



# New York State Education Department

## ***Renewal Site Visit Report 2016-2017***

**Evergreen Charter School**

**Visit Date:** 10/18/2016  
**Date of Report:** 1/20/2017

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## SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

### Charter School Summary<sup>1</sup>

<b>Name of Charter School</b>	Evergreen Charter School
<b>Board Chair</b>	Gil Bernardino
<b>School Leader</b>	Maritza Meyers
<b>District of location</b>	Hempstead UFSD
<b>Opening Date</b>	September 1, 2009
<b>Charter Terms</b>	Initial charter term: January 13, 2009 – January 12, 2014 First Renewal Term: January 13, 2014 – June 30, 2014 Second Renewal Term: July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2017
<b>Management Company</b>	N/A
<b>Educational Partners</b>	N/A
<b>Facilities</b>	605 Peninsula Boulevard Hempstead, New York 11550
<b>Mission Statement</b>	<i>The mission of the Evergreen Charter School (ECS) is to nurture the intellectual, physical and social development of children, through a comprehensive program that promotes academic excellence and prepares its students for success in school and in life. Evergreen promotes respect for self, respect for others, and respect for the environment.</i>
<b>Key Design Elements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>ECS ensures that students of varied cultural and social backgrounds and different ability levels achieve their academic potential while developing a positive sense of self-worth.</i></li> <li>• <i>ECS fosters individual growth and development through the implementation of a challenging and comprehensive educational program.</i></li> <li>• <i>Instruction in a second language, i.e. Spanish, and integration of content regarding Hispanic history and culture is parts of ECS' curriculum.</i></li> <li>• <i>ECS features an enriched arts and physical education program and fosters healthy life choices within a child-centered school environment that places a premium on environmental education and</i></li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The information in this section was provided by the NYS Education Department Charter School Office.

<b>Name of Charter School</b>	Evergreen Charter School
	<i>conservation.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>ECS students possess a strong academic foundation sufficient to be successful at every subsequent level of education through college and beyond.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Requested Revisions</b>	To expand from serving Grades K through 6 with a maximum enrollment of 375 students, to serve Grades K through 8 with a maximum enrollment of 600 students.

**School Characteristics**

**Enrollment**

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Actual Enrollment
2016-2017	K-6	375	376
2015-2016	K-5	300	301
2014-2015	K-5	300	300

**METHODOLOGY**

A one-day renewal site visit was conducted at Evergreen Charter School (ECS) on October 18, 2016. The CSO team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership team, and parents. In cooperation with school leadership, the CSO administered an anonymous online survey to teachers in September 2016.

The team conducted eleven classroom observations in kindergarten through Grade 6. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the principal and assistant principal.

The documents and data reviewed by the team before, during, and after the site visit included the following:

- **Teacher roster**
- **Current organization chart**
- **A master school schedule**
- **Board materials**
- **Board self-evaluation documents**
- **Blank teacher and administrator evaluation forms**
- **Student/family handbook**

- Staff handbook and personnel policies
- A list of curricular documents
- A list of major assessments
- Enrollment data including subgroups
- Professional development plans and schedules
- Academic data

**BENCHMARK ANALYSIS**

The Performance Framework, which is part of the oversight plan included in the Charter Agreement for each school that was chartered or renewed in 2012 or beyond, outlines 10 Performance Benchmarks in three key areas of charter school performance:

- Educational Success
- Organizational Soundness
- Faithfulness to Charter and Law

Observational findings from the site visit will be presented in alignment with the [Performance Framework](#) Benchmarks and Indicators according to the rating scale below, although not all indicators will necessarily be assessed on every site visit. A brief summary of the school’s performance will precede the benchmark analysis. Each benchmark will be rated; however, the report narrative will highlight those indicators not yet fully met by the school.

Level	Description
<b>Exceeds</b>	The school meets the performance benchmark; potential exemplar in this area.
<b>Meets</b>	The school generally meets the performance benchmark; few concerns are noted.
<b>Approaches</b>	The school does not meet the performance benchmark; a number of concerns are noted.
<b>Falls Far Below</b>	The school falls far below the performance benchmark; significant concerns are noted.

For the site visit conducted on 10/18/2016 at Evergreen Charter School, see the following Performance Benchmark Scores and discussion.

**New York State Education Department  
Charter School Performance Framework Rating**

Performance Benchmark		Level
<b>Educational Success</b>	<b>Benchmark 1: Student Performance:</b> The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward proficiency, proficiency and high school graduation. At all grade levels and all assessments, scoring proficiently means achieving a performance level of 3 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).	Exceeds
	<b>Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning:</b> School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that lead to students’ well-being, improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the NYS Learning Standards (NYSLs) for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.	Meets
	<b>Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Family Engagement:</b> The school has systems in place to support students’ social and emotional health and to provide for a safe and respectful learning environment. Families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school’s academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.	Meets
<b>Organizational Soundness</b>	<b>Benchmark 4: Financial Condition:</b> The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.	Meets
	<b>Benchmark 5: Financial Management:</b> The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a long-range financial plan, appropriate internal controls and procedures, and in accordance with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.	Meets
	<b>Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance:</b> The board of trustees provides competent stewardship and oversight of the school while maintaining policies, establishing performance goals, and implementing systems to ensure academic success, organizational viability, board effectiveness and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.	Meets
	<b>Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity:</b> The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure, clearly delineated roles for staff, management, and board members. The school has systems and protocols that allow for the successful implementation, evaluation, and improvement of its academic program and operations.	Meets
<b>Faithfulness to Charter &amp; Law</b>	<b>Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements:</b> The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.	Meets
	<b>Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention:</b> The school is meeting or making annual progress toward meeting the enrollment plan outlined in its charter and its enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch program; or has demonstrated that it has made extensive good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain such students.	Meets
	<b>Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance:</b> The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.	Meets

Performance Benchmark	Level
<b>Summary of Findings</b>	

In the first two years of the current three year charter term, ECS produced academic outcomes in ELA and math that exceed the Hempstead Unified School District for the school as a whole and for all three subgroups. The academic outcomes for both subjects and in both years exceed the NYS average for all students and all three subgroups, with the exception of a single percentage point variance in the ELL subgroup in 2015.

The ECS instructional program is based on a coherent curriculum that integrates Spanish and test preparation. The school uses a co-teaching model to make use of small group differentiated instruction. A variety of assessments and systems are in place to collect and analyze objective information, to drive instructional planning and meet the learning needs of at-risk students.

Organizationally, the school has a stable board, leadership, and faculty. The board monitors student outcomes and is strategically planning for the school’s future. School leadership provides clear guidance and direction, evaluates staff, and holds them accountable. A coherent professional development program is in place and teachers are provided with coaching and support.

According to focus group and survey results, all stakeholders have a clear sense of the school’s mission and the key design elements.

In March 2016, the Board of Regents approved the school’s request to expand from serving Grades k-5 (300 students) to serve Grades k-6 (375 students). The expansion was implemented in 2016-2017.

### **Benchmark 1: Student Performance**

*The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward proficiency, proficiency and high school graduation. At all grade levels and all assessments, scoring proficiently means achieving a performance level of 3 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).*

#### **Finding: Exceeds**

**Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1:** See Appendix A for further detailed information.

The percentage of students proficient in ELA and mathematics at ECS was significantly higher than that of the Hempstead Unified School District in 2015 and 2016 for the school as a whole and for all subgroups. By 2016, ECS student performance exceeded the NYS average for the school as a whole and for all subgroups, in both areas. The school continues to see strong growth in academic outcomes for all students.

## Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

*School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that lead to students' well-being, improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the NYS Learning Standards (NYSLs) for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.*

### Finding: The site visit team has determined that Evergreen Charter School Meets Performance Benchmark 2.

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to the CCLS.</li><li>b. Teachers use unit and lesson plans that introduce complex materials, stimulate higher order thinking, and build deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content.</li><li>c. The curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and vertically between grades.</li><li>d. The curriculum is differentiated to provide opportunities for all students to master grade-level skills and concepts.</li></ul>
2. Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The school staff has a common understanding of high-quality instruction, and observed instructional practices align to this understanding.</li><li>b. Instructional delivery fosters engagement with all students.</li></ul>
3. Assessment and Program Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The school uses a balanced system of formative, diagnostic and summative assessments.</li><li>b. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to inform instruction and improve student outcomes.</li><li>c. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the academic program, and modifies the program accordingly.</li></ul>
4. Supports for Diverse Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The school provides supports to meet the academic needs for all students, including but not limited to: students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students.</li><li>b. The school has systems to monitor the progress of individual students and facilitate communication between interventionists and classroom teachers regarding the needs of individual students.</li></ul>

#### Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2:

According to board members and school leaders, the school uses a coherent curriculum that is research-based and NYS standards-aligned, and reviewed and modified on an ongoing basis at the school level. The school uses a balanced literacy program for ELA instruction to meet gaps in vertical alignment.

The school's balanced literacy program primarily uses the *WriteSteps Writing Program (based on 6+1 Traits and Madeleine Hunter)* and EngageNY Math Modules as the primary mathematics curriculum.

The school added the new writing program in 2016. The program was selected because it fits with its workshop approach and encourages high order independent thinking. Evidence of writing across the curriculum was observed in classrooms throughout the school. The school is also using the iReady program, a computer-based adaptive resource that provides self-paced instruction based on diagnostic assessments that teachers can use to assign supplemental practice for specific skills. Students receive daily Spanish instruction and are taught as either native or non-native Spanish-speakers.

School leaders reported on a new curriculum initiative for the ECS science program. Beginning in 2016, the school implemented the Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES Science21 curriculum in kindergarten. The curriculum will be rolled out one year at a time from grades 1 through 6. Science21 is aligned to NYS Standards and encourages student-directed learning. Additionally, the school has a robust music program with the opportunity for students to learn violin, viola, cello, and recorder.

Literacy and math consultants meet with administrators and teachers on a regular basis to work on vertical alignment of the curriculum. Instructional leaders develop annual pacing calendars that are regularly reviewed and revised and used by teachers to guide lesson planning. The school utilizes a lesson framework that gives teachers a common structure with which to collaborate and plan. Grade level teams that include special education teachers meet weekly to develop lesson plans for the coming week, which are then submitted to instructional leaders for review and feedback.

School leaders reported continued improved implementation of the co-teaching model and targeted instruction. The school makes significant use of co-teaching, with two teachers in every kindergarten and first grade class and three teachers assigned to the two classes in each upper grade. Small group instruction was evident in many observed classes, with reading and math specialists teaching small groups as well. Teachers used a variety of instructional methods, including whole class discussion, small groups, pair/share activities, and independent practice. Students also participate in self-paced, computer-based instruction using programs such as iReady and Accelerated Reader. Lessons were generally purposeful and organized with clear learning objectives. In most lessons observed, students seemed to be engaged in rigorous learning activities. Many teachers reflected NYSL shifts with an emphasis on textual analysis and higher level questioning. Classroom pacing appeared to be intentional and strategic; for example, teachers maximized instructional time by moving quickly from introductions to student-led activities and provided good wait time during questioning to encourage extended answers. In observed classrooms, students demonstrated engagement through focused independent practice, participation in turn and talk sharing, and responding to question prompts either in individual responses or silent polling of agreement/disagreement with pre-determined hand signals.

The school uses a variety of formative, summative, and diagnostic assessments to collect data. iReady and Fountas and Pinnell assessments are used in ELA and math instruction, and teachers make use of the assessments associated with the school's curriculum programs as well. Mock assessments are also administered and test prep is integrated into the regular curriculum. eDoctrina is used for data analysis and teachers participate in monthly data meetings. The director of curriculum and Instruction, director of data and attendance, and the vice principal all support teachers in analyzing data sets and constructing individualized plans with differentiated instructional strategies. The school leaders reported the use of data to address struggling learners through the Response to Intervention tiers. In addition to student-level and teacher-level data, the school reported the use of school-wide data to evaluate the academic programs and making any programming adjustments. Use of data was evident in

small group instruction and the assignment of skills practice using the iReady and Accelerated Reader programs. The school tracks Fountas and Pinnell level goals by grade and results were posted in the principal's office.

The school uses a range of strategies to address the needs of diverse learners. Small group instruction was frequently observed as well as intervention groups and more intensive targeted programs such as phonics intervention. The school uses co-teaching to provide opportunities for individualized support; while many teachers are dually certified in special education, the school does not offer formal integrated co-teaching for special education. The school employs three full-time English as New Language specialists who collaborate or co-teach with classroom teachers to support ELLs in all content areas. In addition, all teachers have been trained in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), which informs them on how to design and deliver lessons to meet diverse student needs, in particular those of ELLs.

### Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate and Family Engagement

*The school has systems in place to support students' social and emotional health and to provide for a safe and respectful learning environment. Families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school's academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.*

#### **Finding: The site visit team has determined that Evergreen Charter School Meets Performance Benchmark 3.**

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Behavior Management and Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The school has a clear approach to behavioral management, including a written discipline policy.</li><li>b. The school appears safe and all school constituents are able to articulate how the school community maintains a safe environment.</li><li>c. The school has systems in place to ensure that the environment is free from harassment and discrimination.</li><li>d. Classroom environments are conducive to learning and generally free from disruption.</li></ul>
2. <i>Family Engagement and Communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Teachers communicate with parents to discuss students' strengths and needs.</li><li>b. The school assesses family and student satisfaction using strategies such as surveys, feedback sessions, community forums, or participation logs, and considers results when making schoolwide decisions.</li><li>c. The school has a systematic process for responding to parent or community concerns.</li><li>d. The school shares school-level academic data with the broader school community to promote transparency and accountability among parents, students and school constituents.</li></ul>
3. <i>Social-Emotional Supports</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. School leaders collect and use data to track the socio-emotional needs of students.</li><li>b. School leaders collect and use data regarding the impact of programs designed to support students' social and emotional health.</li></ul>

#### **Summative Evidence for Benchmark 3:**

The school has a clear and consistent approach to school culture and behavior management. Classroom observations revealed well-defined expectations, routines in place, a calm and warm learning environment and little evidence of disruptive or off-task behavior. Teachers were observed creating classroom environments that are conducive to learning by using polite reminders about behavior and effectively redirecting students who are off-task. The school employs a classroom clip chart system for noting student behaviors, which was developed in collaboration with administration and staff. In public spaces, students were quiet and courteous and transitions were quick and efficient. The school has a behavior management committee composed of teachers who led changes to focus on creating a more positive, encouraging environment along with incentives, rewards and related assemblies. The school maintains safety through school-wide rules that emphasize positive behavior and a discipline code that

describes escalating behavior concerns and the corresponding range of disciplinary actions. At the time of the visit, the school leadership reported not needing to take any actions of suspension or expulsion for the 2016 school year. The school has established a strong, caring community. On the day of the renewal visit the school evidenced a respectful environment.

In addition to having a Parent Association (PA), the school organizes numerous events and workshops for families and reports high participation rates. Parents are required to pick up their child's report card so that they can interact directly with teachers. The school also shares out school-level data at board meetings, which are open to the public. The School-Family Partnership meetings are another forum for the families to share any questions or concerns they may have with the school leadership and the board. The school reported frequent communication with parents at drop-off and pick-up as well as by phone and e-mail, and makes sure that notifications for all events are sent to families in both English and Spanish. The school conducts parent-teacher conferences, with accommodations for teachers to have additional coverage in order to meet with a parent at a different time. The PA holds its own meetings and publicly shares the meeting schedule. They also hold fundraisers and special events, organize school-wide assemblies, and runs a families in need program. The school formally solicits parent feedback through a parent survey and historically has a high response rate to its parent survey. For the 2015-2016 school year, the school reported that 98% of parents expressed satisfaction with the school on the parent survey. The school also has a formal concern or complaint process, which families can initiate and find information on at the front desk of the school.

The school has social emotional development practices in place. The social worker provides counseling, along with information about community resources and support services. Teachers collect data on individual student behaviors, and then work with the school leaders and social worker to analyze trends. The Child Study Team will meet to discuss individual students to determine if social, emotional, or behavioral supports are needed. The team develops behavior plans and discusses various intervention strategies to address any issues. Since the last visit, the school has formalized its social emotional resources into a character education curriculum.

#### Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

*The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.*

**Finding: The site visit team has determined that Evergreen Charter School Meets Performance Benchmark 4.**

#### Summative Evidence for Benchmark 4 :

##### Financial Condition

ECS appears to be in good financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the school's independently audited financial statements.

The Charter School Office reviews the financial performance and management of charter schools using quantitative and qualitative methods. Near-term indicators, such as the current ratio and unrestricted days cash, are measures of liquidity and of the charter school's capacity to maintain operations. Long-term indicators, such as total margin and debt-to asset ratio, are measures of the charter school's capacity to remain viable and to meet financial obligations.

##### Overall Financial Outlook

A *composite score* is an overall measure of financial health calculated by the Department's Office of Audit Services. This score is based on a weighting of primary reserves, equity, and net income. A charter school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is considered in strong financial health ECS's composite score for 2014-2015 is 2.50. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2012-2013 through 2014-2015.

**Evergreen Charter School's Composite Scores  
2012-2013 to 2014-2015**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2014-2015	2.50
2013-2014	2.20
2012-2013	1.70

Source: NYSED Office of Audit Services

##### Near Term Indicators

Near term indicators of financial health are used to understand the current financial performance and viability of the school. The Charter School Office uses three measures:

The *current ratio* is a financial ratio that measures whether or not a charter school has enough resources to pay its debts over the next 12 months. The ratio is mainly used to give an idea of the school's ability to pay back its short-term liabilities (debt and payables) with its short-term assets (cash, inventory, receivables). The higher the current ratio, the more capable the school is of paying its obligations, with a ratio under 1.0 indicating concern. For 2015-2016, ECS had a current ratio of 2.8.

*Unrestricted cash* measures, in days, whether the charter school can meet operating expenses without receiving new income. Schools typically strive to maintain at least 90 days of cash on hand. For fiscal year 2015-2016, ECS operated with 27 days of unrestricted cash.

*Enrollment stability* measures whether or not a charter school is meeting its enrollment projections, thereby generating sufficient revenue to fund ongoing operations. Actual enrollment that is over 85 percent is considered reasonable. ECS's enrollment stability for 2015-2016 was at 100 percent.

### **Long Term Indicators**

A charter school's *debt to asset ratio* measures the extent to which the school relies on borrowed funds to finance its operations. It is calculated as total liabilities divided by total assets. A ratio of 0.9 or less meets a standard of low risk. For 2015-2016, ECS's debt to asset ratio was 0.2.

*Total margin* measures the deficit or surplus a charter school yields out of its total revenues; in other words, whether or not the school is living within its available resources. Total margin is calculated as net income divided by total revenue. A total margin that is positive indicates low risk. For 2015-2016, ECS's total margin was 1.0 percent.

### **Benchmark 5: Financial Management**

*The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a long-range financial plan, appropriate internal controls and procedures, and in accordance with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.*

Select a rating.

### **Meets**

The CSO team reviewed ECS's 2015-2016 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that could be considered material weaknesses.

## Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance

*The board of trustees provides competent stewardship and oversight of the school while maintaining policies, establishing performance goals, and implementing systems to ensure academic success, organizational viability, board effectiveness and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.*

### Finding: The site visit team has determined that Evergreen Charter School Meets Performance Benchmark 6.

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Board Oversight and Governance</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The board recruits and selects board members with skills and expertise that meet the needs of the school.</li><li>b. The board engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning by setting priorities and goals that are aligned with the school’s mission and educational philosophy.</li><li>c. The board demonstrates active oversight of the charter school management, fiscal operations and progress toward meeting academic and other school goals.</li><li>d. The board regularly updates school policies.</li><li>e. The board utilizes a performance-based evaluation process for evaluating school leadership, itself and providers.</li><li>f. The board demonstrates full awareness of its legal obligations to the school and stakeholders.</li></ol>

#### Summative Evidence for Benchmark 6:

The members of the school’s board of trustees have a variety of skills and backgrounds with which to govern the school, including legal, education, social work, and community connections. The board has had stable membership over the course of the charter term, with the co-founders of the school serving as the president and vice president of the board. The board does not plan on adding any new board members in the short-term.

The board described its eagerness to move forward with its expansion plan and is poised to secure property for a facility expansion to manage the growth. Along with its strategic growth plan, the board is focused on continued academic achievement. The board discussed having high expectations of school leadership and ensuring that the school continues to move in the direction of improvement. The board mentioned the adjustments the school had taken in the last year, such as more small group instruction and additional instructors at the upper grade levels, as strategies employed that contributed to recent increase in student achievement on state testing.

The board conducts monthly meetings that provide opportunities for public comment. Board members indicated a priority is fostering community and open communication with parents and families of the students. They solicit and receive a good deal of input from the community at School-Family Partnership meetings and via surveys. On the day of the visit, about 70 parents and guardians attended a focus group to show support for the school and express how valuable an educational option they found the school.

The board works closely with the school administration on planning in a collaborative process. The board has a dual reporting structure, with both the principal (instructional lead) and the director of finance and operations (operational lead) reporting into it. The board requires any budgetary and instructional decision to go through a board approval process.

The board conducts ongoing monitoring of both academic and financial performance through regular academic dashboards and financial reports at the monthly board meetings. The dashboard includes information on student performance on benchmark and diagnostic assessments, student attrition, enrollment, and attendance. The board further reported using the state’s performance framework as a guide to monitor progress and performance. While the board does regularly evaluate the principal and the director of finance and operations, they have only established a rubric for evaluation of the principal. Since the last visit, the board has put in place a four-point scale to evaluate the principal in the areas of instructional leadership, academic assessment and teaching, caring culture of commitment, operations and financials, and good governance. However, there are no clear and measurable goals for evaluating the director of finance and operations, which additionally includes input by the school’s CPA consultant, who is also responsible for the school’s financial oversight.

The board has an annual evaluation process in place that includes a self-evaluation of the board as a whole, as well as individual members. The board also has received training from the school’s attorney and an outside consulting firm, Non-Profit Financial Management, to stay updated on the legal, governance, and fiduciary responsibilities. In addition, the board has a process in place for on-going review and revision of its policies that incorporates feedback from administrators, staff, and families. The board demonstrates awareness of conflict of interest requirements, through the disclosure of key relationships of board members with the school’s landlord and those members recusing themselves from decisions and votes related to the school’s status as tenant (as documented in board meetings’ minutes).

**Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity**

*The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure, clearly delineated roles for staff, management, and board members. The school has systems and protocols that allow for the successful implementation, evaluation, and improvement of its academic program and operations.*

**Finding: The site visit team has determined that Evergreen Charter School Meets Performance Benchmark 7.**

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>School Leadership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The school has an effective school leadership team that obtains staff commitment to a clearly defined mission and set of goals, allowing for continual improvement in student learning.</li> <li>b. Roles and responsibilities for leaders, staff, management, and board members are clearly defined. Members of the school community adhere to defined roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>c. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place which ensures effective communication across the school.</li> <li>d. The school successfully recruits, hires, and retains key personnel, and makes decisions – when warranted – to remove ineffective staff members.</li> </ul>
2. <i>Professional Climate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The school is fully staffed with high quality personnel to meet all educational and operational needs, including finance, human resources, and communication.</li> <li>b. The school has established structures for frequent collaboration among teachers.</li> <li>c. The school ensures that staff has requisite skills, expertise, and professional</li> </ul>

Element

Indicators

development necessary to meet students' needs.  
d. The school has systems to monitor and maintain organizational and instructional quality—which includes a formal process for teacher evaluation geared toward improving instructional practice.  
e. The school has mechanisms to solicit teacher feedback and gauge teacher satisfaction.

□

a. The board of trustees and school leadership establish effective working relationships with the management company or comprehensive service provider.  
b. Changes in the school's charter management or comprehensive service provider contract comply with required charter amendment procedures.  
c. The school monitors the efficacy of contracted service providers or partners.

**Summative Evidence for Benchmark 7:**

The school has a stable instructional leadership team in place with clear roles and responsibilities, including the principal, assistant principal, director of curriculum and instruction, and director of data and assessment. On the day of the visit, the instructional leadership team discussed their shared academic priorities of using data to drive instruction, focus on increasing student vocabulary, and targeting unexcused tardiness through their attendance policy. The instructional leads expressed that the principal set the tone for the school, creating a welcoming and comfortable environment of high expectations, and specifically mentioned her as central to the school's success.

Interviewed staff described a collaborative team process with frequent opportunities for input. School instructional leads participate in grade-level team meetings and have a frequent presence in public spaces and classrooms. Other organizational structures for teacher collaboration include twice daily preparation periods, teacher team meetings, and monthly data meetings for staff.

The school has established communication systems and decision-making processes in place, however the separation of the instructional and financial processes present some challenges. The board's organizational structure of having both the principal and the director of finance and operations report into them has most management decisions being made at the board-level.

The school has a stable faculty with minimal turnover. However, the school leadership recognizes that hiring and retaining qualified staff is an ongoing challenge that they face, due to their bilingual model and the competitive salary offered by the school district. Since the last visit, the board approved a salary increase for all teachers and incentives for current or potential staff that demonstrate oral and written fluency in the Spanish language. The school recruits and hires appropriately certified teachers or persons with teaching experience or relevant skills and expertise. They also have three staff members with English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) certification and four staff members with special education grades 1-6 certification.

The school has a coherent professional development (PD) program in place, including a two-week summer program and workshops run by the instructional leaders held throughout the school year tailored to the needs of the teachers to increase teacher effectiveness. The leadership team also works closely with two consultants, one that supports teachers as a math coach with the assistant principal

and one that supports teachers as a literacy coach with the principal and director of curriculum and instruction, to assist with the development of curriculum and instruction and ongoing coaching. Teachers are also encouraged to attend external workshops and conferences.

The school has a formal teacher evaluation system in place based on two annual observations using the Danielson framework, as well as informal pop-in observations and immediate feedback to improve instructional practices. School leaders do hold staff accountable as evidenced by teachers being let go based on evaluation performance, if coaching and mentoring fails to yield significant improvement. Since the last visit, the school has developed measurable student performance goals to drive progress and improvement efforts. The school takes into account the absolute and growth data of student achievement to evaluate teacher effectiveness.

School leaders solicit teachers' interests and identify needs through multiple mechanisms. Teachers give feedback formally through surveys. They also provide input informally through staff meetings, grade-level meetings, and daily interaction with school leaders. Instructional leaders seek teacher feedback on curriculum materials, pacing calendars, and additional instructional resources during planning meetings.

### **Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements**

*The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.*

#### **Finding: The site visit team has determined that Evergreen Charter School Meets Performance Benchmark 8.**

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Mission and Key Design Elements</i>	a. School stakeholders share a common and consistent understanding of the school's mission and key design elements outlined in the charter. b. The school has fully implemented the key design elements in the approved charter and in any subsequently approved revisions.

#### **Summative Evidence for Benchmark 8:**

All interviewed stakeholders had a clear sense of the school's mission and key design elements. The instructional leaders focused foremost on academic achievement and the continuing development of data-driven instruction. Over the course of the renewal visit, the observed instruction in the classroom aligned with the school's instructional model and key design elements. The school has increased a number of practices that address its environmental focus including a recycling program. The school has an Environmental Committee, comprised of students, teachers, administrators, and staff, that utilizes project-based learning activities focused on the school's green initiatives, such as water conservation and air quality improvement. The school continues to consistently implement its key design element of promoting healthy life choices. The school employs a full-time chef to prepare nutritious meals that follow the guidelines of the USDA Child Nutrition Program, as well as to educate the students and their families on healthy eating.

The school continues to prioritize its bilingual mission. The board recently approved hiring incentives for bilingual teachers and staff members. The school provides Spanish instruction at every grade level, differentiating curriculum for native and non-native students. The school has also integrated the approach of “trans-linguaging” that supports the flexible use of language practices of bilingual students.

**Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention**

*The school is meeting or making annual progress toward meeting the enrollment plan outlined in its charter and its enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch program; or has demonstrated that it has made extensive good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain such students.*

**Finding: The site visit team has determined that Evergreen Charter School Meets Performance Benchmark 9.**

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Targets are met</i>	a. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet or come close to meeting the enrollment plan outlined in the charter.
2. <i>Targets are not met</i>	<p>a. The school is making regular and significant annual progress toward meeting the targets.</p> <p>b. The school has implemented extensive recruitment strategies and program services to attract and retain students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible for free and reduced priced lunch. Strategies include, but are not limited to: outreach to parents and families in the surrounding communities, widely publicizing the lottery for such school, efforts to academically support these students, and enrollment policy revisions, such as employing a weighted lottery or enrollment preference, to increase the proportion of enrolled students from the three priority populations.</p> <p>c. The school has implemented a systematic process for evaluating recruitment and outreach strategies and program services for each of the three categories of students, and makes strategic improvements as needed.</p>

**Table 1: Student Demographics – Evergreen Charter School Compared to Hempstead Unified School District**

	2014-15			2015-16			2016-17
	Percent of Enrollment		Variance <sup>2</sup>	Percent of Enrollment		Variance	Percent of Enrollment
	School	CSD		School	CSD		School <sup>3</sup>
<b>Enrollment of Special Populations</b>							
Economically Disadvantaged	89%	68%	+21	86%	76%	+10	69%
English Language Learners	29%	30%	-1	30%	35%	-5	31%

<sup>2</sup> Variance is defined as the percent of subgroup enrollment between the charter school and the district of location.

<sup>3</sup> Reported by the school; 2016-17 enrollment data has not been publicly released as of the date of this report.

Students with Disabilities	2014-15			2015-16			2016-17
	7%	10%	-3	8%	10%	-2	7%

**Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:**

The school enrolls a higher percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged compared to the district of location. ECS’s enrollment of English language learners and students with disabilities was slightly below the district for the 2014-2015, 2015-2016 school years, but is increasing.

**Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance**  
*The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.*

**Finding: The site visit team has determined that Evergreen Charter School Meets Performance Benchmark 10.**

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Legal Compliance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The school has compiled a record of substantial compliance with applicable state and federal laws and the provisions of its charter including, but not limited to: those related to student admissions and enrollment; FOIL and Open Meetings Law; protecting the rights of students and employees; financial management and oversight; governance and reporting; and health and safety requirements.</li> <li>b. The school has undertaken appropriate corrective action when needed, and has implemented necessary safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements.</li> <li>c. The school has sought Board of Regents and/or Charter School Office approval for significant revisions.</li> </ul>

**Summative Evidence for Benchmark 10:**

ECS has substantially complied with legal obligations, applicable state and federal laws, and the terms of its charter.

In September 2016, the Office of the State Comptroller released an audit report [Evergreen Charter School Employee and Independent Contractor Fingerprinting](#) which identified several practices that are not in compliance with Education Law fingerprint/criminal background check requirements. ECS immediately developed and implemented a corrective action plan and instituted a new policy to ensure safeguards and remain in compliance with applicable requirements.

In March 2016, the school sought and was granted Board of Regents approval to increase enrollment from 300 students to 375 students, and grade levels served from k-5 to k-6. These changes were implemented in 2016-2017.

## APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT AND GRADUATION OUTCOMES

**Table 1: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes for All Students: School, District & NYS Level Aggregates**

All Students	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)
2013-14	21%	7%	+14	30%	-9	33%	12%	+21	36%	-3
2014-15	31%	8%	+23	31%	0	43%	10%	+33	42%	+1
2015-16	46%	12%	+34	38%	+8	54%	12%	+42	42%	+12

**Table 2: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup – Economically Disadvantaged Students: School, District & NYS Level Aggregates**

Economically Disadvantaged	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)
2013-14	18%	8%	+10	20%	-2	31%	10%	+21	29%	+2
2014-15	29%	8%	+21	21%	+8	39%	12%	+27	30%	+9
2015-16	46%	11%	+35	27%	+19	55%	14%	+41	31%	+24

**Table 3: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup – Students with Disabilities: School, District & NYS Level Aggregates**

Students with Disabilities	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)
2013-14	0%	0%	0	6%	-6	0%	3%	-2	12%	-12
2014-15	9%	1%	+8	6%	+3	27%	3%	+24	13%	+14
2015-16	19%	1%	+18	8%	+11	19%	2%	+17	13%	+6

**Table 4: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup – English Language Learners: School, District & NYS Level Aggregates**

English Language Learners	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch–Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch–NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch–Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch–NYS)
2013-14	4%	1%	+3	4%	0	8%	2%	+6	14%	-6
2014-15	5%	2%	+3	5%	0	13%	3%	+10	14%	-1
2015-16	9%	3%	+6	5%	+4	22%	5%	+17	13%	+9