 SIFE students. In contrast, the Academy Charter School system schools in Hempstead, Uniondale, and Wyandanch served **zero** SIFE students. Academy Charter has not shown that it is equipped to serve SIFE students.

The Charter Proposals not only fall short of legal requirements but also reflect a troubling disregard for the educational needs of Brentwood’s most at-risk populations. Without a credible plan to meet SUNY’s enrollment and retention targets, and to serve SIFE students, the proposals cannot be considered legally sufficient or educationally sound. Approval would risk undermining the District’s progress and compromise the rights of the very students the Charter Schools Act was designed to protect.

(b) Special Education Services

The Charter Proposal fails to present a credible or comprehensive plan to meet the needs of students with disabilities in Brentwood. Despite the scale and resources of the Academy Charter network, the proposed special education framework is alarmingly underdeveloped and lacks the autonomy, infrastructure, and personnel necessary to deliver legally compliant and effective services. Independently, the Proposed Charters will not be able to provide the necessary support to students with disabilities.

SUNY’s application requirements are clear. Request for proposals must detail the “resources, personnel, and direct and related services the school is likely to provide both within general education classrooms and in other settings (*e.g.*, collaborative team teaching (“CTT”), Special Education Teacher Support Services (“SETSS”), speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, counseling, planning time, instructional materials, technology, professional development, staff and consultants, etc.) and a brief discussion about how specifically the school would ensure that students entitled to these services would continue to receive them in a remote setting.”

Aside from a co-teaching model, which the District already employs and exceeds, mention of any of the above resources and services is lacking. In fact, the Charter Proposals specifically state that related service providers are hired consultants provided through the student’s home district. The Charter network’s explicit reliance on the District to provide necessary services is troubling. This outsourcing approach undermines the Charter’s obligation to meet the needs of its students independently and raises a worrying concern about the proposed charter schools’ capacity to meet the individualized needs of students with disabilities. The absence of a dedicated, school-based special education team limits timely interventions and continuity of meaningful educational services.

For a charter network of this size, such a minimalistic and dependent approach to special education is inadequate and unacceptable. The Charter Proposals reflect a systemic failure to prioritize or invest in the supports/services necessary to serve students with disabilities.

(c) Teacher Turnover and Teaching Out of their Field of Certification

Charter schools across the country have consistently struggled with high teacher turnover, with national data showing that, on average, one in four charter school teachers will leave their position each year. While a 25% turnover rate nationally is already alarming – especially when compared to the 14% average for traditional public schools – the situation at the existing Academy Charter Schools is even more troubling. According to recent data from NYSED, Academy Charter campuses in Hempstead and Wyandanch failed to retain nearly one third of their teaching staff in the 2023-2024 school year. Academy Charter Uniondale’s retention rate was even worse still, losing an astonishing 34% of its teachers last year.

This high attrition rate has led to an Academy teaching staff that is notably inexperienced. At the Wyandanch and Uniondale campuses, approximately 40% of the teachers for the 2023-2024 school year had two years of experience or less. The situation is even more pronounced at the administration level, where not one of the principals at those locations had more than two years of experience in the role.

In stark contrast, the District has demonstrated exceptional teacher retention. In the 2023-2024 school year, the District retained 91% of its teaching staff – 5% higher than the average public school, 16% higher than the average charter school, and 23% higher than the average for existing Academy Charter Schools. This remarkable stability is not a coincidence; it reflects the District’s supportive work environment, strong leadership, and deeply rooted commitment to its students and community.

Notably, in two recent reports from the SUNY Charter Schools Institute that recommended the SUNY Trustees deny applications for charter renewal, the Institute repeatedly cited high teacher turnover as evidence that a school had a “culture problem” and was not “meeting the goals it committed to when it sought a charter from the State University of New York Trustees.” See [SUNY Charter Schs. Inst., Renewal Recommendation Report: Oracle Charter School](#), at p. 27, 33 (Jan. 8, 2018). The Institute explicitly recognized the significant negative impact high turnover has on at-risk students, stating that, for one charter school, the high staff turnover “has contributed to an absence of institutional memory with respect to processes that are required for effectively identifying and serving at-risk students.” In the second report, the Institute stated that “[t]urnover in the special education staffing, as well as the director of student support on leave, has left the program inadequate in quality.” See [SUNY Charter Schs. Inst., Renewal Recommendation Report: Buffalo Creek Academy Charter School](#), at p. 8 (Feb. 7, 2025).

For the District’s students, particularly those most at risk, continuity of service and in teaching staff are not just beneficial, but imperative. The District’s at-risk student population has benefitted immensely from the stability and strong relationships that only a committed and consistent teaching staff can provide. The significant gains these students have made because of the District’s experienced and dedicated staff would be at grave risk should SUNY grant Academy Charter’s applications, potentially destabilizing the learning environment and undermining the progress that has been achieved through years of consistent, high-quality instruction.

Aside from the detrimental impact Academy Charter’s retention rate would have on student achievement and development, it also carries significant financial consequences for the broader community. High turnover increases the costs of recruitment, training, and onboarding – costs that will ultimately fall on the shoulders of district taxpayers.

In addition to the concerning teacher turnover rates at Academy Charter institutions, the number of teachers teaching out of their field of certification is also alarming. At Academy Charter School Hempstead, Uniondale, and Wyandanch, 78%, 74%, and 67% of teachers, respectively, teach out of their field of certification. In contrast, only 3% of teachers working for the District teach out of their field of certification.

The District stands out as a model of progress and stability, where students are supported by a committed and consistent teaching force. Introducing a charter school with a proven record of instability would not “improve student learning and achievement,” nor would it fulfill any other objective outlined in New York Education Law § 2850.

(d) Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

New York charter schools struggle with attendance and high absenteeism rates. The Academy Charter network is no exception. The data clearly indicates that the District outperforms Academy Charter in student attendance. Despite serving a significantly more complex and high-needs student population, the District consistently outperforms Academy Charter in both attendance rates and student engagement.

As the largest suburban school district in New York State, the District enrolled 17,902 students during the 2023–2024 school year. Of these, 37% were identified as ELLs, 21% were ELLs with IEPs, 16% were students with disabilities, 670 were SIFE students, and 87% were economically disadvantaged. Despite these figures, the District achieved an impressive attendance rate of 93%, surpassing the Academy Charter system-wide rate of 92%.

While a one percentage point difference may appear marginal, it is significant when viewed in the context of the District’s scale and the intensity of student needs. Academy Charter serves a smaller and less complex population and yet lags behind.

2023-24	Brentwood Union Free School District	Academy Charter School Hempstead: K-12	Academy Charter School Uniondale: K-12	Academy Charter School Wyandanch: K-3
Enrollment	17,902	1,894	1,521	191
ELL %	37%	24%	9%	9%
ELL w/ IEP %	21%	8%	13%	0%

SIFE Total	670	0	0	0
SWD %	16%	5%	7%	8%
Student Attendance Rate	93%	92%	92%	92%

Moreover, the District maintains a lower average chronic absenteeism rate (across elementary, middle, and high schools) of **24.55%**, compared to:

- **27.85%** at Academy Charter Hempstead,
- **28.7%** at Academy Charter Uniondale, and
- **24.1%** at Academy Charter Wyandanch.

These figures underscore the District’s stronger school climate, more effective student engagement strategies, and deeper community ties. The District not only meets but exceeds expectations in supporting consistent student attendance, even under more demanding circumstances.

(e) Lack of a Secured Location

One of the most troubling aspects of the Charter Proposals is their failure to secure a physical location to house prospective students. This lack of planning raises serious concerns about the proposed schools’ ability to provide a safe, stable, and enriching learning environment. In contrast, the District offers students access to exceptional facilities, including athletic fields, arts spaces, music/band rooms, and other specialized instructional environments, such as science laboratories. Most notably, the District recently acquired a new building that will be transformed into a dedicated culinary facility, which will further expand the District’s commitment to a hands-on, career-focused education.

It will be exceedingly difficult for Academy Charter to find and develop facilities that match the quality and breadth of what the District already provides. Furthermore, the lack of an identified location raises concerns over siting, zoning, and transportation that negatively impact the operations and planning for the District and its students. The District’s students deserve nothing less than the best, and the absence of a secured and fully equipped facility from the Charter Proposals falls far short of that standard.

2. The Charter Proposals’ Result in an Unnecessary Duplication of Services:

The Charter Proposals’ academic models closely mirror existing programs within the District. This duplication does not serve a demonstrated need and risks unnecessarily diverting critical resources from the District.

(a) Performance Based Learning and Assessment

The Charter Proposals state that teachers will be encouraged to utilize Performance-Based Learning and Assessment (“PBLA”) instructional models. PBLA emphasizes real-world, authentic learning experiences that allow students to demonstrate mastery through projects, presentations, and other “hands-on” tasks. While Academy Charter’s goal of encouraging teachers to utilize PBLA is commendable, it is not a novel approach within the District. Indeed, the District participates in the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) Performance-Based Learning and Assessment Network (“PLAN”) Program, which focuses on three types of PBLA approaches: Career and Technical Education and Work-Based Learning (“CTE”); Inquiry-Based Approaches with Learner Profiles; and Project-Based Learning and Performance-Based Assessment Tasks. Notably, Brentwood High School was selected as one of only 23 schools across New York State to participate in the program, reflecting the District’s readiness and commitment to innovative, student-centered education.

(b) Extended Learning Time

The Charter Proposals include extended school day as a key design element, incorporating a school day from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and summer school. However, the District already exceeds this model and has demonstrated its firm commitment to extended learning opportunities year-round for all students. The District offers an extended day program from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., along with evening high school options tailored to meet the diverse needs of its student population. During the 2024–2025 school year, the District served 2,961 students through its dynamic before and after school programs. Additionally, the District provided summer academic programming to over 4,000 students in the summer of 2024. Above and beyond the summer academic programming, the District also offers students numerous sports camps and a large music program throughout the summer. All students receive free breakfast and lunch. To name a few, the following programs are afforded to the students during the summer:

- **BHS Summer Program**
Grades: 10-12
- **Bilingual/ENL Parent Engagement Academy**
- **Excelsior Middle School Summer Enrichment**
Grades: 7-9
- **Extended School Year Summer Program**
Grades: 1–8
- **First Grade Jumpstart**
Grades: Entering 1st
- **Freshmen Campus – Intro to Research Bootcamp**
Grades: 9-10
- **HS Advanced Science Research Institute - Regeneration**
- **Middle School Regents Preparation**
Grades: 10-12
- **Moving onto Middle School Program**
Grades: Entering 6th
- **Regents ELA/ENL Preparation**
Grades: 9-12
- **STEAM Enrichment Camp**
Grades: 4-6
- **Summer Golf Academy**
Grades: Entering 4-12
- **Summer Music Program: 4 Weeks**
Grades: 6-12
- **Summer Music Program: 5 Days**
Grades: 6-12

- **Summer Reading and Math for Success**
Grades: 1-5
- **Super Scholars Academy**
Grades: 2-5
- **First Grade Jumpstart**
Grades: Entering 1st
- **The Pioneers**
Grades: 1-5
- **Young Inventors - Advance**
Grades: 8-9
- **Young Inventors - Intro**
Grades: 7-8

(c) Career and Technical Education (“CTE”) and Industry Certification/Licensure

The Charter Proposals incorrectly stated a lack of structured career pathways and economic opportunities for students as a critical need in the Brentwood community. The proposals further argue that a CTE-driven school model would address these needs by:

- (a) Offering career pathways in high-demand fields, such as healthcare, technology, and other skilled trades;
- (b) Providing paid partnerships and hands-on training, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships;
- (c) Enhancing school safety through mentorship and mental health supports;
- (d) Promoting economic mobility by partnering with local businesses, unions, and colleges and providing dual-enrollment opportunities;
- (e) Supporting immigrant and first-generation students with bilingual and vocation ESL programs, and industry certification programs.

The District believes that college, career, and civic readiness are of equal importance and is committed to providing its students ample CTE opportunities. Accordingly, in addition to preparing students to attend higher education institutions, it has incorporated a CTE model districtwide via its Graduation Plus+ initiative.

Graduation Plus+ is a 5-year, core strategic plan that aims to empower students to enter the workforce with appropriate skills, certification or licensure, or be enrolled in a post-secondary program of study based on student’s strengths, preferences, and interests. Graduation Plus+ is an informed plan, taking into consideration districtwide needs. The District conducted stakeholder surveys of over 6,000 individuals, which included students, parents, district staff, and other community members.

Through the District’s CTE model and approved pathways, students can explore fields such as information technology, HVAC, allied health, manufacturing, security, welding, culinary arts, and lifeguarding. These programs equip graduates with a competitive edge in today’s workforce and provide valuable technical skills while allowing them to earn industry-recognized certifications and licensure.

Number of students graduating with job-ready certifications (23-24):	
HVAC at SCCC	12
Ideal School of Allied Healthcare	42
Security Guard	12
OSHA 10 Certificate	11
CNC Manufacturing	10
First Aid, CPR/AED	20
American Red Cross Lifeguard	66
Total:	173

The District also provides pre-apprenticeship opportunities via partnerships with the Laborer’s International Union of North America, Haugland Group, LLC, and Northwell Scholars.

Dual-enrollment is also a top priority for the district. Hence, in the 2023-2024 school year, nearly 3,000 students graduated with college credits.

Number of students graduating with college credits (23-24)	
At least 1	1,002
At least 3	963
6-9	850
Minimum 12	155
Minimum 30	20
Minimum 6	6
Total:	2,996

With regard to bilingual and ESL programming, the District is a prime example of a district working to meet the needs of its ELL and multilingual learners (“MML”). The District has a dedicated Office of Bilingual and English as a New Language, which plays a pivotal role in advancing academic achievement and language development for this targeted student group. In this regard, the District offers multiple models of learning and teaching. Amongst those programs are the Transitional Bilingual Program and the English as a New Language Program (“ENL”). Under the Transitional Bilingual Program, certified teachers instruct students in both English and Spanish daily. The amount of time spent in each language is individualized depending on English proficiency. Through targeted instruction, culturally responsive practices, and strong family engagement, the District ensures that ELL and MLL students receive the support they need to thrive linguistically, academically, and emotionally.

(d) Moderate Class Size

While the Charter Proposals maintain class sizes between 25 and 30 students and average 30 in grades 5 through 12, the District offers significantly smaller class sizes that better support individualized instruction. In grades 3–8, the District averages just 16 students per class in ELA and 19.3 in Mathematics, allowing for more focused teaching, small group work, and personalized academic support. These smaller class sizes are a clear advantage, especially for meeting the diverse needs of the District’s student population.

(e) Standards-Based Instruction and Curriculum

The Charter Proposals state that instruction will be provided in accordance with the New York State Next Generation Standards and that literacy is guided by the EngageNY instructional guidelines. Additionally, the charters will incorporate data-driven instruction and state assessments. Again, this is duplicative of what the District is already doing and exceeding. In accordance with state law, District teachers instruct students based on the New York State Next Generation Standards.

The Charter Proposals also highlight the following elements, which are met or exceeded by the District:

- **State-of-the-Art Presentation Technology**

The District strives to provide students with a classroom environment that mirrors the 21st Century landscape. In addition to the typical items found in the classroom, the District provides students with the opportunity to engage with innovative technologies, like interactive flat panels, virtual reality tools, drones, and 3-d printers, no name a few. With these new technologies, teachers can create a more interactive and dynamic classroom for the students.

- **Each Classroom is Equipped with Computers**

The Charter Proposals provide that each classroom is equipped with computers. The District is far exceeding this element with its one-to-one laptop program. The one-to-one laptop program aims to provide laptops to all students from grades 3 through 12, who can use these laptops both at school and at home. For students in grades K through 2, laptops are available for in-class use.

- **Strong Emphasis on Writing**

The Charter Proposals do not surpass the District’s emphasis on writing. The District’s curriculum demonstrates a systemic commitment to writing instruction across all grade levels and

subject areas. The District ensures that writing is not confined to English classes but is a consistent focus in science, history, and even mathematics. The integration of Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (“CER”) into all lessons further reinforces analytical writing as a core skill. Additionally, the District’s collaborative efforts to align writing expectations vertically from elementary through high school show a long-term, cohesive strategy to develop strong writers. This comprehensive and embedded approach to writing instruction reflects a district-wide culture that prioritizes writing as essential to student success. Indeed, the District’s focus on writing is imperative for the population of students it serves (high number of ELL and MLL students).

- **STEAM, Daily Instruction in the Arts, and Project Lead the Way**

While the Charter Proposals may include STEAM and CTE elements, they do not surpass the District’s robust emphasis on STEAM and career and technical education. The District integrates STEAM across subjects through initiatives like cross-disciplinary projects that unite science, technology, engineering, arts, and math in meaningful, hands-on learning experiences, often focusing on future careers and technical training. The District’s use of the engineering design process across subjects empowers students to engage in real-world problem solving from an early age. Additionally, the District’s commitment to CTE (as described above) ensures students are exposed to current industry practices and technologies, preparing them for both college and career pathways. The District also prioritizes arts integration, ensuring that creativity and innovation are central to the learning experience. To ensure that STEAM is integrated into daily lessons, the District provides teachers and administrators with ongoing professional development, as described in Section (f) below.

The District’s strong emphasis on STEAM and CTE comes full circle for students when they enter high school, where they have access to a wide range of specialized courses: Woodworking Design and Instruction, Design for Drawing and Production, Engineering Graphics and Technical Illustration, Architectural Drawing, Basic Electricity/Electronics, Energy Technology, Principles of Engineering, Residential Woodworking, Practical Woodworking, Residential Structures, Small Engines, Land Transportation, and Advanced Automotive. As described above starting on page 11, students also have a range of opportunities to engage in CTE.

(f) Ongoing Professional Development

The Charter Proposals provide a professional development program composed of pre-service training, in-service training/coaching, and consultant based/offsite opportunities for teachers and leadership staff. The District’s Professional Development Plan is more robust and, in addition to teachers and administrators, it allows teaching assistants and long-term substitute teachers to participate.

Professional development opportunities are provided year-round for educators and administrators. The District offers professional development that aims to encourage integration of different subjects and enhance interdisciplinary learning. The District is currently in the process of developing Innovation & Design labs in each of the middle schools to align with the opportunities offered in STEAM at Brentwood High School. To facilitate the roll-out and support the interdisciplinary curriculum, the District offers:

- **Professional Development for State-of-the-Art Presentation Technology:**
 - **Initial Training and Onboarding:** At the start of the school year or upon the introduction of new technology (*e.g.*, interactive flat panels, new presentation software, virtual reality tools, drones, 3d printers, t-shirt makers), teachers receive foundational training on how to operate and integrate these tools effectively into their lessons.
 - **Software and Platform Workshops:** Throughout the year, specialized workshops are offered on specific presentation software (*e.g.*, advanced features in Canvas (an open-source Learning Management System that serves as a central hub for online, hybrid, and in-person classrooms), creating interactive presentations with Nearpod (an instructional platform for delivering engaging and results-driven teaching and learning experiences), video editing for student projects). These sessions are often hands-on, allowing teachers to practice and experiment.
 - **Device Integration Training:** Professional development focuses on how to leverage student devices (laptops) for collaborative digital presentations, multimedia content creation, and real-time student feedback, ensuring equitable access and effective utilization.
 - **Peer-to-Peer Learning and Tech Coaches:** The District fosters a culture of shared expertise. Experienced teachers often serve as “tech coaches” or lead informal “lunch and learn” sessions, demonstrating innovative uses of presentation technology in their own classrooms. Our teachers train others to implement lessons for prototyping and engineering student developed inventions.
 - **Virtual and Augmented Reality Exploration:** As these technologies evolve, professional development sessions are dedicated to exploring their educational applications, providing teachers with opportunities to experiment with VR/AR headsets and content creation tools.

- **Professional Development for Strong Emphasis on Writing:**
 - **Content Area Literacy Workshops:** Throughout the year, professional development sessions specifically address strategies for teaching writing across all disciplines. This includes workshops on crafting effective prompts, providing constructive feedback on different types of writing (*e.g.*, lab reports, historical analyses, mathematical explanations), and integrating research skills. Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (“CER”) is embedded in all lessons.
 - **Scaffolding for Diverse Learners:** Targeted professional development focuses on strategies for scaffolding writing instruction for English language learners and multilingual learners and students with diverse learning needs. This includes training on using graphic organizers, sentence starters, vocabulary development techniques, and culturally responsive approaches to writing.
 - **“Writing Across the Curriculum” Initiatives:** Teachers from different departments participate in collaborative professional development to develop common rubrics, share successful writing assignments, and ensure vertical alignment of writing expectations *from elementary through high school*.
 - **Assessment and Feedback Strategies:** Professional development helps teachers use effective assessment practices for writing, including portfolio assessment and providing specific, actionable feedback that promotes student growth.

- **Professional Development for STEAM and CTE Curriculum:**
 - **Disciplinary-Specific Training (e.g., Experience Science Implementation):** For programs like “Experience Science,” professional development is provided to ensure deep understanding of the curriculum’s pedagogy (e.g., phenomena-based learning, 5E model, 3D learning). These sessions help teachers effectively implement hands-on investigations, integrate digital tools, and manage classroom logistics for inquiry-based learning.
 - **Cross-Disciplinary STEAM Workshops:** Teachers from different subject areas (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) participate in collaborative professional development to design and implement integrated STEAM projects. This might involve brainstorming transdisciplinary units, sharing resources, and developing common assessment tools.
 - **CTE Industry Updates and Certifications:** CTE teachers receive ongoing professional development to stay current with industry standards, technologies, and certifications relevant to their fields (e.g., new automotive diagnostics, updated health safety protocols). This often involves partnerships with local businesses or community colleges.
 - **Engineering Design Process Training:** Professional development focuses on teaching and implementing the engineering design process across various subjects, empowering teachers to guide students through problem definition, ideation, prototyping, testing, and refinement.
 - **Technology Integration for STEAM/CTE:** Workshops on specific software and hardware relevant to STEAM/CTE, such as CAD/CAM software, robotics platforms, coding languages, or data analysis tools, are offered throughout the year.
- **Professional Development for Art Integration:**
 - **Arts Integration Workshops for Non-Arts Teachers:** Professional development sessions are specifically designed for general education teachers to demonstrate practical strategies for integrating visual arts, music, dance, and drama into their core subject areas. This could include workshops on using visual journaling in science, creating musical compositions to understand historical periods, or developing dramatic interpretations of literary texts.
 - **Collaboration Between Arts and Core Subject Teachers:** Dedicated professional development time is set aside for arts specialists and core subject teachers to collaboratively plan integrated units and projects. This fosters shared understanding of content and pedagogical approaches.
 - **Exploring Artistic Processes:** Professional development emphasizes teaching the creative processes used in the arts (e.g., ideation, experimentation, critique, revision) and how these processes can be applied to problem-solving in other disciplines.
 - **Cultural Responsiveness in the Arts:** Training focuses on incorporating diverse cultural perspectives and artistic traditions into lessons, enhancing students’ understanding and appreciation of various cultures.

- **Professional Development for Project-Based Learning (“PBL”) and De-Siloing Curriculum:**
 - **PBL Design Workshops:** Throughout the year, teachers participate in workshops focused on designing authentic, transdisciplinary PBL experiences. This includes training on identifying compelling driving questions, developing real-world challenges, scaffolding complex projects, and managing long-term student inquiry.
 - **Facilitating Student Inquiry and Autonomy:** Professional development helps teachers shift from direct instruction to a facilitator role in PBL, guiding student inquiry, fostering collaboration, and providing just-in-time support without giving away answers.
 - **Cross-Curricular Planning Sessions:** Dedicated planning days or collaborative release time are provided for teams of teachers from different departments to collaboratively design and implement integrated PBL units that genuinely de-silo the curriculum. This is where the magic happens for transdisciplinary projects.
 - **Assessment in PBL:** Professional development addresses effective assessment strategies for PBL, including rubrics for process and product, peer and self-assessment, and methods for evaluating complex, multifaceted projects.
 - **Leveraging Technology for PBL:** Training focuses on using state-of-the-art presentation technology, collaboration tools, and digital resources to support all phases of PBL, from research and ideation to creation and presentation.
 - **Showcasing Best Practices:** The District encourages teachers to share their successful PBL experiences and outcomes through internal presentations, conferences, and online platforms, fostering a community of practice.
 - **Regeneron and AP Seminar Mentorship Professional Development:** Teachers who mentor Regeneron finalists or teach AP Seminar receive specialized professional development on guiding advanced research, fostering independent inquiry, and supporting students through the rigorous demands of these high-stakes projects, ensuring they are truly authentic and student-driven.

(g) Character Development

The District is deeply committed to developing students as scholars and principled, compassionate leaders. Character education is woven into the fabric of the District’s educational philosophy, with a strong emphasis on leadership, integrity, and civic responsibility. Through a myriad of programs, the District empowers students to grow into confident and community-minded individuals. Initiatives such as My Brother’s Keeper (“MBK”), Community, Obligation, Professionalism, and Achievement (“COPA”), Girls Inc., and Girls United offer structured mentorship and leadership development that equips students to serve as positive role models in their schools and neighborhoods.

The District passionately supports social and emotional learning and personal growth through programs like AFJROTC and various extracurricular activities, all of which promote teamwork, discipline, and resilience. The District offers its students the following extracurricular activities:

- AFJROTC
- Anti-Bullying Fashion Movement
- Art Club
- Art national honor Society

- Athletic College Connection
- Bank at School/Wall Street Club
- Body Image Group
- BHS Special Sports
- Chess Club
- Christian's United Club
- Computer Club
- COPA Club
- Courtyard Club
- Craft Club
- DECA
- Drama Club
- Emerald Echo/BHS Literary Magazine
- English Honor Society
- ESL Drop-in-Lounge
- Family Careers Community Leaders of America Club
- Feminist Society Club
- Financial Literacy for Female Advisors
- Friendship Club
- French Club
- Future Business Leaders of America
- Future Teachers of America
- Gay, Lesbian, Straight Alliance
- Green Garden Club
- Government Club
- Health and Wellness Club
- Human Relations Club
- Interact Club
- Italian Club
- Junior Class
- Latinos En Accion
- Leadership Club
- Math League
- Math National Honor Society
- Medical Society
- Mentoring Club
- Mock Trial Club
- Motor Head Club
- Mundos
- Muslim Students Association
- National Honor Society
- Nubians United/African American Culture Club
- Paws for a Cause
- Pow-Wow School Newspaper
- Students Against Destructive Decisions
- Science Honor Society
- Science Olympiads
- Senior Class
- Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
- Social Studies National Honor Society
- Sophomore Class
- Students Taking an Active Role
- Student Council
- Students United
- United Anime Japanese Society
- Varsity Club
- World Languages Honor Society
- Yearbook

The District also provides students the following music focused activities:

- Acapella Club
- Green machine Marching Band
- One O’Clock Jazz Ensemble
- Two O’Clock Jazz Ensemble
- High School Musical
- Guitar Club
- Tri-M
- Jazz Choir
- Musical Pit Orchestra

In sports, the District provides the following activities:

- Athletes Helping Athletes
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cheerleading
- Fencing Team
- Football
- Lacrosse
- Soccer
- Softball
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Track and Field
- Volleyball
- Wrestling

These efforts reflect Brentwood’s commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals who are prepared to lead with character and compassion.

Additionally, the District has a robust list of community partners. To name a few, the District partners with the following entities:

- Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Long Island
- Brentwood Fire Department
- Brentwood Public Library
- Economic Opportunity Council (EOC) of Suffolk
- Island Harvest
- Long Island Cares
- Manarva, Inc.
- Pronto Long Island, Inc.
- Suffolk County Police Department
- Teatro Yerbabruja
- The Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood
- Youth Enrichment Services (YES)
- Academy of Civic Life at Stony Brook University
- CNC Manufacturing at SCCC
- Dual Enrollment Courses
- Early College Program at Suffolk County Community College (SCCC)
- Farmingdale Smart Scholars
- HVAC at SCCC
- Ideal School of Allied Healthcare
- Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA), The Haugland Group, and Local Laborers Union 66. Pre-apprenticeship Program
- Long Island Mental Health Professional Expansion Project
- New York State Security Guard Training
- Northwell Community Scholars
- Prosper Program
- Town of Islip, Lifeguard Training
- Welding with CNC Manufacturing at SCCC

With the aforementioned activities and partnerships, the District cultivates a school environment that fosters the development of well-rounded students who are prepared to thrive academically, contribute meaningfully to their communities, and succeed in their present and future endeavors.

3. Academy Charter Failed to Communicate with the District or to Meaningfully Engage with the Community:

The District believes that any *new* educational initiative within the District must be rooted in collaboration and transparency. However, this is not a matter of principle, but rather a legal requirement under the New York State Charter Schools Act. Notwithstanding that legal mandate, Academy Charter failed to communicate with the District and to meaningfully engage with the community in the development of the Charter Proposals.

Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(ii) requires that in order for the SUNY Trustees to consider any application for approval, the proposal must “rigorously demonstrate” that the applicant has conducted public outreach “in conformity with a thorough and meaningful public review process”

designed “to solicit community input regarding the proposed school and address comments received from the impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students.” In order for the Institute to recommend any proposal to the SUNY Trustees for approval, the proposal must include evidence of the following three criteria:

- The applicant informed the community of the intent to develop a school proposal **in a timely fashion**...;
- The community had meaningful opportunities for input on that proposal; and
- There was a thoughtful process for considering community feedback and incorporating it into the final proposal, especially regarding the educational program of the proposed school, and the educational needs of students.

Despite these clear requirements, the Charter Proposals fail to abide by the statute. The Charter Proposals claim that Academy Charter commenced formal outreach in the “winter and early spring months of 2025” and that over 200 community members were engaged. However, the alleged communication is vague, inconsistent, and not credible. The proposal references informal conversations with individuals but provides no evidence of broad community engagement or demographic representation. In fact, the Charter Proposals highlight a conversation had in March 2025 with Travis Holloway, an Academy Charter principal who resides in Central Islip, who to no surprise supported the Charter Proposals. The Charter Proposals state that only 50 signatures have been gathered in support of their proposals and that most of their outreach has been to faith-based organizations, which is not representative of the District’s approximately 18,000 students, let alone Brentwood’s 62,387-person population.

In fact, the Charter Proposals acknowledge that community outreach efforts have been neither widespread nor complete. The proposals state that outreach will “continue throughout the summer and until the schools open,” which directly contradicts the requirement that such engagement occur *prior* to submission. According to the proposals, formal outreach did not begin until January 2025, with the application being submitted just a few months later in April. This compressed timeline is particularly concerning given the size and diversity of the Brentwood community, and it significantly undermines the credibility and thoroughness of Academy Charter’s outreach process.

In contrast, the District initiated its own petition on June 2, 2025. Within just ten days (by June 12, 2025), it had gathered 3,079 *verified* signatures, demonstrating clear and widespread community opposition to the proposed charter schools. A true and accurate copy of the petition, its signatures, and testimonials is attached hereto as **Exhibit E**.¹ Additionally, the Brentwood Teachers Association (“BTA”) initiated its own petition, titled the Don’t Defund Long Island Public Schools Petition, against the Charter Proposals, which amassed 556 signatures. A true and accurate copy of the BTA petition and its signatures is attached hereto as **Exhibit F**. A former District board member and active community member, Maria Gonzalez-Prescod, initiated her own petition,

¹ For the most up-to-date number of District petition signers, please see the following link: https://www.change.org/p/oppose-charter-schools-in-brentwood-ny-428df88b-ca39-4921-a4e9-2b8486e7df7c?recruited_by_id=3feff830-3fe4-11f0-9603-2f305d927c51&utm_source=share_petition&utm_campaign=share_petition&utm_term=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink

which gathered 146 signatures. A true and accurate copy of Gonzalez-Prescod's petition and its signatures is attached hereto as **Exhibit G**. 15 individual petitions against the Charter Proposals have been submitted to the District. A true and accurate copy of the individual petitions and their signatures is attached hereto as **Exhibit H**.

Furthermore, SUNY's Request for Proposal guidelines underscore Academy Charter's deficiencies. The RFP states that:

The narrative should explain how **comprehensive efforts** were made to engage with community members that are **fully representative of the overall community demographics**.

The proposal provides a narrative description of support for the proposal from community stakeholders or others **including a candid analysis of both the depth of support and opposition to the school from stakeholders such as community members**, civic organizations, and elected officials.

Submit documents that provide **evidence of community support** (e.g., letters of support from community stakeholders, emails with evidence of support, petitions, online survey results, etc.). Evidence of support should be concrete and specific to the proposed school. Generic support for charter schools or educational choice and innovation in general is not sufficient

Submit documents that provide **evidence of demand** for the school (e.g., petitions that clearly indicate signers have students of age to enroll in the school and would consider enrolling them in the school, etc.).

(Emphasis added). SUNY Request for Proposals guidance document.

As previously explained, the Charter Proposals fail on every turn. Fewer than 200 signatures were collected. Additionally, the rushed outreach relied heavily on informal networks and faith-based leaders, raising serious concerns about neutrality, transparency, and representativeness of the Brentwood community. In sum, the Charter Proposals do not meet the standards required for approval. Accordingly, the District respectfully urges SUNY to reject the proposal based on its failure to conduct a thorough, inclusive, and meaningful community engagement process. Attached to this Letter as **Exhibit I** are community entity/member letters in opposition to the Charter Proposals. The below have submitted letters to the District in opposition to the Charter Proposals:

- Academy Language Learning Institute, Inc.
- Bay Shore Union Free School District
- Protect All Children from Trafficking (PACT by ECPAT-USA)
- The Family Service League
- Marnava, Inc. (dba SavvyMe)
- MDQ Academy
- Shepherds Gate, Inc.

- Youth Enrichment Services

Additionally, please see **Exhibit J**, emails to the District in opposition to the Charter Proposals.

4. Financial Impact:

The District has projected a 5-year total financial loss (2027-2032) of nearly Ninety-Nine million dollars (\$99,000,000). This estimate is based on projected tuition payments, other general considerations like nursing, materials, and transportation, and IDEA and Title I federal aid funding (assuming the charter schools meet their target student enrollment figures).

Year	Projected Enrollment	Est. Tuition Rate	Potential Aid Loss
27/28	300	23,750	7,125,000
28/29	444	25,013	11,105,772
29/30	665	26,342	17,517,430
30/31	835	27,742	23,164,570
31/32	950	29,216	27,755,200
			86,667,972

Year	Nurse	Materials Aid	Transportation	Sum
27/28	117,976	31,104	749,146	898,226
28/29	124,364	46,034	1,292,277	1,462,675
29/30	130,742	68,947	1,738,759	1,938,448
30/31	138,587	86,573	2,353,343	2,578,502
31/32	146,902	98,496	2,865,542	3,110,940
				9,988,791

Year	General Fund	IDEA Grant	Title Grants	Total
27/28	8,023,226	63,828	85,398	8,172,452
28/29	12,568,447	93,969	126,389	12,788,805
29/30	19,455,878	141,840	189,299	19,787,017
30/31	25,743,072	177,300	237,691	26,158,063
31/32	30,866,140	202,122	270,427	31,338,689

98,245,026

The diversion of nearly \$99,000,000 public funds to the proposed charter schools would result in a financial strain on the District. This burden is especially concerning for the District given that charter schools, including Academy Charter-system schools, historically enroll fewer students with the greatest needs, such as ELLs, students with disabilities, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Such a substantial loss of funding would compromise the District's ability to maintain current staffing levels, deliver essential student services, and maintain extracurricular activities that are detrimental for student development. Ultimately, this would erode the District's ability to support the very students who rely most heavily on public education for opportunity and advancement.

Conclusion:

For all the foregoing reasons, the District respectfully but fervently urges SUNY to reject the Charter Proposals or to require that the Charter Proposals be withdrawn. As the Superintendent of Schools of the District stated during the June 3, 2025 public hearing on this matter:

This is not a district waiting for innovation; what our children need is not duplication. Our students need investment; they need stability; they need a school system that knows them well and that respects them and is accountable for them, not an outside operator with no ties to the community.

Candace J. Gomez, Esq.

Candace J. Gomez, Esq.

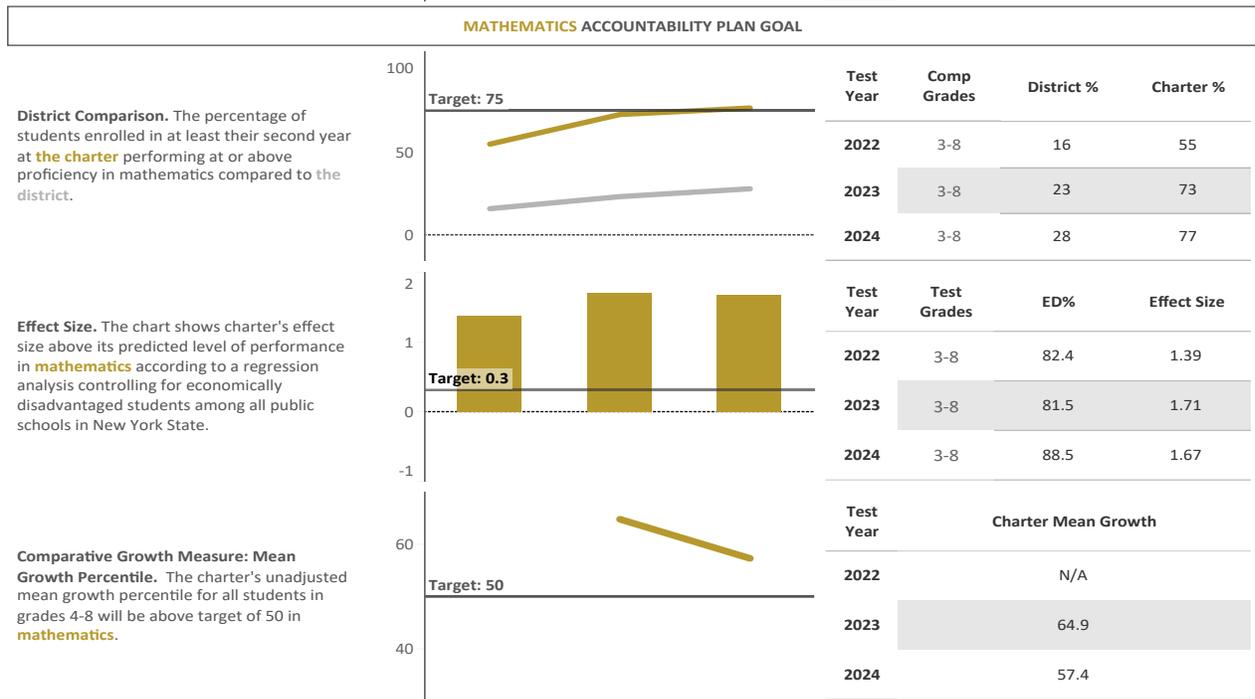
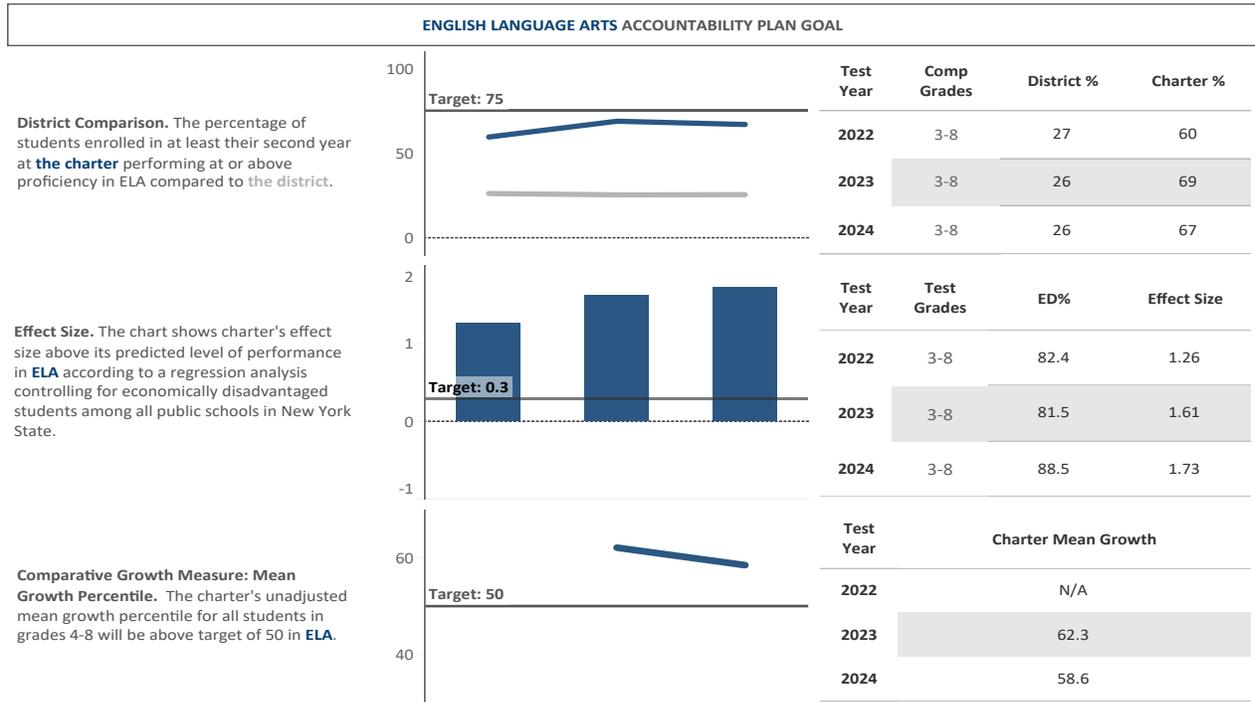
Brentwood Union Free School District *Additional Points of Pride*

- 250 students earned the NYSED Seal of Biliteracy in 23-24. 340 earned the Seal in 24-25
- Boys Soccer program recently ranked #1 in the United States of America (2022-2023)
- National Regeneration Science Competition Finalists
- Simon STEM Summer/Scholarship Program participants
- National Merit Scholarship Program Commended Students
- A multitude of full-scholarship, Ivy League bound students, each year
- YMCA Youth and Government individual and team debate winners. Brentwood Youth Governor!
- High levels of student interest in careers tied to law enforcement, medical fields, skilled trades, and business
- BUFSD Refugee and Immigrant Student Welcome Program (RISWP) Center
- 1 of 8 Human Trafficking and Youth Prevention Education (HTYPE) centers in the U.S.
- Family Community Plaza in all 17 buildings
- Parent Connectors at the elementary and middle levels
- Family and Community Swim Nights
- College & Career Week, UPK-12 (November 18-22, 2024)
- Districtwide implementation of MTSS pilot at the elementary level to support academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs
- Restorative practices embedded at the secondary level, PBIS at the elementary level to proactively enhance school culture
- Dedicated Reading/Math Consultants and AIS providers, K-12
- Dedicated Psychologists, Social Workers, and ABA Specialists
- Evolving Blueprint for Middle School Success
 - Inclusion of music at the 6th grade level

APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The Academy Charter School

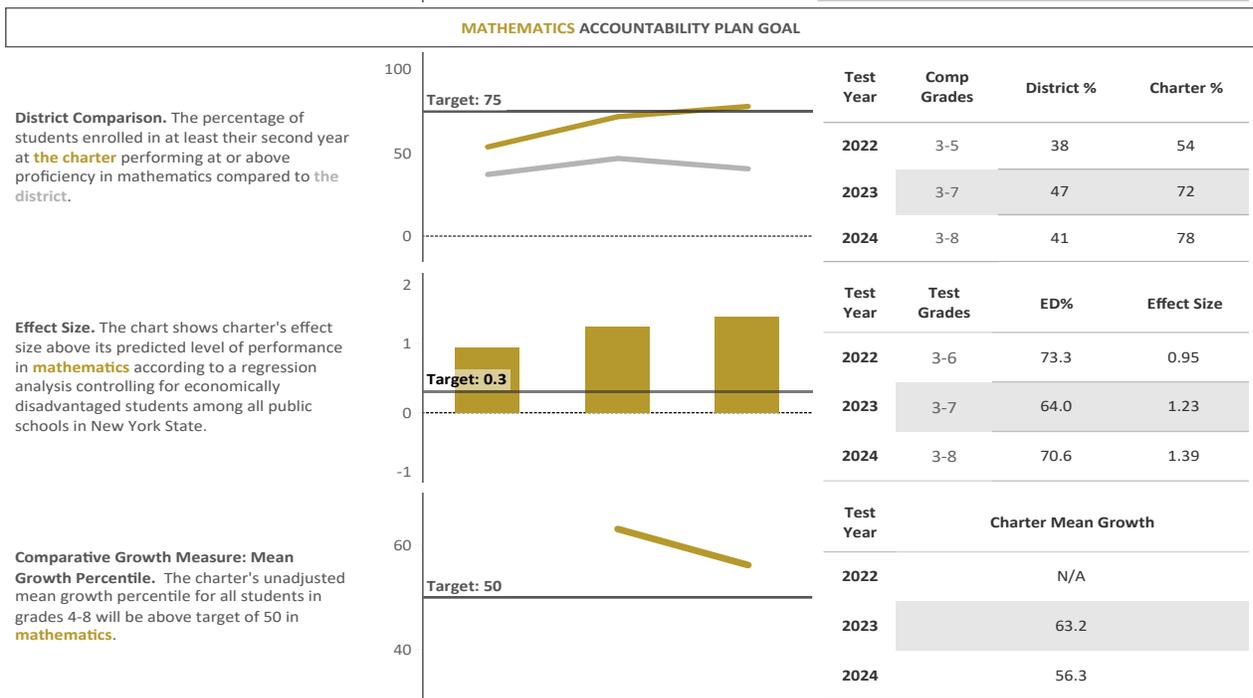
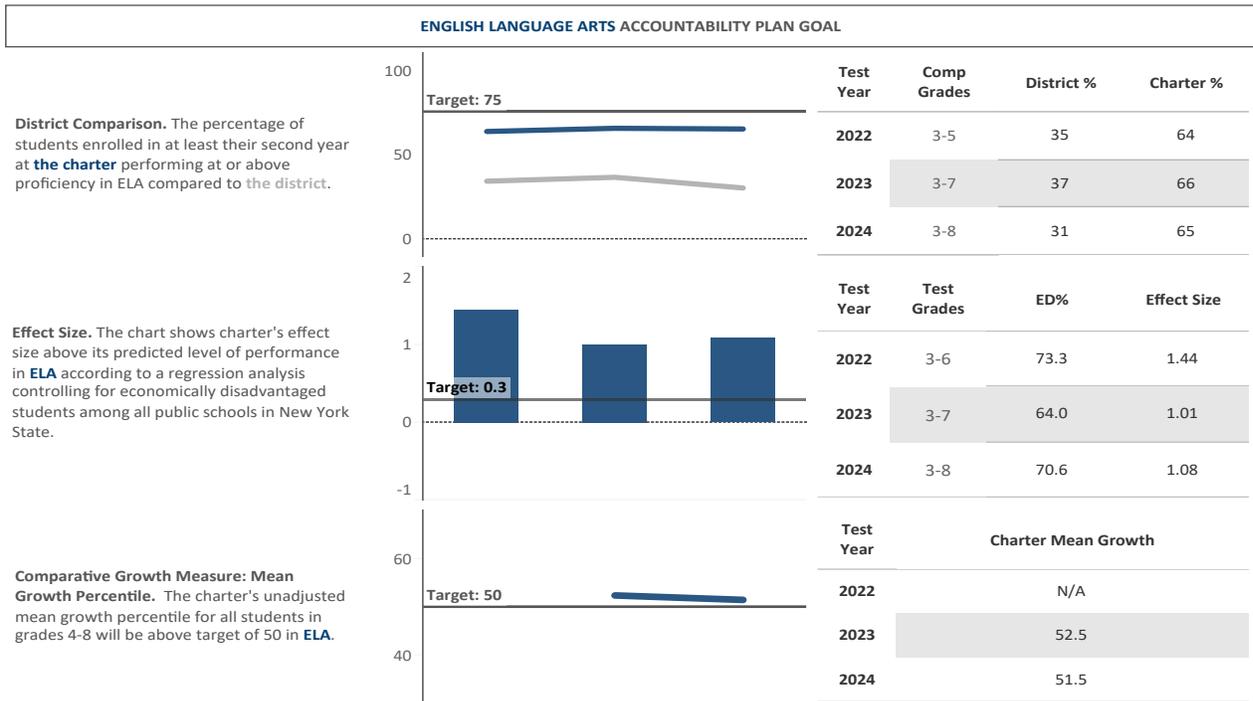
Hempstead UFSD



APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The Academy Charter School - Uniondale

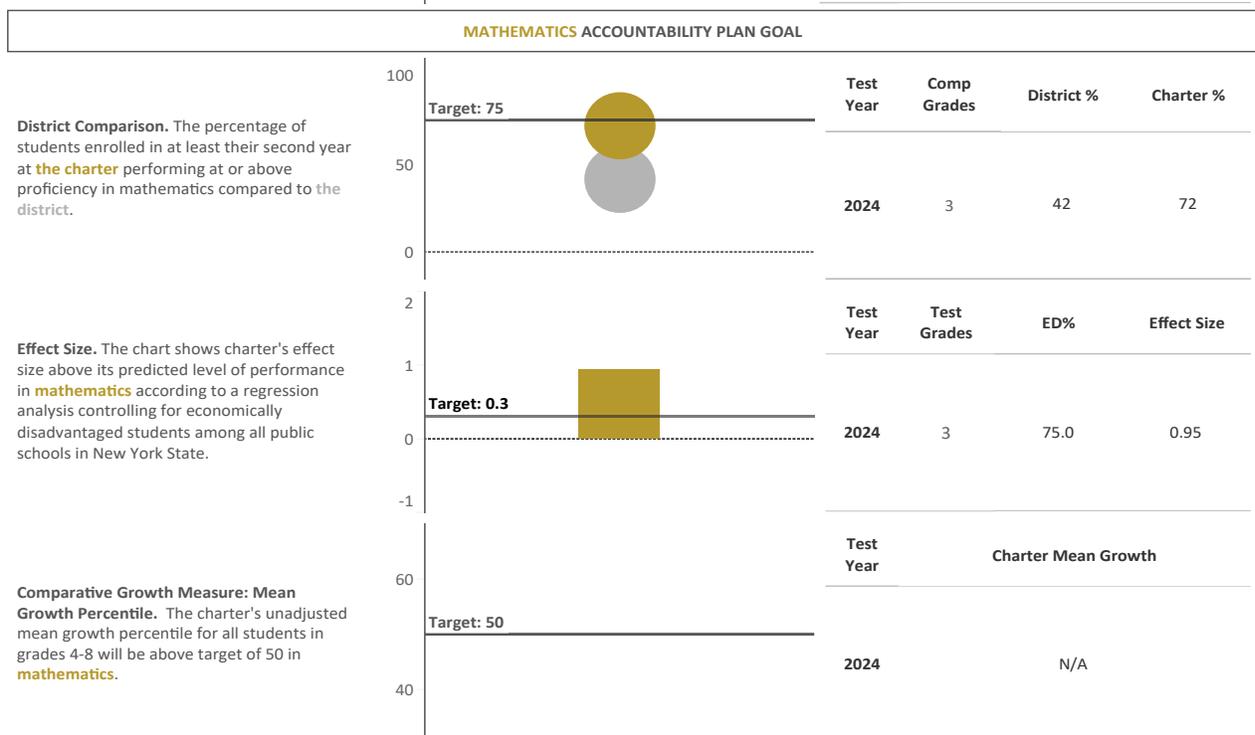
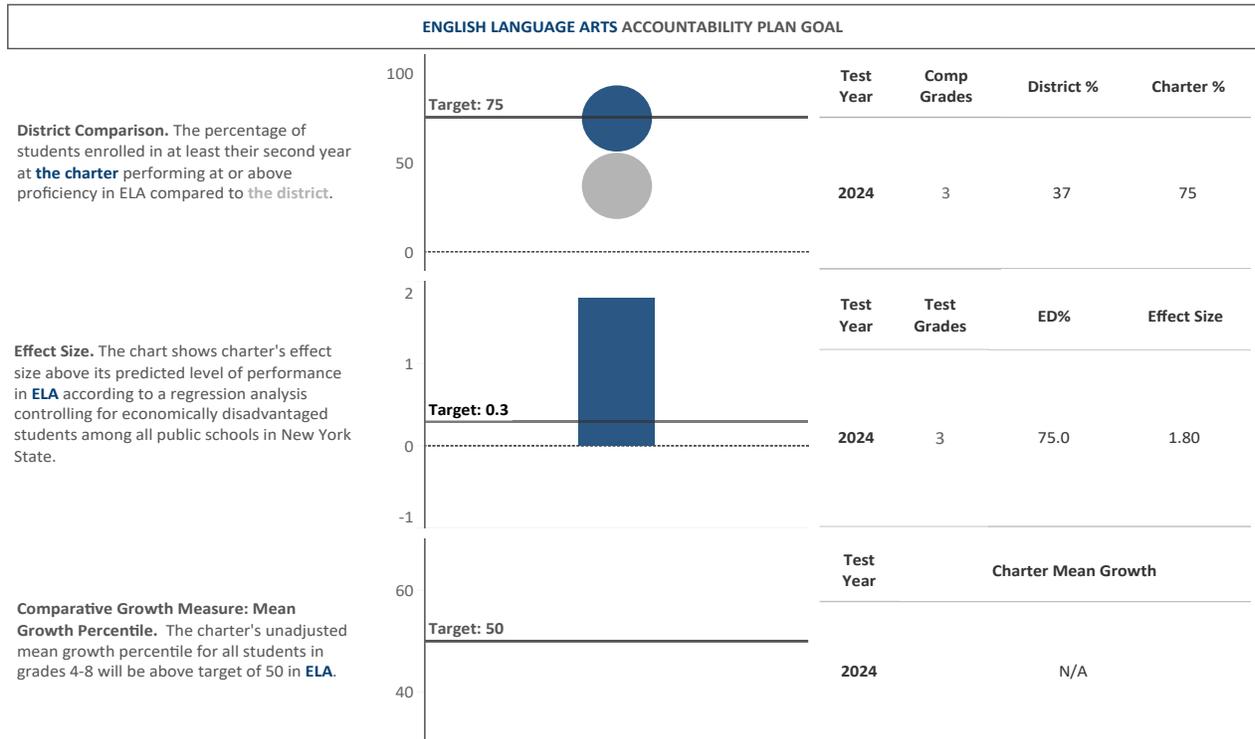
Uniondale UFSD



APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The Academy Charter School - Wyandanch

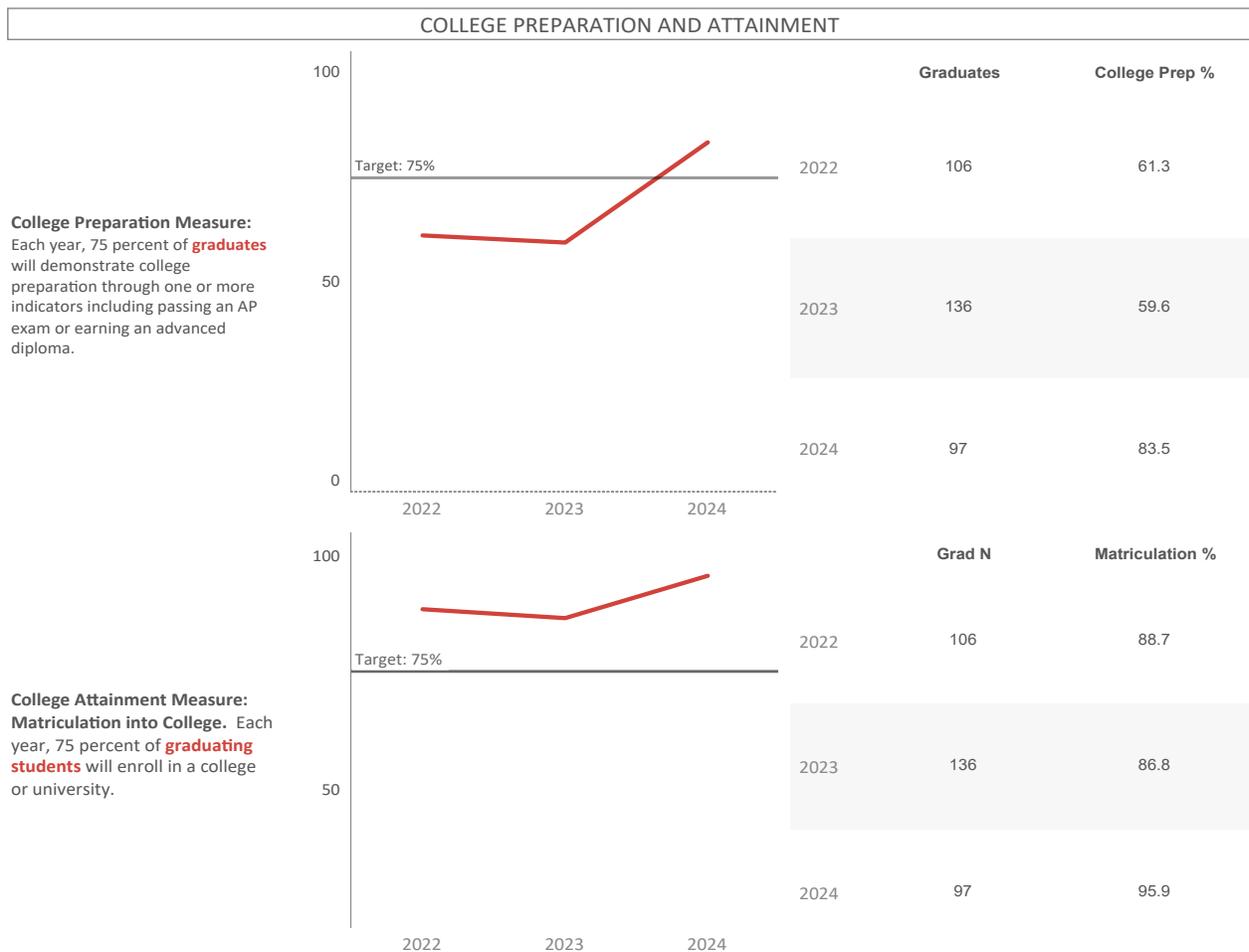
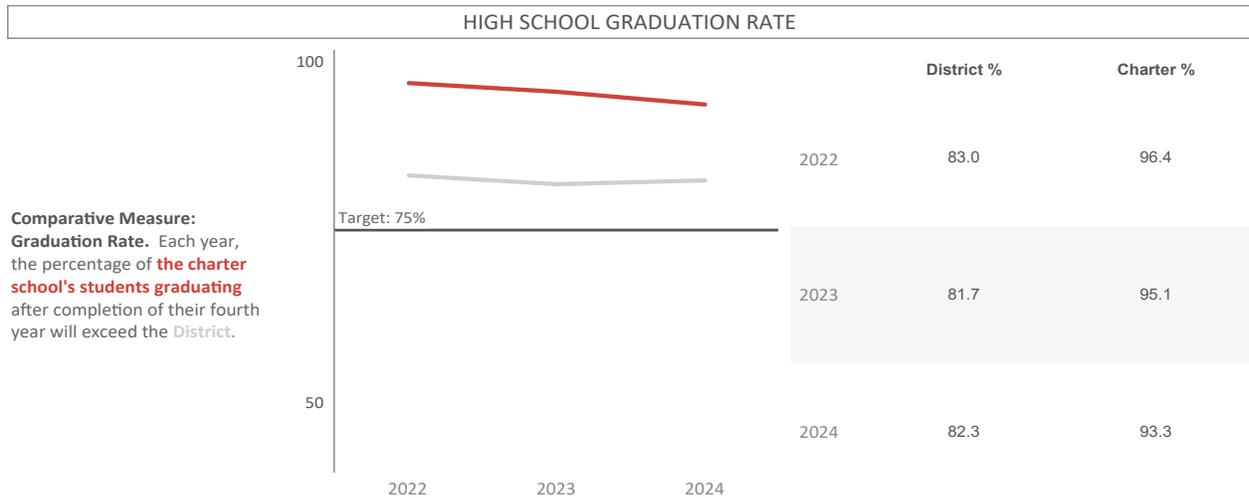
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APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The Academy Charter School

Hempstead UFSD

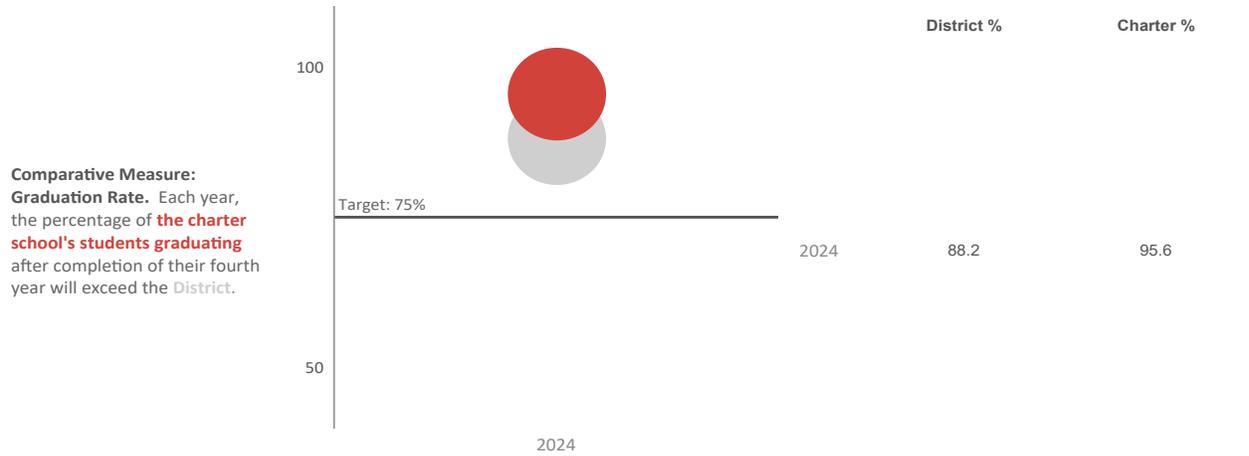


APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

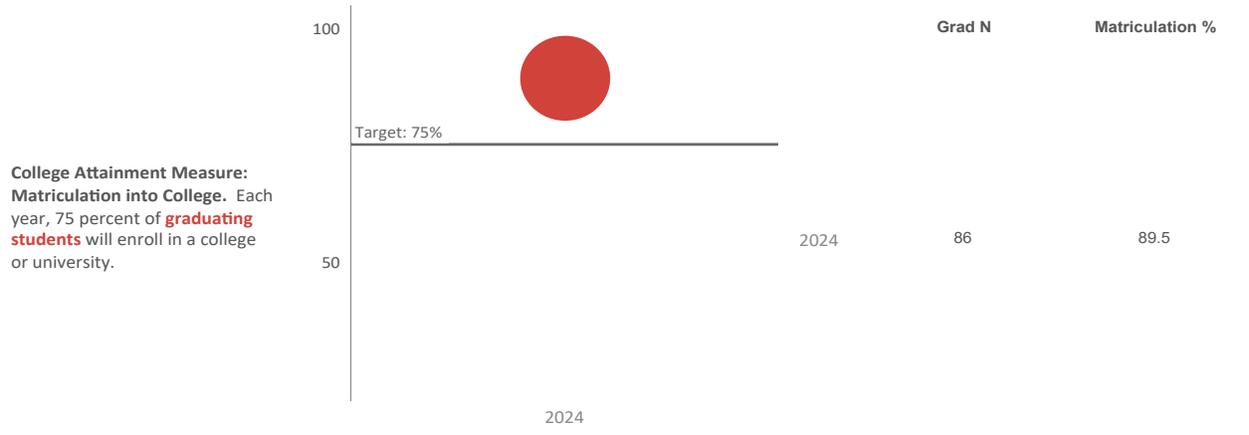
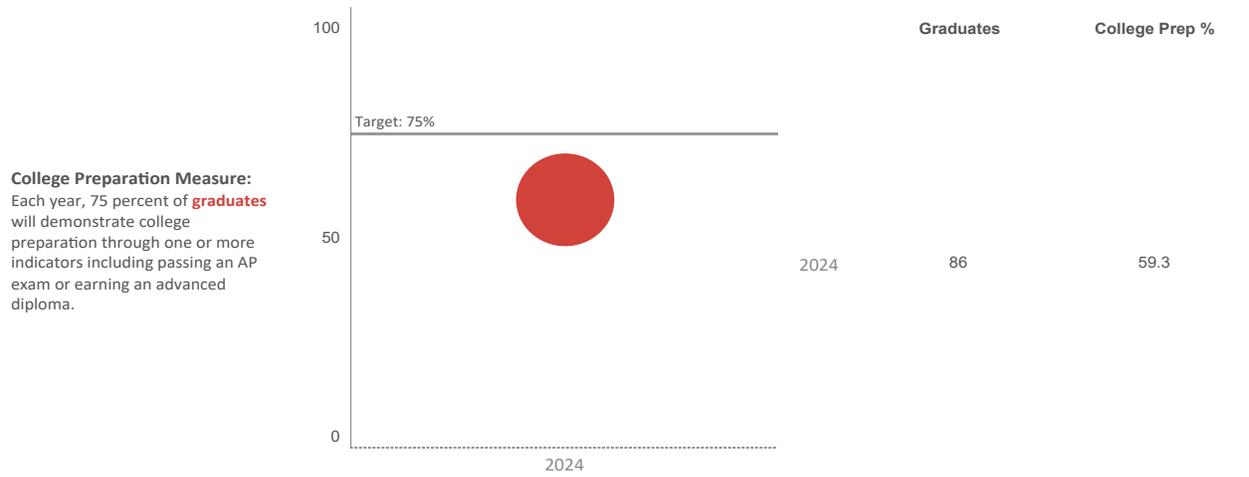
The Academy Charter School - Uniondale

Uniondale UFSD

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE



COLLEGE PREPARATION AND ATTAINMENT

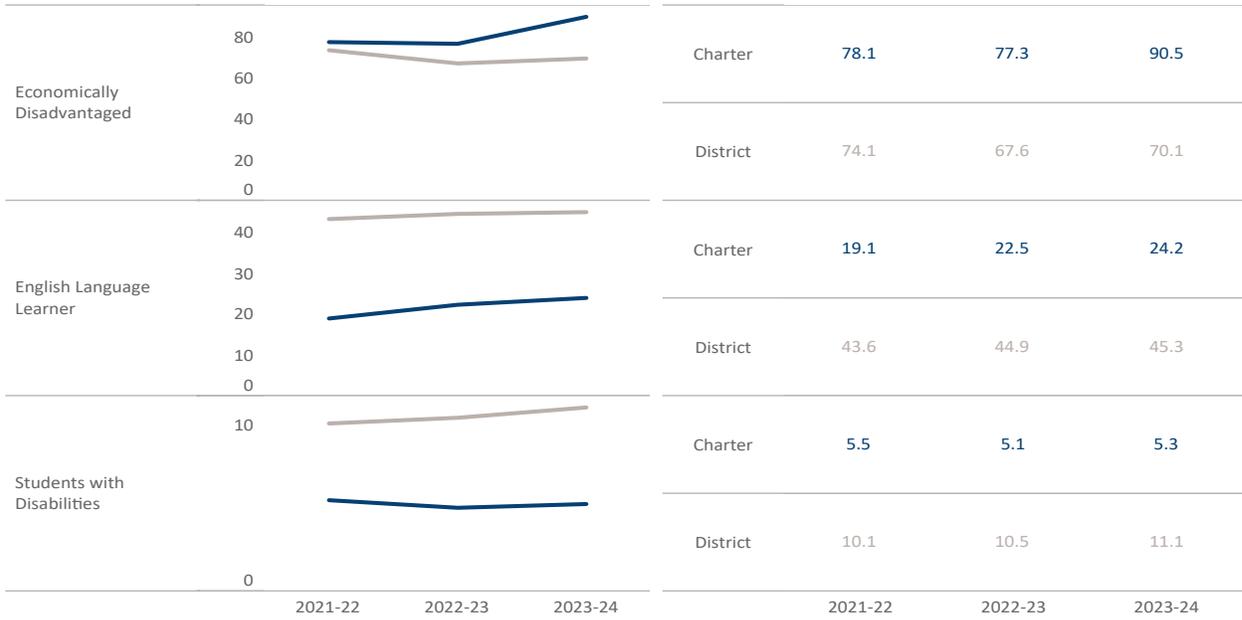


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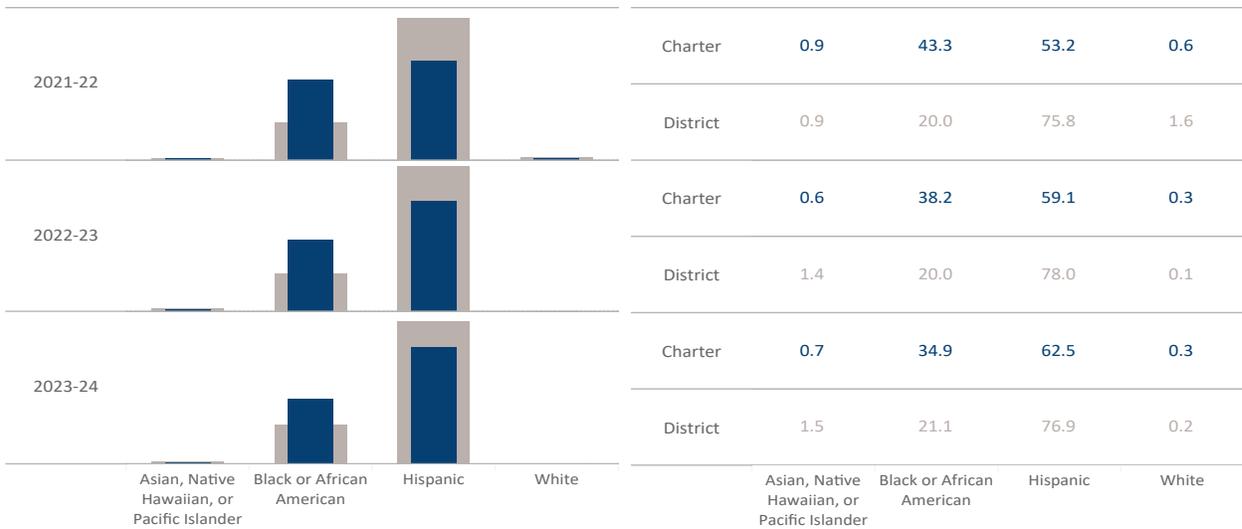
The Academy Charter School

Hempstead UFSD

Student Demographics: Sub-populations



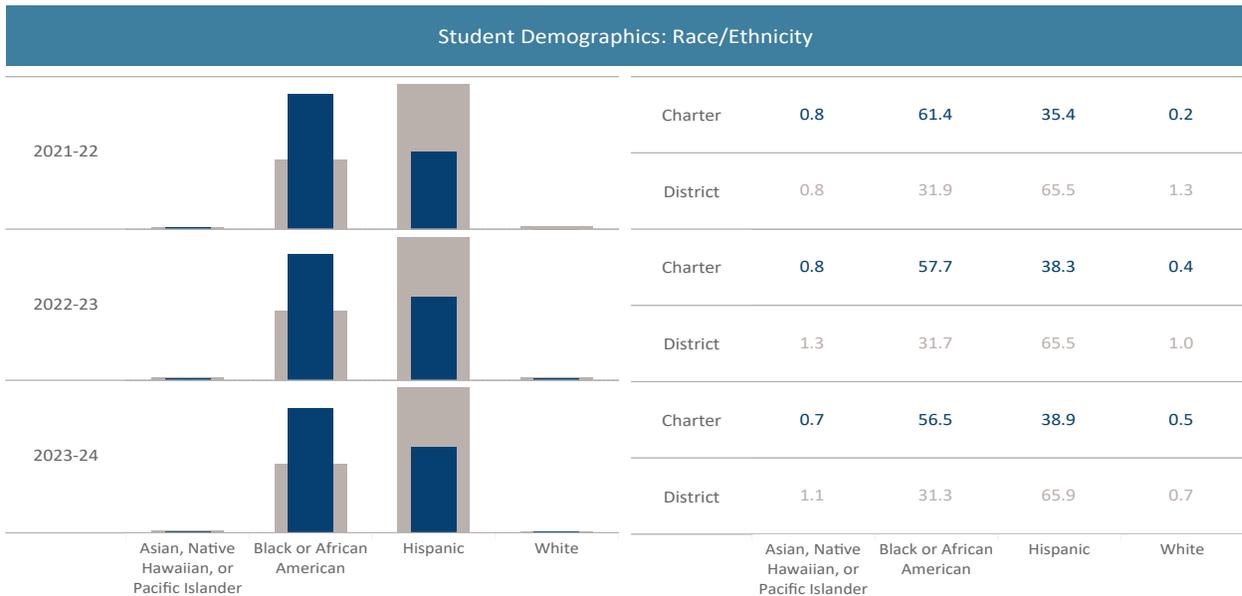
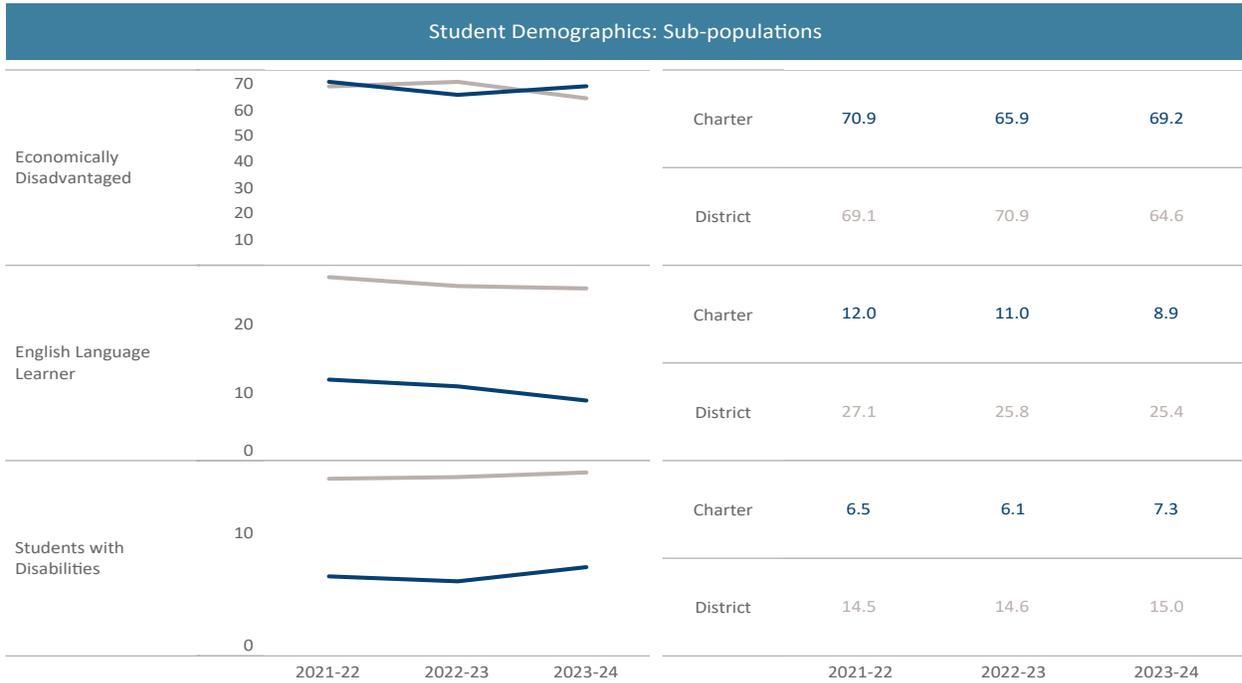
Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity



APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The Academy Charter School - Uniondale

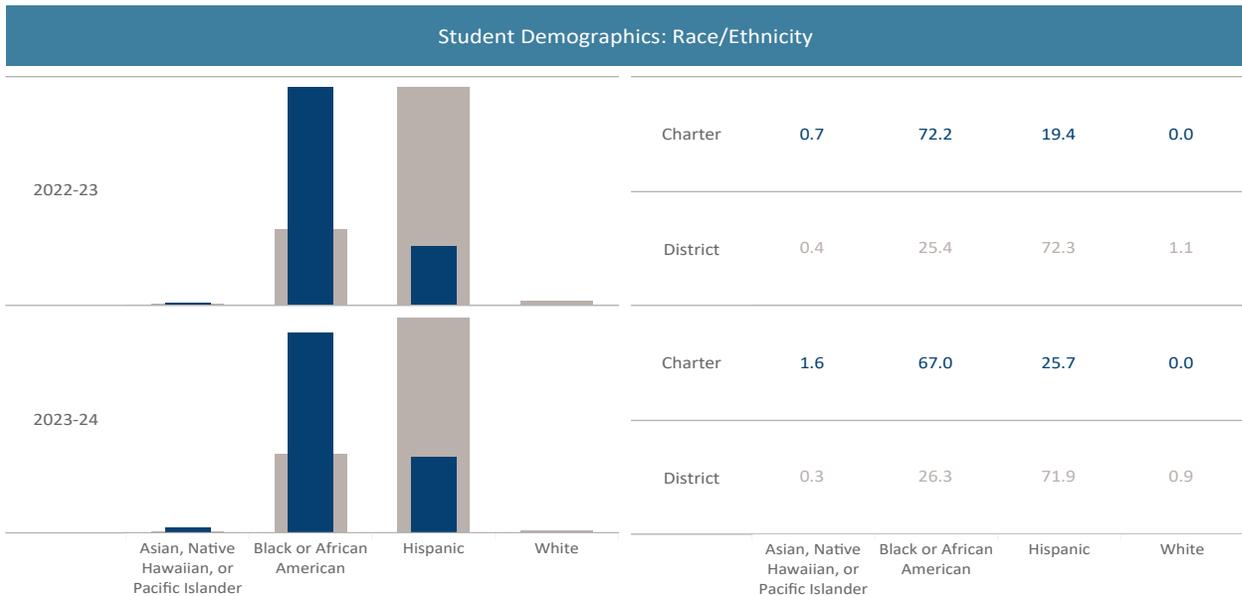
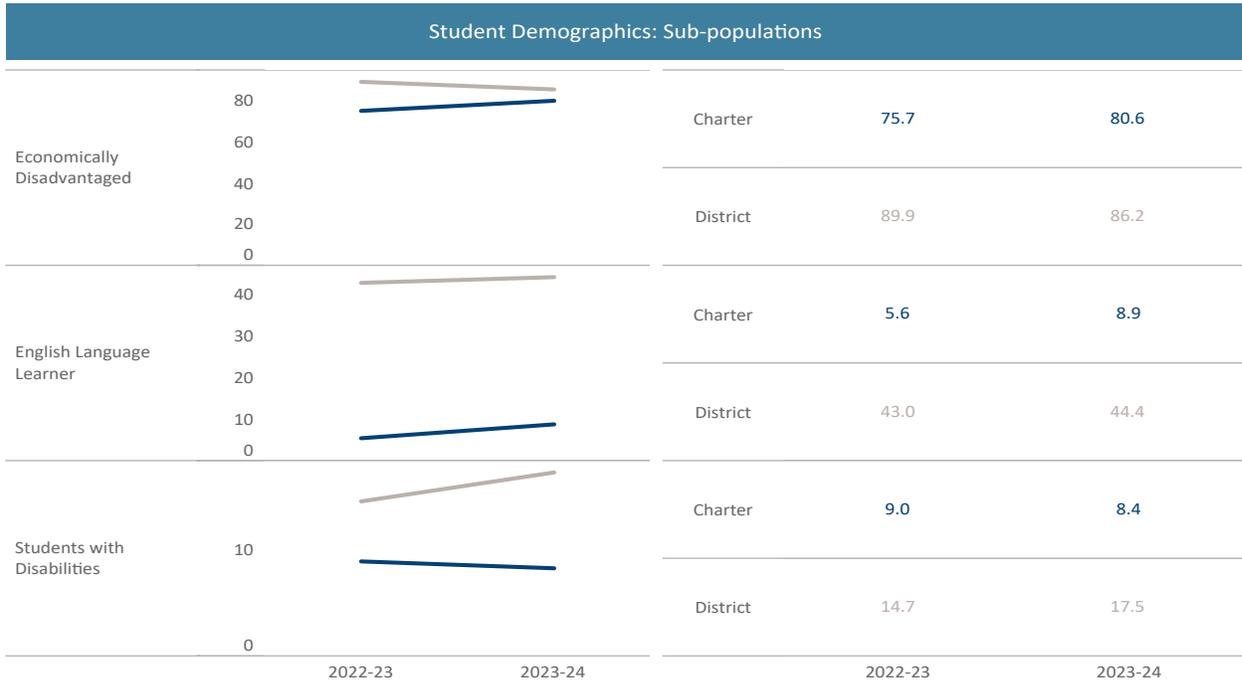
Uniondale UFSD



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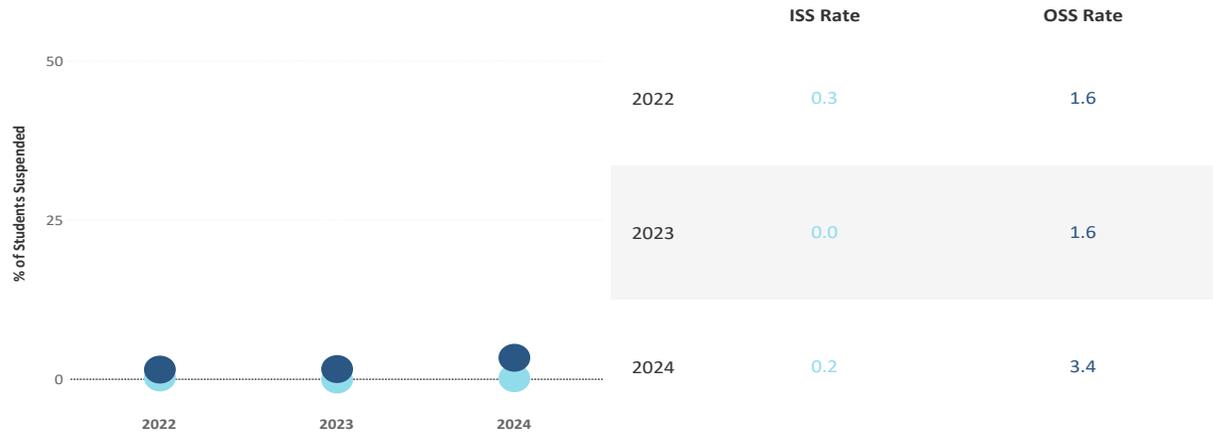
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Wyandanch UFSD

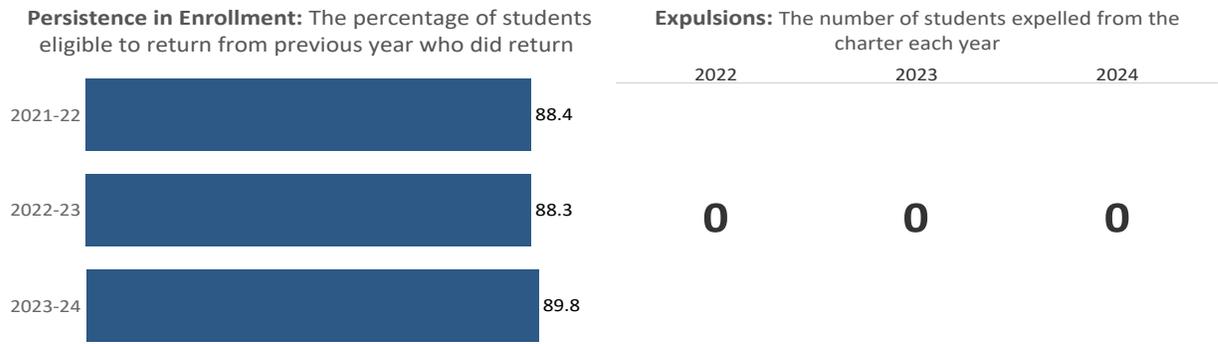


APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The Academy Charter School



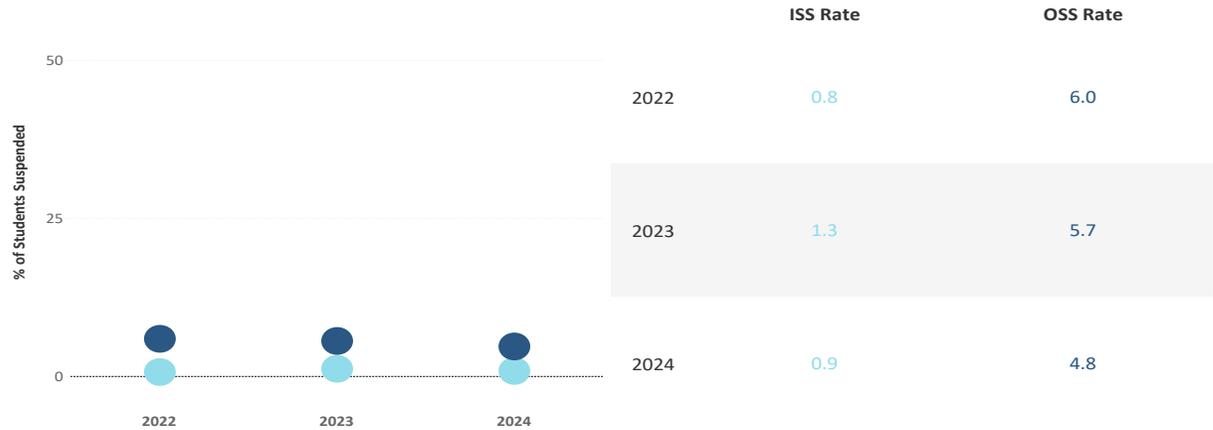
Data suitable for comparison are not available. The percentage rate shown here is calculated using the method employed by NYCDOE: the total number of students receiving an in school or out of school suspension at any time during the school year is divided by the total enrollment, then multiplied by 100.



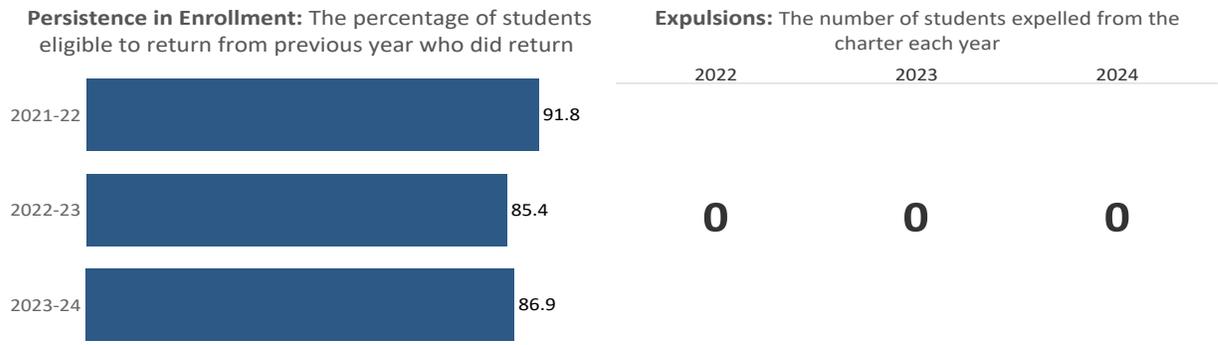
The Academy Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2023-24		Target	Charter
enrollment	economically disadvantaged	78.4	90.5
	English language learners	39.3	24.2
	students with disabilities	8.1	5.3
retention	economically disadvantaged	95.9	89.8
	English language learners	93.8	93.0
	students with disabilities	94.9	75.3

APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The Academy Charter School - Uniondale



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.



The Academy Charter School - Uniondale's Enrollment and Retention		Target	Charter
Status: 2023-24			
enrollment	economically disadvantaged	64.1	69.2
	English language learners	26.8	8.9
	students with disabilities	10.8	7.3
retention	economically disadvantaged	96.9	86.5
	English language learners	99.6	92.1
	students with disabilities	95.7	84.6

APPENDIX B: EXISTING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

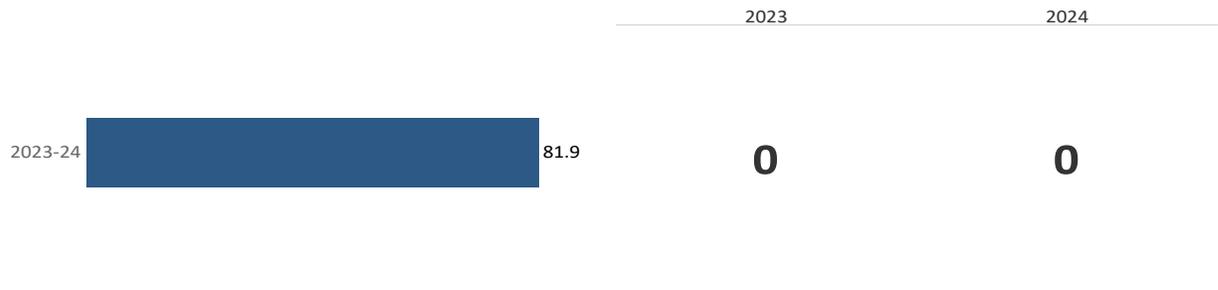
The Academy Charter School - Wyandanch



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

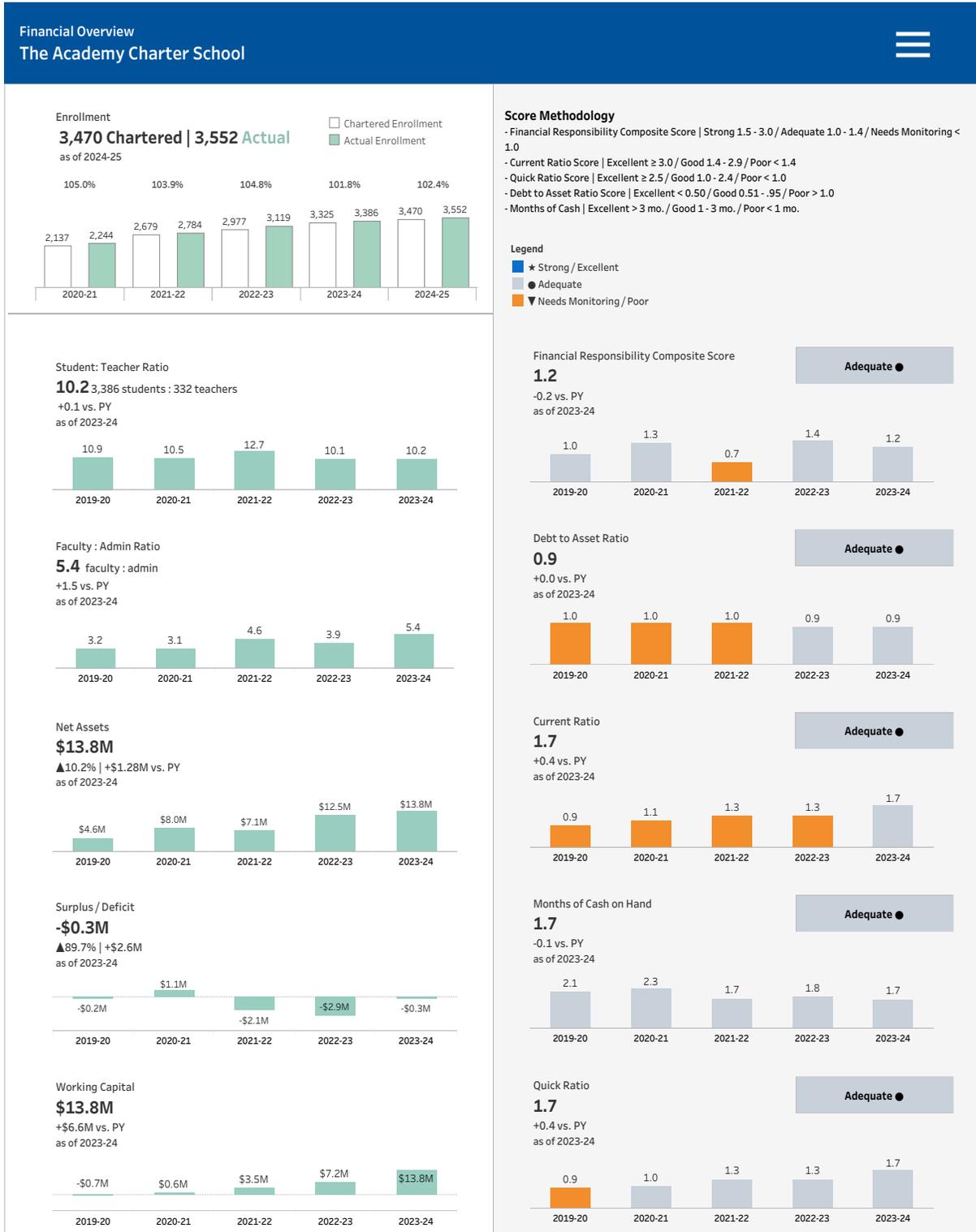
Expulsions: The number of students expelled from the charter each year



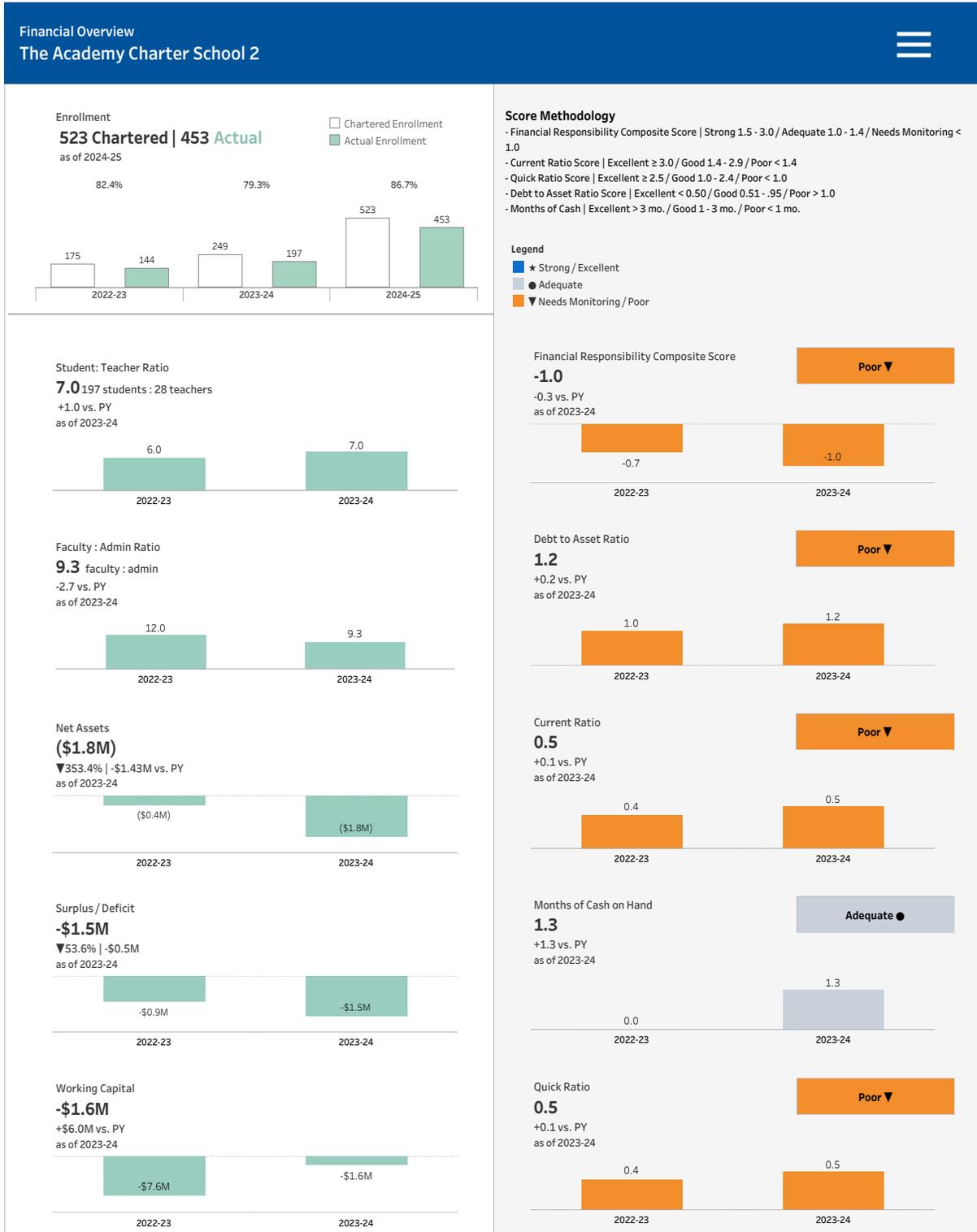
The Academy Charter School - Wyandanch's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2023-24

	Target	Charter
enrollment economically disadvantaged	91.7	80.6
English language learners	39.4	8.9
students with disabilities	12.6	8.4
retention economically disadvantaged	95.8	81.7
English language learners	95.9	87.5
students with disabilities	95.4	84.6

APPENDIX C: FISCAL DASHBOARD



APPENDIX C: FISCAL DASHBOARD





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The State University of New York

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