



New York State Education Department

***Remote Renewal Site Visit Report for BoR-Authorized Charter Schools under the
2015 Charter School Performance Framework
2020-2021***

School in the Square Public Charter School

Remote Renewal Site Visit Date(s) of Report: November 16-20, 2020

Date of Report: February 4, 2021

[Charter School Office](#)

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary¹

Name of Charter School	School in the Square Public Charter School
Board Chair	Scott Levenson
District of location	NYC CSD 6
Opening Date	Fall 2016
Charter Term(s)	July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2021
Current Term Authorized Grades/ Approved Enrollment	Kindergarten, Grades 6-8/ 424 students
Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/ Proposed Approved Enrollment	Kindergarten - Grade 8/ 924 students
Comprehensive Management Service Provider	None
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120 Wadsworth Avenue, Manhattan Middle School – Private Space • 108 Cooper Street, Manhattan Kindergarten – Private Space
Mission Statement	<p><i>“School in the Square (S2) engages, educates and empowers adolescents in Washington Heights to respond mindfully and creatively to life’s opportunities and challenges. S2 draws its name from the concept of the public square, where communities come together to solve problems and celebrate successes. We envision S2 as a place where students, families and educators are seen, heard, and inspired, and where students build the academic foundations, emotional intelligence, and leadership skills necessary to excel in college and professional life. In line with our commitment to equity and diversity, S2 is dedicated to serving all students by providing a differentiated and inclusive learning environment.”</i></p>
Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigorous Curriculum (Partnerships and personalized learning) • Collaborative Professional Culture • Compassionate Community (Social Emotional Supports) • Dual language program beginning in kindergarten
Requested Revisions	<p>In 2020, the Board of Regents approved a two-way Spanish English Dual Language Immersion program elementary school program for this school. The current revision is</p>

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

	<p>a continuation of that approval and will allow the students currently enrolled in the school’s elementary school to continue in that program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand current grade span to add Grade 1 through Grade 5 to the school’s currently approved Kindergarten and Grade 6 through Grade 8 configuration • In the expanding grades, increase authorized enrollment from 424, by adding 100 students for each year of the proposed renewal charter term, up to a maximum of 924 students
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Noteworthy: School in the Square Public Charter School (S2PCS) was authorized by the Board of Regents to open Dos Amigos, a dual language immersion elementary classroom in August 2020 with 100 kindergarten students. Although the COVID-19 pandemic limited the school’s in person outreach significantly, the school received well over 200 applications and continues to receive applications and inquiries from families wishing to enroll for the current school year. Students receive in-person instruction four full days per week including early morning drop off and a robust after school program. On Fridays, children log in for remote classes with teachers receiving professional development in the afternoon. Families and staff understand the importance of keeping school open and everyone safe. Partnering with parents and a local healthcare facility has enabled the school to use saliva testing to test every student and staff member weekly. The school has had only two occasions where it had to pivot to fully remote instruction this school year. School leadership has shared an analysis of collected data and teacher observations demonstrates that student progress is developmentally appropriate for this time in the school year. Students are building their numeracy skills and math vocabulary in both Spanish and English and beginning to manipulate numbers to ten. Readers have started building their understanding of letters, sounds, and words in both languages as well as their sight word bank and how to navigate fiction and non-fiction texts. Through in-class and small group instruction many of the students are beginning to read beginning level books. As writers, students are using their reading skills to write stories and sentences independently at their own level. Using the strategies that they are learning, some writers are telling stories through pictures, some labeling their pictures, some adding familiar sight words and some using their letter knowledge to stretch and sound out words. As students learn and grow together, they are also growing friendships. They are learning how to build relationships, take turns, share, and work together, which is at the forefront of their work in kindergarten.

School in the Square Public Charter School’s (S2PCS) takes great pride in building relationships with its students and families. This includes keeping in touch with their alumni. The school is in year two of a five-year program partnership with Michelle Fine from the CUNY Graduate Center to understand and support their alumni as they move through high school. Elements of the program include; emails sent to all alumni families in English and Spanish inviting them to participate in the food pantry and other ongoing supports, visiting students (pre-COVID-19) in their new schools and making connections with high school counselors to ensure continuation of care, and the training of 14 students to be oral historians and student researchers. To date, they have completed over 90 interviews and worked to analyze the data, which the school is using to inform how to best support the graduates and adapt the current 8th grade experience. Graduating classes have moved on to 60 different high schools across New York City, New York State, and New Jersey. Some of the high schools S2PCS alumni matriculated to are Facing History High School, Bard

Early College, Central Park East, Bronx High School of Science, Brooklyn Latin High School, High School for Environmental Studies, and the Urban Assembly School for the Performing Arts.

Renewal Outcomes

Pursuant to the Board of Regents Renewal Policy, the following are possible renewal outcomes:

- **Full-Term Renewal:** A school’s charter may be renewed for the maximum term of five years. For a school to be eligible for a full-term renewal, during the current charter term the school must have compiled a strong and compelling record of meeting or exceeding Benchmark 1, and at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all other performance benchmarks in the Framework.

- **Short-Term Renewal:** A school’s charter may be renewed for a shorter term, typically of three years. As discussed above, the Regents will place an even greater emphasis on student performance for schools applying for their second or subsequent renewal, which is consistent with the greater time that a school has been in operation and the corresponding increase in the quantity and quality of student achievement data that the school has generated. In order for a school to be eligible for short-term renewal, a school must either:
 - (a) have compiled a mixed or limited record of meeting Benchmark 1, but at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework which will likely result in the school’s being able to meet Benchmark 1 with the additional time that short-term renewal permits, **or**
 - (b) have compiled an overall record of meeting Benchmark 1 but falls far below meeting one or more of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework.

- **Non-Renewal:** A school’s charter will not be renewed if the school does not apply for renewal or the school fails to meet the criteria for either full-term or short-term renewal. In the case of non-renewal, a school’s charter will be terminated upon its expiration and the school will be required to comply with the Charter School Office’s Closing Procedures to ensure an orderly closure by the end of the school year.

Please Note: The Regents may include additional terms, conditions, and/or requirements in a school’s Full-Term or Short-Term Renewal charter to address specific situations or areas of concern. For example, a school may meet the standards for full-term renewal or short-term renewal with regard to its educational success but may be required to address organizational deficiencies that need to be corrected but do not prevent the Regents from making the required legal findings for renewal. A school may also meet the standards for full-term renewal or short-term renewal of only a portion of its educational program (e.g., for the elementary school program, but not the middle school program). Such additional terms and/or requirements may include, but are not limited to, restrictions on the number of students and grades to be served by the school, additional student performance metrics, heightened reporting requirements, or specific corrective action.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC NOTE: As of the publication of this report, New York State is in the midst of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. NYSED understands that these are not normal times and state assessments for grades 3-8 as well as high school students were canceled for the 2019-2020 school year (see the applicable memos at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/aboutcharterschools/lawsandregs/law.html>). The

NYSED Charter School Performance Framework is a robust document that allows NYSED to continue to use it as an evaluative tool even during the current statewide crisis. With state assessments cancelled for the 2019-2020 school year, Benchmark 1 allows for the use of longitudinal data and NYSED has been continuing to monitor and evaluate schools through the lens of the Performance Framework during the current crisis as Board of Regents-authorized charter schools have been implementing robust continuity of learning plans and adhering to NYSED’s [Remote Monitoring and Oversight Plan](#). Therefore, NYSED will continue to use the Performance Framework and Board of Regents renewal policies to evaluate, in a summative manner, applicable charter schools for renewal recommendation determinations.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Current Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2016 to 2017	Year 2 2017 to 2018	Year 3 2018 to 2019	Year 4 2019 to 2020	Year 5 2020 to 2021
Grade Configuration	Grade 6	Grades 6-7	Grades 6-8	Grades 6-8	Kindergarten, Grades 6-8
Total Approved Enrollment	108	216	324	324	424

Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Projected Enrollment Requested by the School²

	Year 1 2021 to 2022	Year 2 2022 to 2023	Year 3 2023 to 2024	Year 4 2024 to 2025	Year 5 2025 to 2026
Grade Configuration	K - Grade 1, Grades 6-8	K - Grade 2, Grades 6-8	K - Grade 3, Grades 6-8	K - Grade 4, Grades 6-8	K - Grade 8
Total Proposed Enrollment	524	624	724	824	924

METHODOLOGY

A five-day remote renewal site visit was conducted at School in the Square Public Charter School (S2PCS) on November 16 – 20, 2020. The New York State Education Department’s Charter School Office (CSO) team; including a member of the New York State Education Department’s Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) conducted interviews with the board of trustees and school leadership team. In cooperation with school leadership, the CSO administered anonymous online surveys to and parents.

² This proposed chart was submitted by School in the Square Public Charter School in its renewal application. It is subject to change pending the final renewal recommendation and approval by the Board of Regents.

The team conducted remote eleven classroom observations in K and Grades 6 - 8. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the principal, assistant principal, and director of curriculum and instruction. NYSED utilizes the CSO's remote Classroom Observation Worksheet as a lens for remote classroom observations. It is shared with the school prior to the site visit, and can be found in the [Renewal SV Protocol](#).

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

- **Current 2020-2021 organizational chart;**
- **A 2020-2021 master school schedule;**
- **Board materials (roster, minutes, and strategic plan, if applicable) and a narrative describing the board's self-evaluation process;**
- **Narrative describing the process used to evaluate school leadership;**
- **Narrative describing the process school leadership uses to evaluate teachers;**
- **NYCDOE School Quality Reports showing survey results;**
- **Spring 2020 CSO COVID-19 Parent Survey Results;**
- **Current school policies, including the discipline policy, complaint policy, enrollment and admissions policy, and by-laws;**
- **NYSED Attachment 1: Academic and Enrollment Data;**
- **NYSED Attachment 2: Fiscal Dashboard Data;**
- **Narrative describing the school's progress and efforts made toward reaching its enrollment and retention targets;**
- **Admissions and Waitlist information;**
- **Faculty/Staff Roster;**
- **Fingerprint Clearance Certificates for all instructional and non-instructional staff;**
- **School-submitted Annual Reports during current charter term;**
- **School's Self-Evaluation Tool;**
- **Prior CSO monitoring reports (check-in, midterm, renewals);**
- **2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey;**
- **2018-2019 NYSED CSO Parent Survey;**
- **Spring 2020 Continuity of Learning Plan;**
- **School's 2020 renewal application;**
- **School's 2019-2020 community engagement and outreach calendar; and**
- **Letters of support for the school.**

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The 2015 Performance Framework, which is part of the oversight plan included in the Charter Agreement for each school, outlines 10 Performance Framework benchmarks in three key areas of charter school performance:

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

Observational findings from the review of the renewal application, supporting data, and the site visit will be presented in alignment with the 2015 Performance Framework benchmarks and Indicators according to the rating scale below. A brief summary of the school's strengths will precede the benchmark analysis. Each benchmark will be rated; and the report narrative will provide evidence-based information relative to each indicator.

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

For the site visit conducted from November 16, 2020 to November 20, 2020 at S2PCS, see the following Performance Framework benchmark ratings and narrative.

**New York State Education Department
2015 Charter School Performance Framework Rating³**

2015 Performance Benchmark		Level
Educational Success	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).	Meets
	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 New York State 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
	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.	Meets
Organizational Soundness	Benchmark 4: Financial Condition: The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.	Meets
	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.	Meets
	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.	Meets
	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.	Meets
Faithfulness to Charter & Law	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.	Meets
	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.	Approaches
	Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance: The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.	Meets

³ Charter schools authorized or renewed beginning in the 2019-2020 school year and thereafter use the [2019 Charter School Performance Framework](#), and all other charter schools use the [2015 Charter School Performance Framework](#) until renewal. Refer to the appropriate framework for the applicable benchmark standards.

Summary of Findings

- S2PCS is in year five of operation and serves students in K, and Grades 6 - 8. During its current charter term, the school is rated in the following manner: meeting nine benchmarks and approaching one benchmark. A summary of those ratings is provided below.
- **Summary of Areas of Strengths:** S2PCS improved its student academic proficiency outcomes in both English Language Arts and math over the course of the charter term, for all students and for each of the special population subgroups, meeting or exceeding the school district of location proficiency scores in the 2018-2019 school year. The school received Board of Regents approval in January 2020 to expand its enrollment and added kindergarten to its grade span. The kindergarten, called Dos Amigos, implements a dual language English/ Spanish program, following a 50/50 two-way immersion model. S2PCS's school culture places an emphasis on "relationships first" and has extended its services to the school community since COVID-19 by offering a bi-weekly school pantry that provides food, clothing, hygiene products, masks, and other resources. Organizationally, the school has a stable board and leadership team. The board provides oversight and is the financial steward of the school.
- **Summary of Areas in Need of Improvement:** Although the school has made progress in its enrollment of the subgroups, exceeding the district of location with serving students with disabilities (SWDs), and increasing their economically disadvantaged students to just a few percentage points below the district of location in 2018-2019; the school should continue to build upon its successful recruitment and retention efforts (see above) to increase its English language learner (ELL) student populations. The school must also remedy deficiencies in the school's fingerprinting process prior to hiring new staff members.

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: Meets

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1:

See Attachment 1 for data tables and additional academic information.

Note: State assessments were not administered in the 2019-2020 school year. As such, NYSED is not able to include results from that academic year in the analysis of this benchmark.

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 New York State Learning Standards (NYSL) 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: Meets

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Curriculum</i>	<p>a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to the NYSL.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c. The curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and vertically between grades.</p> <p>d. The curriculum is differentiated to provide opportunities for all students to master grade-level skills and concepts.</p> <p>e. The curriculum is systematically reviewed and revised.</p>
2. <i>Instruction</i>	<p>a. The school staff has a common understanding of high-quality instruction, and observed instructional practices align to this understanding.</p> <p>b. Instructional delivery fosters engagement with all students.</p>
3. <i>Assessment and Program Evaluation</i>	<p>a. The school uses a balanced system of formative, diagnostic and summative assessments.</p> <p>b. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to inform instruction and improve student outcomes.</p> <p>c. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the academic program and modifies the program accordingly.</p>
4. <i>Supports for Diverse Learners</i>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

Academic Program for Elementary School (ES)/Middle School (MS):

- ES:
 - S2PCS currently serves kindergarten in Dos Amigos.

- S2PCS provides a dual language English/ Spanish program, implementing the 50/50 two-way immersion model.
- MS:
 - S2PCS currently serves Grades 6 through 8.
 - S2PCS identifies their school as being standards-based, small group instruction, and co-teaching model.
 - S2PCS has an extended day and an extended school year.

Academic Program for Students with Disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs):

- SWDs:
 - S2PCS utilizes Co-Teaching (ICT) to support SWDs enrolled in the school. The school also provides Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS), with push in and pull out supports. During the 2019-2020 school year, S2PCS employed four reading specialists and six special education teachers.
- ELLs:
 - S2PCS utilizes a Structured English Immersion (SEI) program to support ELLs enrolled in the school. ELL teachers provide both push in and pull out English language supports. During the 2019-2020 school year, S2PCS employed two ELL teachers.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2:

1. Element: ***Curriculum:***

- **Indicator a:** In the renewal application, S2PCS reports that its curriculum is aligned to the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLS). For the middle school, the school's uses *Amplify ELA* for its ELA curriculum, *Math in Focus: Singapore Math* for its math curriculum, *Amplify Science* for its science curriculum, and *HMH Social Studies*, NYS Social Studies Core Curriculum, and *Facing History and Ourselves* for its social studies curriculum. For kindergarten, S2PCS also implements *Math in Focus: Singapore Math* for its math curriculum, *Amplify Science* for its science curriculum, and NYS Social Studies Core Curriculum for its social studies curriculum, in both English and Spanish classes. Since S2PCS's kindergarten is a dual language program, the instructional leadership chose complementary ELA curriculum for its English Zone and Spanish Zone classes. When students are learning in English Zone classes, S2PCS implements *HMH Into Reading* and Teachers College writing units for literacy and Wilson *Foundations* for phonics. In its Spanish Zone classes, S2PCS implements *HMH ¡Arriba La Lectura!* and Teachers College writing units for literacy and *Estrellita* for phonics. In making curricular choices the HMH program utilizes a thematic approach and stories are not just translated. Instead the reading selections are authentic stories related to the Spanish culture with native authors.
- **Indicator b:** S2PCS uses unit plan and lesson plan templates to ensure teachers differentiate content. Classroom teachers, along with English as a new language (ENL) and special education teachers, collaborate and modify lessons during the planning process. Since the CSO site visit was remote, observations did not include lesson plans. However, in most observed classrooms, teachers evidenced lesson organization and preparation through posted agendas, goals/objectives given, and intentional groupings. During class observations, teachers would often refer to previous lessons to scaffold the new information and build upon prior knowledge to foster conceptual understanding.

- **Indicator c:** The school states in its renewal application that it aligns its curriculum horizontally and vertically through scope and sequences for each subject. The school leadership team ensures that the curriculum remains aligned to the NYSLS through annual reviews. S2PCS also utilizes curriculum maps and pacing guides to develop unit and lesson plans. In the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey, 84% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the curriculum is aligned horizontally across the same grade level classrooms and 79% agreed or strongly agreed that the curriculum is aligned vertically among grade levels. School leadership stated that when planning Dos Amigos curriculum, they considered vertical alignment when choosing appropriate programs and materials.
- **Indicator d:** The school intends for teachers to use the unit and lesson plans to facilitate differentiation and scaffolded instruction. During the CSO remote site visit, most observed classrooms had differentiation, such as the use of break out groups for small grouping instruction, graphic organizers, intentional groupings, and leveled resources. Differentiation included both process and product in both the middle school grades and at Dos Amigos.
- **Indicator e:** S2PCS outlines its curriculum review process in its renewal application, stating that it is a collaborative process between administrators and teachers and occurs on a quarterly and annual basis. The process includes consideration of assessment data and pacing with regards to meeting the NYSLS, and if needed, allows for adjustments and revisions to the curriculum.

2. Element: ***Instruction:***

- **Indicator a:** The school self-reports in its renewal application that it uses the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) for its instructional approach at both the middle school and Dos Amigos. During the CSO remote site visit, in most of the classes observed at the middle school and in kindergarten, the instructional leader stated that the teacher’s practice was aligned to the school’s instructional model. On the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey, 84% of teachers replied that there is a uniform expectation for teachers’ implementation of academic rigor.
- **Indicator b:** In the online classrooms observed, where students were visible, most students appeared to be engaged in the lesson through verbal responses, virtual/visual polling, and participation in lesson activities. The school’s expectations on turning video on in the remote classroom keeps it optional for students due to equity issues and honoring students’ feelings and preferences. During the CSO remote site visit, the school leadership team explained that they discussed with teachers the ways they could measure student engagement beyond video, visual observation, including the use of the online chat function, spoken participation, sharing screen to show work, and the use of Go Guardian to see work in real time. Classrooms observed aligned with these expectations. The site visit team remotely visited the English Spanish dual language immersion kindergarten classrooms. Teachers effectively used visuals, songs, and rhyming to engage students and support instruction. Students were actively engaged and appeared to enjoy the singing and movement. Clear routines had been established. It was noted and confirmed by school leadership that 90% of the Dos Amigos instructional staff is bilingual.

3. Element: ***Assessment and Program Evaluation:***

- **Indicator a:** School leadership reported in the renewal application the use of formative, diagnostic, and summative assessments, including Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, NWEA MAP reading and math assessments, Let’s Go Learn DORA assessment for reading, and Let’s Go Learn ADAM assessment for math, exit tickets, unit tests, and mock state tests. During the school leadership focus group, the school leaders spoke about the challenges of administering any assessment since the transition to remote learning. However, they said that

they have continued to administer some assessments, such as the interim math assessments, an ELA testing tool, and exit tickets, to continue to collect academic data and measure student growth. During the classrooms observed on the CSO remote site visit, some of the assessments observed included questioning, classwork, exit tickets, and quizzes. At Dos Amigos, classwork, and responding to teacher questions was observed. The questions posed by students also demonstrated their thought process as they were taking in new information and learning new language and vocabulary.

- **Indicator b:** As confirmed by the school's organization chart and staff roster, the school employs a director of data and partnerships, who manages the school's academic data and provides data reports, enabling the school leadership team and teachers to analyze the data and use it to inform the groupings for small group instruction and any changes that may need to be made to instruction or the curriculum. As an example, the school shared data from its fall 2020 MAP assessments, which also included disaggregated data of the ELLs and SWD subgroups. In addition, teachers utilize questioning, rubrics, exit tickets, unit tests, quizzes, and homework data to inform their instruction and determine needs for differentiation and groupings.
- **Indicator c:** The school leadership team utilizes the data reports generated by the director of data and partnerships to evaluate progress against charter goals and the NYSED Performance Framework. The school gave an example of the decision to hire reading interventionists as a result of data that showed that students entering the middle school read at an elementary grade level. On the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey, 81% of teachers reported that the administration uses data from assessments to make school-wide decisions.

4. Element: ***Supports for Diverse Learners:***

- **Indicator a:** S2PCS supports SWDs through an ICT model, along with push-in and pull-out services for small group instruction. The school also provides SETSS instruction through push in or pull out for small groups. For ELLs, S2PCS uses a SEI program with push-in language support services in general education classrooms and pull-out support with small group instruction.
 - According to the school's New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Committee on Special Education (CSE), The school is extremely flexible and accommodating in scheduling student evaluations and IEP meetings with the CSE. However, the school does not timely provide the CSE with teacher progress reports or Appendix B forms. During the 2019-2020 school year, the school had 11 students initially referred for special education evaluations. The school often does not have a special education teacher of the student participate in IEP meetings, but instead, provides the school's special education coordinator at the meetings. In addition, the IEP goals written by the school are often not specific to the student in question. The school seems to communicate well with parents and makes efforts to ensure parental participation in IEP meetings. The school appears to effectively implement student IEPs.
- **Indicator b:** The school leadership team spoke about the Student Success Team (SST) that includes classroom teachers and interventionists and the Student Success Meetings (SSM), where they identify students in kindergarten or Grades 6-8 who may need intervention and monitor the progress of individual students. The RtI process also provides a structure between staff for communication and collaboration about individual students' needs and decisions about the interventions. The principal shared, and it was observed at the middle school during remote instruction, small group instructors that provide supports for English language learners or special education students are paired with a content area teacher to provide integrated co-teaching. Small group instructors work with the four content area teachers to create lessons that include targeted strategies and modifications to support student learning. They also provide direct

services to students during class instruction. Additionally, ELL and SWD teachers hold daily office hours to provide additional supports including breaking down assignments and information to help facilitate understanding of the content area material. The school also has initiated a Mentor Tutoring program for students and families needing extra supports. Bilingual tutors are available for families or students. An Executive Functioning class taught by the special education chair has been implemented. It was designed to support students who are struggling with organizational and time management strategies. At Dos Amigos, English as a new language (ENL) services and strategies are integrated in the dual language program model and are a benefit to all students. A reading specialist moved from the middle school to kindergarten to provide small group reading intervention groups in both English and Spanish. She also provides staff development to teachers. Areas of focus include Guided Reading and Shared Reading in the Spanish Zone classes.

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: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
<p>1. <i>Behavior Management and Safety</i></p>	<p>a. The school has a clear approach to behavioral management, including a written discipline policy. b. The school appears safe and all school constituents are able to articulate how the school community maintains a safe environment. c. The school has systems in place to ensure that the environment is free from harassment and discrimination. d. Classroom environments are conducive to learning and generally free from disruption.</p>
<p>2. <i>Family Engagement and Communication</i></p>	<p>a. The school communicates with and engages families with the school community. b. Teachers communicate with parents to discuss students’ strengths and needs. c. 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. d. The school has a systematic process for responding to family or community concerns. e. The school shares school-level academic data with the broader school community to promote transparency and accountability among parents, students and school constituents.</p>
<p>3. <i>Social-Emotional Supports</i></p>	<p>a. The school has systems or programs in place to support the social-emotional needs of students. b. School leaders collect and use data to track the socio-emotional needs of students. c. School leaders collect and use data regarding the impact of programs designed to support students’ social and emotional health.</p>

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 3:

1. Element: ***Behavior Management and Safety:***
 - **Indicator a:** According to school leadership, S2PCS takes a “relationships first” approach to the school’s community, which they implement through the social emotional team and Restorative Justice practices. Documentation review shows that the school’s updated discipline policy incorporates the principles of restorative practices and intervention approaches that include

conflict resolution, mediation, and reflection. The discipline policy also includes the school's code of conduct, which details tiers of behavior, disruptive actions, and the respective interventions, supports, and disciplinary consequences. Review of the Dos Amigos family handbook shows that it includes the school's discipline policy and code of conduct.

- **Indicator b:** Since the CSO site visit was remotely held, the school-wide environment was not directly observed. However, the classrooms observed during the CSO remote site visit showed consistent approaches to behavior and maintained safe spaces. On the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Parent Survey, 100% of the parents who responded said that the school provides a safe environment.
- **Indicator c:** Documentation review shows that the Dos Amigos family handbook has a section on the school's safety procedures, to ensure a supportive learning environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. In addition, the handbook includes a section on the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) that lists the dignity act coordinator's name and contact information. On the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey, 89% of the teachers reported that they found S2PCS generally free of bullying, discrimination, and harassment for students.
- **Indicator d:** The CSO remote site visit included 11 classroom observations with live, synchronous instruction. For the live lessons observed, teachers created an environment that tried to best leverage direct online instruction to foster student engagement. On the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey, 95% of the teachers said that teacher-student interactions could be described as supportive and respectful.

2. Element: ***Family Engagement and Communication:***

- **Indicator a:** S2PCS primarily utilizes an online platform called Parent Square that allows the school to send emails, texts, phone calls, and has an English/Spanish translation function, to communicate with parents and families. Other forms of communication with parents and families, include the family handbook (one for Dos Amigos and one for the middle school), ongoing informal contact between teachers and families, school events, and the school's website. The school's director of community engagement, who is a member of the school's leadership team, serves as the family liaison and leads the initiatives that foster building strong relationships with families and the community around the school. The school also has a Family Council, which holds meetings for families to discuss issues relevant to them and any concerns they have for their children. Since COVID-19 began, S2PCS has emailed a weekly Community Resource Newsletter in both English and Spanish to all families to provide information and resources. Examples of emails sent includes information on food pantries, anti-racism resources, and important dates for the school community. The NYS Charter Schools COVID-19 Parent Survey Report showed that since the school building closed, 80% of S2PCS parents said that their child's teacher contacted them at least once a week, with 48% of those parents saying the school contacted them almost every school day. For the past 10 months the school has operated a food pantry. Twice a month families, of S2PCS students, alumni and the community are provided with various necessities such as food, cleaning supplies, masks, sanitizer, formula, diapers, personal care items and coats. They have donated over 10 tons of food and over 20,000 masks to the community. They have partnered with two other local schools to provide them with essential items for over 150 families. The school has also joined forces with stakeholders to advocate and support community initiatives including 2020 Census Count, Clean Streets for Washington Heights, Uptown Black Lives Matter March, and community murals.
- **Indicator b:** Teachers at S2PCS utilize multiple forms of communication with parents, including an online, secure parent portal called ALMA, to share students' grades and assignments, in addition to progress reports mid-semester and report cards at the end of semesters. On the 2018-2019

NYSED CSO Teacher Survey, 97% of the teachers said they regularly communicate with families on issues related to academics. On the 2018-2019 NYC DOE School Survey, 95% of parents responded that they have communicated with their child's teacher about their child's performance. S2PCS holds parent-teacher conferences at the end of each semester. In the renewal application, the school reports on average an 80% participation rate in parent-teacher conferences. The school also notes in the renewal application that since COVID-19, teachers have conducted virtual parent-teacher conferences and have gotten a higher participation rate. On the NYS Charter Schools COVID-19 Parent Survey Report, 91% of S2PCS parents responded somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the school provided them with help to support their child's remote learning.

- **Indicator c:** S2PCS assesses family and student feedback and satisfaction through the NYC DOE School Survey, the student retention rate, town halls, affinity groups, and informal school-created student and family surveys. On the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Parent Survey, 96% of the parents who responded said that the school seeks feedback from parents through surveys, meetings, or some other forum. S2PCS had a 92% response rate for its students on the 2018-2019 NYC DOE School Survey.
- **Indicator d:** S2PCS has a written complaint policy that describes the steps to escalate any concern or complaint and is included in the family handbook. On the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Parent Survey, 93% of the parents who responded said that the school has a clear complaint policy.
- **Indicator e:** S2PCS shares school-level academic data at monthly board meetings, which are open to the public. During the board focus group, the members present mentioned that the board meetings are open to families. The school's website links to accountability reports that contain school-level academic progress and proficiency data, such as the school's NYSED Annual Report.

3. Element: ***Social-Emotional Supports:***

- **Indicator a:** The school employs a social emotional learning (SEL) department chair who is on the school leadership team, one social worker per grade, a guidance counselor, and a high school/alumni counselor, as per the school's organizational chart and staff roster, to provide social-emotional supports for the students. The school provides mandated counseling, as well as counseling for at-risk students. The SEL team and the school leadership team coordinate through daily meetings and discuss specific student situations that may need intervention plans. During the transition to remote learning, S2PCS submitted its continuity of learning plan that outlined its continued offerings of social emotional supports including the social workers providing mandated counseling through private, parent-approved Doxy sessions, and regular one-to-one check-ins with the general student body through Zoom. The school cites PrimeTime, advisory, health classes, Voice, restorative circle, and Discovery class as other structures that support social-emotional learning and growth. During the school leadership focus group, they spoke about how important PrimeTime has been throughout COVID-19 and remote learning in providing consistency and supporting relationships with students. A PrimeTime group observed during the CSO remote site visit included an opportunity for students to share their feelings through choosing one of four pictures given to illustrate their current feelings. They also mentioned that they have been able to continue Discovery and Voice classes in the remote setting, which empowers students and gives them choice. On the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey, 95% of the teachers reported that S2PCS has systems in place to support students' social-emotional needs. On the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Parent Survey, 96% of the parents who responded said the school has social or emotional programs and supports for children who need them.
- **Indicator b:** S2PCS utilizes parent and student survey data, teacher observation, attendance data, and behavioral data as some of its forms of quantitative and qualitative data to track social-

emotional needs of the students. The school leadership team reviews the data in their weekly team meetings. In addition, teachers and the school leadership team analyze the data in weekly Student Success Meetings (SSM).

- **Indicator c:** During the school leadership team focus group in the CSO remote site visit, the team spoke about the partnership they have formed with Johns Hopkins University Graduate School of Education to conduct a schoolwide survey to measure the school's climate and identify areas of growth. The informational materials from Johns Hopkins on the School Culture 360 survey indicate that the survey data will measure school culture elements such as communality, organizational identity, administrative support, holistic development, and academic emphasis. Beyond the upcoming survey, the school utilizes the social-emotional data it gathers to evaluate the effectiveness of its programs designed to impact students' social-emotional health, and to make any adjustments to the programming. S2PCS gave as an example in the school's renewal application, the changes it made to its PrimeTime program based on teacher, parent, and student survey data, such as altering the scheduling of PrimeTime groups to all of them consistently happening in the morning, instead of at different times throughout the day.

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

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

Finding: Meets

See the school’s fiscal dashboard attached to the end of this report (Charter School Fiscal Accountability Summary). The fiscal dashboard provides detailed information regarding the school’s compliance with Benchmark 4 of the Charter School Performance Framework. Unless otherwise indicated, financial data is derived from the school’s annual independently audited financial statements which can be found on the NYSED website at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/csdirectory/CSLaunchPage.html>.

- Financial Composite Score
- Working Capital
- Debt to Asset
- Cash Position
- Total Margin

Financial Condition

School in the Square Public Charter School appears to be in good financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the school’s independently audited financial statements.

Overall Financial Outlook

A financial composite score is an overall measure of financial health based on a weighting of primary reserves, equity, and net income. A charter school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is generally considered to be in good financial health. School in the Square Public Charter School’s 2019-2020 composite score is 2.18.

**Composite Scores
2016-2017 to 2019-2020**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2016-2017	1.76
2017-2018	.03
2018-2019	2.30
2019-2020	2.18

Benchmark 5: Fiscal 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.

Finding: Meets

Renewal is based on evidence that the following indicators are generally present:

1. The school has an accurate and functional accounting system that includes monthly budgets.
2. The school sets budget objectives and regularly analyzes its budget in relation to those objectives.
3. The school has allocated budget surpluses in a manner that is fiscally sound and directly attends to the social and academic needs of the students attending the school.
4. The school has and follows a written set of fiscal policies.
5. The school has complied with state and federal financial reporting requirements.
6. The school has and is maintaining appropriate internal controls and procedures.
7. The school follows generally accepted accounting principles as evidenced by independent financial audits with an unqualified audit opinion, a limited number of findings that are quickly corrected, and the absence of a going concern disclosure.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 5:

NYSED CSO reviewed School in the Square Public Charter School's 2019-2020 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor did not identify 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: Meets

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

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 6:

1. Element: **Board Oversight and Governance:**
 - **Indicator a:** The board currently is comprised of nine members, seven of which are founding board members, with relevant and diverse experience, including backgrounds in education, finance, development, real estate, and school governance, according to its submitted BoT Membership Table in Attachment G of the renewal application. The school also shows in its renewal application that over the course of the charter term, four board members left, and two members joined. The full board was present for the board focus group, including the board chair. The board focus group stated that they have recruited two new board members, both from the community and with Latinx backgrounds, who pend approval by NYSED. One of the new board members is a parent of an alumni at the school and the other new board member is a professor with expertise in bilingual education. The board focus group discussed that they continue to search for new members, specifically with a focus on candidates with backgrounds in technology or the entertainment sectors, as well as members from the community.
 - **Indicator b:** The board focus group stated that since the school is its first charter, the board served more of an operational and hands-on role to facilitate the startup of the school. The board focus group shared that they have evolved over the charter term and continue to move towards an oversight and strategic board. The board focus group gave the examples of overseeing the leadership transition and the approval of the expansion of the school as developing the school’s

priorities and strategic planning. S2PCS's renewal application mentions the board's annual retreat, where it reviews the status of the school and progress towards key priorities and develops new goals for the upcoming year.

- **Indicator c:** The board's committee structure supports oversight of academics and fiscal management, with executive, finance, real estate, community engagement, development, governance, and academic committees, as indicated in the school's 2019-2020 Annual Report BoT Membership Table. The board focus group discussed that the Executive Committee meets every two weeks and frequently communicates with the executive director to maintain active oversight of the school, in addition to the monthly reports on academic, financial, and operational data provided by the executive director to the full board. The board focus group mentioned that they have increased the frequency of their own meetings since moving to remote learning, to ensure they fully support the school leadership team and act quickly if any immediate intervention was needed.
- **Indicator d:** In the renewal application, S2PCS outlines its process for updating school policies, which the school leadership team and board review on an annual basis. The renewal application states that the school leadership team submits revised policies, handbooks, and manuals, to the BoT for approval and, when applicable, to the NYSED CSO.
- **Indicator e:** In the renewal application, S2PCS outlines its process for the board conducting its annual self-evaluation, which is led by the Governance Committee and includes a board-developed survey tool that assesses various domains. In addition to the annual self-evaluation, the Executive Committee evaluates the board monthly to determine board performance against benchmarks for the domains. In the renewal application, S2PCS outlines its process for the board conducting its formal evaluation of the executive director, which includes the use of an evaluation tool that assesses five performance domains, including academics, external relationships, strategic planning, finances, and board development. The board conducts the evaluation of the executive director at the end of the school year, incorporated the executive director's self-reflection, the executive committee's evaluation, interviews with school leadership team members who are direct reports, and observations made by the board throughout the school year. The board focus group stated that they have separated the school evaluation from the evaluation of the executive director.
- **Indicator f:** The board appears to be aware of its legal obligations and has legal counsel for general services and any school discipline related concerns. The board submitted all its annual conflict of interest requirements in its 2019-2020 Annual Report.

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: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
<p>1. <i>School Leadership</i></p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place which ensure effective communication across the school.</p> <p>d. The school successfully recruits, hires, and retains key personnel, and makes decisions – when warranted – to remove ineffective staff members.</p>
<p>2. <i>Professional Climate</i></p>	<p>a. The school is fully staffed with high quality personnel to meet all educational and operational needs, including finance, human resources, and communication.</p> <p>b. The school has established structures for frequent collaboration among teachers.</p> <p>c. The school ensures that staff has requisite skills, expertise, and professional development necessary to meet students’ needs.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>e. The school has mechanisms to solicit teacher feedback and gauge teacher satisfaction.</p>
<p>3. <i>Contractual Relationships</i> □N/A</p>	<p>a. The board of trustees and school leadership establish effective working relationships with the management company or comprehensive service provider.</p> <p>b. Changes in the school’s charter management or comprehensive service provider contract comply with required charter amendment procedures.</p> <p>c. The school monitors the efficacy of contracted service providers or partners.</p>

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 7:

1. Element: *School Leadership*:

- **Indicator a:** An executive director serves as the school lead for S2PCS and reports to the S2PCS board of trustees, as detailed in the school’s organization chart. The executive director has been with the school since inception. Along with the executive director, the principal, assistant principal, director of operations, director of community engagement, director of data and partnerships, director of development, dean of culture, SPED department chair, and SEL

department chair comprise the school leadership team. The principal, director of operations, director of community engagement and director of development report into the executive director, and all other members of the school leadership team report into the principal, as detailed in the school's organization chart. The school's school leadership team communicates the school's mission and goals through professional development, school community meetings, and the school's website.

- **Indicator b:** S2PCS submitted an organization chart illustrating reporting structure and staff role descriptions, outlining the responsibilities for all school leadership. S2PCS's organization chart clearly delineates staffing of the entire school, along with a focus on the elementary school and a focus on the middle school reporting structures. During the CSO remote site visit, the interviewed school leadership team and board members confirmed their roles and responsibilities, aligning with the submitted documentation.
- **Indicator c:** S2PCS's renewal application details its various communication systems including stated its organizational reporting structure, weekly department and grade team meetings, the use of a family communication platforms Parent Square and Alma, and adherence to operational policies established in the family and employee handbooks to ensure effective communication and decision-making across the school. The school submitted a continuity of learning plan for the transition to online learning, which included protocols for active communication such as daily morning check ins, continued use of Parent Square, weekly staff and team meetings, weekly letters to families in both English and Spanish, and individual emails with families as needed.
- **Indicator d:** S2PCS's renewal application cites its recruitment methods as including advertising, attending recruitment fairs, posting positions on the school's website and other external websites, encouraging staff referrals, and networking with partner organizations. The renewal application also outlines the retention strategies the school finds have been effective including ensuring opportunities for professional growth, providing professional development, and coaching, and implementing compensation strategies. In the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey, 81% of teachers replied that they agreed or strongly agreed that S2PCS was a long-term, sustainable workplace.

2. Element: *Professional Climate:*

- **Indicator a:** In addition to executive director and director of operations, both on the school leadership team, the school employs an operations and technology manager, facilities and operations associate, and two operations associates to meet its operational and financial needs, as detailed in the school's organization chart and staff roster. The school's website includes all operations staff.
- **Indicator b:** The school's co-teaching model allows for classroom-level collaboration, strengthened by two prep periods a day. During the school leadership team focus group, they discussed teachers other scheduled opportunities for collaboration include weekly grade and content team meetings, monthly departmental meetings, and a Friday focus meeting. In the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey, 89% of teachers replied that they agreed or strongly agreed that teachers frequently collaborated on instruction and curriculum. The school's renewal application cites other opportunities for teacher collaboration include the Rtl process, SSM, and quarterly and annual curriculum review sessions, and weekly morning PD sessions. During the focus group, the school leadership team mentioned that with remote learning, teachers have been collaborating through digital platforms and sharing best practices as they explore new tools.
- **Indicator c:** According to the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey, the school has a teaching staff with a range of teaching experience with 43% having seven years or more, 19% having four

to six years, and 38% having three years or less. In S2PCS's renewal application, school leadership reports that professional development opportunities include coaching by non-evaluative content coaches, in-school meetings focused on schoolwide goals (such as literacy and independent reading), and out-of-school sessions (such as trainings led by external partners). In the 2018-2019 NYCDOE School Survey, 72% of responding teachers said that they had opportunities to work productively with colleagues at their school on professional development.

- **Indicator d:** S2PCS connects its professional development and teacher evaluation to support the growth and effectiveness of its teachers. S2PCS's renewal application mentions that the school uses outside non-evaluative coaches to provide individualized support for teachers, informed by the teachers' annual goals and S2PCS's schoolwide goals. The school utilizes Fisher and Frye's Framework for Intentional and Targeted Teaching for its formal teacher evaluations, which includes three visits a year from a school leadership team member, a goal-setting process, and a feedback document. Eighty-six percent of surveyed teachers through the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey understood the systems in place to monitor and evaluate teacher instruction.
- **Indicator e:** During the school leadership team focus group, the school leaders discussed their prioritization of giving voice to all stakeholders and fostering the relationship-building of the school community. S2PCS school leadership states in the renewal application that they gather teacher feedback and determine teacher satisfaction through the NYSED CSO Teacher Survey, the NYC DOE School Survey, school-created surveys, think tanks, ad hoc committees, and grade level restorative circles. In the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey, teachers reported full staff meetings, feedback forms and surveys, and emails as some examples of how the school leadership team solicits feedback from staff.

3. Element: ***Contractual Relationships:***

- **Indicator a:** N/A
- **Indicator b:** N/A
- **Indicator c:** In the renewal application, S2PCS outlines its process for its annual review of contracted vendors and service providers. The process described in the renewal application includes an evaluation by the executive director and the principal with recommendations made to the BoT to renew, revise, or terminate the contract.

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: Meets

<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:

- 1. Element: **Missions and Key Design Elements:**
 - **Indicator a:** During the CSO remote site visit, school stakeholders expressed a shared understanding of the school’s mission and key design elements. Both the board and leadership team focus groups spoke about the school’s strategic partnerships and co-teaching model and the resulting targeted individualized instruction, all components of the three school’s key design elements. Eighty-six percent of teachers reported on the 2018-2019 NYSED CSO Teacher Survey that they agreed or strongly agreed that the school’s mission is clear and shared by all stakeholders. The school’s website includes its mission and a page on “Programs and Priorities,” which includes brief descriptions of some of the key design elements.
 - **Indicator b:** S2PCS continues to implement its key design elements listed in their initial charter application, even after its transition to remote learning. The CSO remote site visit included the daily “prime time,” a component of the key design element of SEL, that serves as an advisory and allows for relationship-building, which is a priority for the school. Virtual visits to the kindergarten classrooms provided opportunities to view the implementation of the dual language immersion program approved in January 2020 by the Board of Regents. During the school leadership focus group, the team discussed that they have been able to translate small group instruction and Passions/Discovery classes to distance learning. S2PCS’s school calendar and master school schedule reflect the school’s extended day and extended year design elements. S2PCS’s organization chart and staff roster support its key design element of a robust SEL program with staffing of three social workers, a school counselor, and a dean of culture, along with a SEL department chair for the middle school. The school’s submitted 2020-2021 discipline policy incorporates its procedures for restorative practices, in alignment with its key design element of restorative justice.

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: Approaches

<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>

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

2. Element: **Targets are not met:**

- **Indicator a:** The school is currently at 96% enrollment. Although the school has increased its percentage of SWDs over its charter term to exceed the district of location, it continues to under-enroll the district of location in its percentage of ELLs and slightly for ED students. However, S2PCS exceeded the district of location in its retention of its ELLs by 3 percentage points and its ED students by 4 percentage points, in the 2018-2019 school year.
- **Indicator b:** According to the school’s renewal application and supported by the discussion with the board focus group, the school uses information sessions, open houses, advertising, outreach to local organizations, and marketing materials in both English and Spanish as its primary recruitment strategies. In the fall of 2019, the school continued to engage in significant outreach to the community building upon what they learned in 2018 and prior to the school being authorized. On October 17, 2019 the school facilitated a Community Advisory Meeting with community stakeholders including representation of local social service community-based organizations (CBOs), arts organizations, higher education, parents, staffing and students. The guiding question was, “How can our space further expand to be in service to the community?” They wanted to strengthen their partnerships with the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights (NMCIR), Dominican Women’s Development Center, Northern Manhattan

Improvement Corp, Juan Pablo Duarte Foundation and Bronx Community College. The school also wanted to increase the outreach about its work in the community and the local media outlets. In the 18 months since that first meeting, the school is proud of its deepened relationships and has become a trusted resource for information and community support. Examples of those partnerships include collaborating with the NMCIR Worker Center by speaking at the Know Your Rights workshops sharing information about the school and the dual language immersion program. They have supported community-based outreach street teams and the pantry program. The school has also developed medical partnerships. The NYC Health and Hospital partnership has given the school direct relationships with the directors of the COVID-19 testing sites in NYC CSD 6, proving staff and families expedited testing options. New York Presbyterian (NYP) has partnered with the school to provide family workshops on Social Emotional Wellbeing as well as COVID-19 and vaccine information sessions. NYP has also presented at school board meetings providing a Community Assessment of our areas and opportunities for collaboration. The school also hosts and engages in community building events with their local elected officials including their state Senator, Assembly Member, and US Congress Member.

S2PCS's 2020 community engagement and outreach calendar include efforts made for its kindergarten and middle school recruitment, such as presentations at day care centers and Zoom online information sessions. In addition, the school added a lottery preference for ELLs, starting in the 2020 school year, to further its efforts on improving the ELL enrollment. During the leadership team focus group, the team discussed the enrollment challenges of the neighborhood undergoing gentrification and how they decided to target community-based organizations that work with immigrant populations to increase their ELL enrollment. Further, they mentioned they expect that having a dual language program, a new key design element approved by the Board of Regents in January 2020 starting in kindergarten and growing by one grade each year, would support their ELL recruitment efforts as well.

- **Indicator c:** S2PCS employs a director of community engagement, who evaluates and assesses recruitment and outreach strategies on an annual basis. As described in its renewal application, the director of community engagement reviews the data and determines the effectiveness of the various strategies, and if a strategy is ineffective will either discontinue or adjust improve.

See Attachment 1 for data tables and additional information.

Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance

The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.

Finding: Meets

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Legal Compliance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. b. The school has undertaken appropriate corrective action when needed and has implemented necessary safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements. c. The school has sought Board of Regents and/or Charter School Office approval for significant revisions.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 10:

1. Element: **Legal Compliance:**
 - **Indicator a:** The school generally complies with the law and the provisions of its charter. However, the school has had uncategorized uncertified teachers during the charter term and has had some concerning practices, like allowing occupancy of its facility prior to obtaining a fire inspection and certificate of occupancy. There have been concerns about the school’s fiscal condition in light of transfer of assets between the school and its “friends of” organization. Some of the school’s policies require revision to be legally compliant. School officials have not been complying with fingerprinting and clearance requirements for staff, a serious safety violation. The school must adopt a multi-step, comprehensive process to ensure that all school employees have fingerprint clearance prior to their start date at the school.
 - **Indicator b:** The NYSED CSO issued the school a Notice of Concern in November 2017 because student performance on NYS testing in ELA and math during the first year of operation did not meet the NYSED Performance Framework standards. In its second year of operation, S2PCS nearly doubled its proficiency scores in both ELA and math and maintained that growth in its third year of operation.
 - **Indicator c:** During the charter term, S2PCS requested and received NYSED CSO approval for several material and non-material revisions. The revisions included a key design element to implement a dual language program, clarification of the waitlist process to the enrollment policy, increased grade span and maximum student enrollment, and the addition of ELL enrollment preference.

Attachment 1: 2020-2021 Renewal School Visit
School in the Square Public Charter School

Benchmark 1:

Indicator 1: All Schools

1.a.i. Accountability - ESEA Accountability Designation:

This school is designated as a school in Good Standing under current New York State criteria as defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

1.b.i. Similar Schools Comparison – Comparative Proficiency:

This school outperforms schools with similar grades and subgroup demographics in math, but does not outperform similar schools in ELA or science .

Indicator 2: Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

2.a.i. and 2.a.ii. Trending Toward Proficiency – Aggregate and Subgroup Standards-Based Trend Toward Proficiency: See Table 1 below.

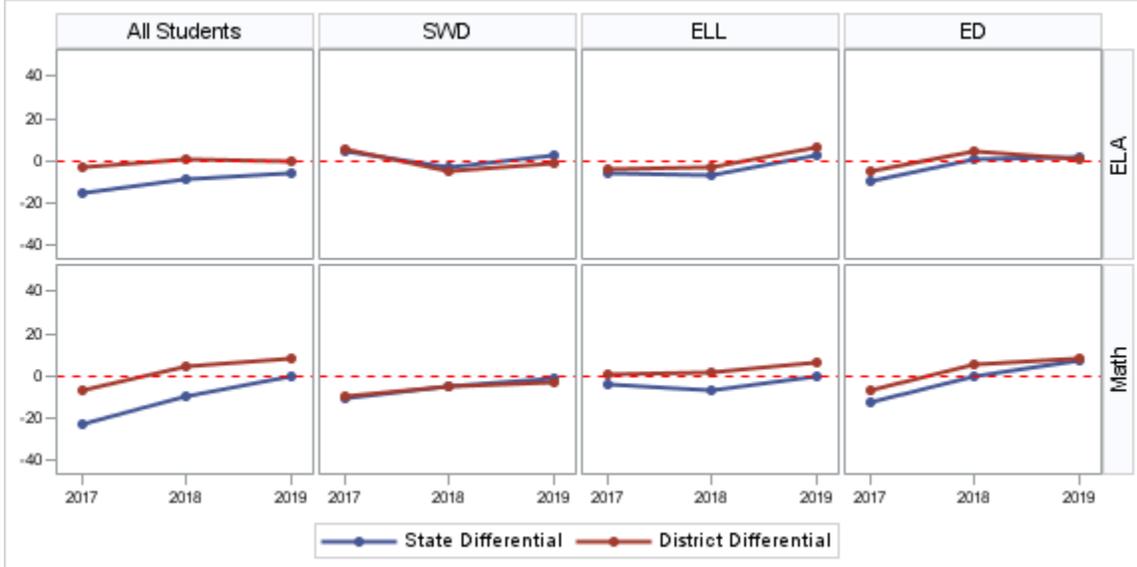
Table 1: Elementary/Middle School Trending Toward Proficiency – Target = 75%

		All Students	SWD	ELL	ED
ELA	2016-2017	27%	13%	11%	24%
	2017-2018	51%	32%	34%	51%
	2018-2019	50%	34%	39%	49%
Math	2016-2017	22%	13%	11%	19%
	2017-2018	54%	36%	39%	54%
	2018-2019	57%	23%	48%	56%

**See NOTES (2), (3), (7), and (8) below.*

2.b.i. and 2.b.ii. Proficiency - Aggregate and Subgroup School Level Proficiency: See Figure 1 and Table 2 below.

Figure 1: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency State and District Differentials Over Time



*See NOTES (1), (2), (3), and (6) below.

Table 2: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes: Charter School, District, and NYS

		ELA					Math				
		School in the Square Public CS	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS	School in the Square Public CS	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS
All Students	2016-2017	17%	20%	-3	32%	-15	17%	24%	-7	40%	-23
	2017-2018	36%	35%	+1	45%	-9	33%	29%	+4	43%	-10
	2018-2019	39%	39%	0	45%	-6	42%	34%	+8	42%	0
SWD	2016-2017	11%	6%	+5	7%	+4	0%	10%	-10	11%	-11
	2017-2018	11%	16%	-5	14%	-3	8%	13%	-5	13%	-5
	2018-2019	16%	17%	-1	13%	+3	12%	15%	-3	13%	-1
ELL	2016-2017	0%	4%	-4	6%	-6	11%	10%	+1	15%	-4
	2017-2018	13%	16%	-3	20%	-7	15%	13%	+2	22%	-7
	2018-2019	22%	16%	+6	19%	+3	23%	17%	+6	23%	0
ED	2016-2017	13%	18%	-5	23%	-10	15%	22%	-7	28%	-13
	2017-2018	36%	32%	+4	35%	+1	31%	26%	+5	31%	0
	2018-2019	37%	36%	+1	35%	+2	40%	32%	+8	33%	+7

*See NOTES (1), (2), (3), (6), and (7) below.

2.b.iii. Aggregate Grade Level Proficiency: See Table 3 below.

Table 3: Aggregate Grade Level Proficiency

		ELA					Math				
		School In The Square Public CS	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS	School In The Square Public CS	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS
Grade 6	2016-2017	17%	20%	-3	32%	-15	17%	24%	-7	40%	-23
	2017-2018	37%	38%	-1	49%	-12	30%	28%	+2	44%	-14
	2018-2019	33%	39%	-6	47%	-14	34%	35%	-1	47%	-13
Grade 7	2017-2018	35%	32%	+3	40%	-5	35%	29%	+6	41%	-6
	2018-2019	29%	32%	-3	40%	-11	43%	33%	+10	43%	0
Grade 8	2018-2019	54%	47%	+7	48%	+6	51%	35%	+16	33%	+18

*See NOTES (1), (6), and (7) below.

Indicator 3: High School Outcomes

(Not applicable to this charter school.)

Benchmark 9:

Table 4: Student Demographics

	SWD			ELL			ED		
	School In the Square Public CS	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	School In the Square Public CS	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	School In the Square Public CS	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District
2016-2017	17%	23%	-6	18%	33%	-15	86%	86%	0
2017-2018	19%	24%	-5	24%	39%	-15	85%	90%	-5
2018-2019	24%	23%	+1	22%	38%	-16	79%	88%	-9
2019-2020	25%	23%	+2	22%	38%	-16	84%	87%	-3

*See NOTES (2) and (6) below.

Table 5: Retention - Aggregate and Subgroups

	All Students			SWD			ELL			ED		
	School In the Square Public CS	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	School In the Square Public CS	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	School In the Square Public CS	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	School In the Square Public CS	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District
2017-2018	94%	92%	+2	94%	89%	+5	84%	90%	-6	93%	92%	+1
2018-2019	93%	91%	+2	89%	90%	-1	94%	89%	+5	92%	91%	+1
2019-2020	96%	92%	+4	91%	91%	0	94%	91%	+3	96%	92%	+4

*See NOTES (2) and (6) below.

***NOTES:**

(1) Data in the table above represents tested students who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on the NYS ELA and/or math assessment.

(2) For the students with disabilities and the ELL/MLL subgroups, both current and former members of the subgroups have been combined.

(3) Pursuant to NYSED business rules, the data was suppressed for subgroups containing <5 students and the subgroup category may not be included for the metric.

(4) Data in the table above represents students who passed the Annual Regents or equivalents (score of 65 or better).

(5) The 4- and 5-year graduation rates reported are as of August. The 6-year graduation rates are as of June.

(6) Data in the table above represents a comparison between those grades served in the charter school to only those same grades in the district.

(7) A "." in any table indicates that the data was suppressed, no student sat for the exam, or the exam was not given.

(8) Data in the table above represents tested students who either maintained a proficient score from one year to the next or students whose proficiency level increased from one year to the next (a proficient score is level 3 or 4).

(9) Data in the table above represents students within their respective subgroups who have passed three out of the five Annual Regents and Regents Common Core Examinations (score of 65 or better) or equivalents.

(10) Data in the table above represents the percentage of students from the original 9th grade cohort who persisted within the same school to a 4-year graduation (includes August graduates).

Charter School Fiscal Accountability Summary

SCHOOL IN THE SQUARE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

Grades Served
Maximum Chartered Grades Served
Chartered Enrollment
Maximum Chartered Enrollment
Actual Enrollment

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Grades Served	-	6	6-7	6-8	6-8
Maximum Chartered Grades Served	-	6-8	6-8	6-8	6-8
Chartered Enrollment	-	106	212	318	318
Maximum Chartered Enrollment	-	318	318	318	318
Actual Enrollment	-	105	204	301	304

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	-	125,638	207,690	820,067	2,062,090
Grants and Contracts Receivable	-	86,544	137,794	105,717	196,341
Prepaid Expenses	-	95,114	27,012	26,956	132,210
Other Current Assets	-	49,015	6,618	35,067	252,213
Total Current Assets	-	356,311	379,114	987,807	2,642,854

Non-Current Assets

Property, Building and Equipment, net	-	575,961	713,134	675,508	583,274
Restricted Cash	-	25,000	26,142	76,237	76,361
Security Deposits	-	41,667	41,667	41,667	41,667
Other Non-Current Assets	-	-	-	-	-
Total Non - Current Assets	-	642,628	780,943	793,412	701,302
Total Assets	-	998,939	1,160,057	1,781,219	3,344,156

LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	-	134,770	188,835	296,537	495,039
Accrued Payroll and Payroll Taxes	-	-	-	-	-
Due to Related Parties	-	-	-	-	-
Refundable Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Other Current Liabilities	-	-	-	-	(10,000)
Total Current Liabilities	-	134,770	188,835	296,537	485,039

Long-Term Liabilities

Deferred Rent	-	515,000	780,000	75,478	-
Other Long-Term Liabilities	-	-	-	-	865,130
Total Long-Term Liabilities	-	515,000	780,000	75,478	865,130
Total Liabilities	-	649,770	968,835	372,015	1,350,169

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	-	199,169	191,222	1,409,204	1,993,987
Restricted	-	150,000	-	-	-
Total Net Assets	-	349,169	191,222	1,409,204	1,993,987
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	-	998,939	1,160,057	1,781,219	3,344,156

OPERATING REVENUE

State and Local Per Pupil Revenue - Reg. Ed	-	1,451,991	2,934,846	4,573,349	4,797,761
State and Local Per Pupil Revenue - SPED	-	253,188	579,029	1,018,690	987,992
State and Local Per Pupil Facilities Revenue	-	289,494	-	933,400	1,274,125
Federal Grants	-	971,096	355,647	554,916	476,553
State and City Grants	-	-	566,600	-	-
Other Operating Income	-	-	441,467	-	-
Total Operating Revenue	-	2,965,769	4,877,589	7,080,355	7,536,431

EXPENSES

Program Services

Regular Education	-	2,228,785	3,423,525	4,136,465	5,320,693
Special Education	-	629,201	963,544	1,468,926	1,636,772
Other Expenses	-	-	-	-	-
Total Program Services	-	2,857,986	4,387,069	5,605,391	6,957,465

Supporting Services

Management and General	-	780,950	634,307	857,151	1,115,659
Fundraising	-	17,847	14,160	23,324	22,179
Total Support Services	-	798,797	648,467	880,475	1,137,838
Total Expenses	-	3,656,783	5,035,536	6,485,866	8,095,303
Surplus/Deficit from Operations	-	(691,014)	(157,947)	594,489	(558,872)

SUPPORT AND OTHER REVENUE

Interest and Other Income	-	-	-	-	-
Contributions and Grants	-	1,040,183	-	623,493	1,143,655
Fundraising Support	-	-	-	-	-
Other Support and Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support and Other Revenue	-	1,040,183	-	623,493	1,143,655
Change in Net Assets	-	349,169	(157,947)	1,217,982	584,783
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	-	-	349,169	191,222	1,409,204
Net Assets - End of Year	-	349,169	191,222	1,409,204	1,993,987

REVENUE & EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

Revenue - Per Pupil

Operating	-	28,245	23,910	23,523	24,791
Support and Other Revenue	-	9,907	-	2,071	3,762
Total Revenue	-	38,152	23,910	25,594	28,553

Expenses - Per Pupil

Program Services	-	27,219	21,505	18,623	22,886
Management and General, Fundraising	-	7,608	3,179	2,925	3,743
Total Expenses	-	34,827	24,684	21,548	26,629
% of Program Services	0.0%	78.2%	87.1%	86.4%	85.9%
% of Management and Other	0.0%	21.8%	12.9%	13.6%	14.1%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses	0.0%	9.5%	-3.1%	18.6%	7.2%

FINANCIAL COMPOSITE SCORE

Composite Score	-	1.76	0.03	2.30	2.18
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Strong: 1.5 - 3.0 / Adequate: 1.0 - 1.4 / Needs Monitoring: -1.0 - 0.9	-	Strong	Needs Monitoring	Strong	Strong

WORKING CAPITAL

Net Working Capital	-	221,541	190,279	691,270	2,157,815
Working Capital (Current) Ratio	-	2.6	2.0	3.3	5.4
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or greater than 1.2	-	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard

DEBT TO ASSET

Debt to Asset Ratio	-	0.7	0.8	0.2	0.4
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or less than 1.0	-	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard

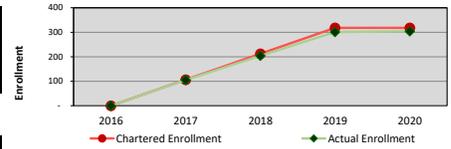
CASH POSITION

Days of Cash	-	12.5	15.1	46.2	93.0
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or greater than 60 days	-	Does Not Meet Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard

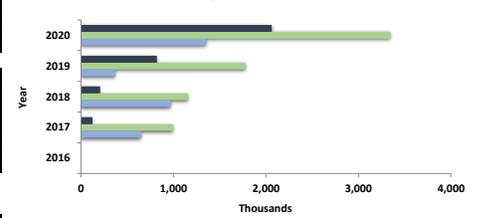
TOTAL MARGIN

Total Margin Ratio	-	0.1	(0.0)	0.2	0.1
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or greater than 0.0	-	Meets Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard

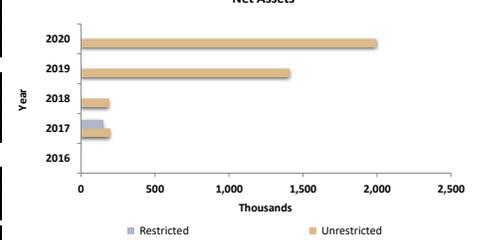
Chartered vs. Actual Enrollment



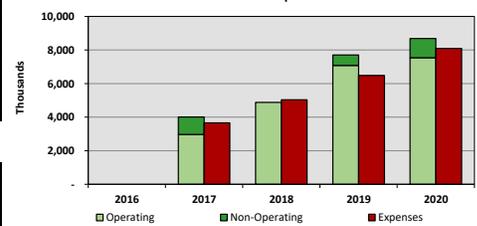
Cash, Assets and Liabilities



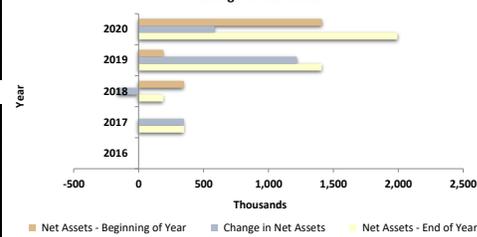
Net Assets



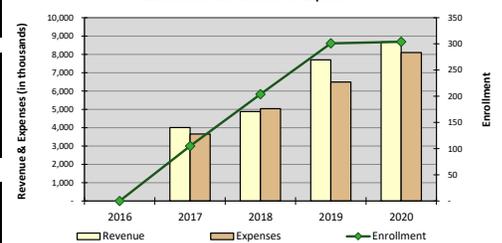
Revenue & Expenses



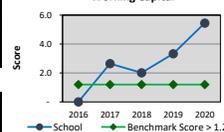
Change in Net Assets



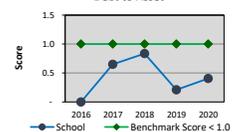
Enrollment vs. Revenue & Expenses



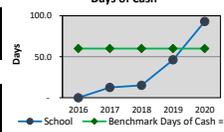
Working Capital



Debt to Asset



Days of Cash



Total Margin

