



New York State Education Department

Renewal Site Visit Report *2017-2018*

Utica Academy of Science Charter School

Visit Date: November 8-9, 2017
Date of Report: January 19, 2018

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary¹

Name of Charter School	Utica Academy of Science Charter School
Board Chair	Dr. Fehmi Damkaci
District of Location	Utica City School District
Opening Date	September 1, 2013
Charter Terms	Initial Charter Term: July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2018
Proposed Renewal Term	July 1, 2018 to June 30, 20123
Authorized Grades/Maximum Authorized Enrollment	6-12, 462
Management Company	N/A
Educational Partners	Science Academies of New York Charter Schools
Facilities	<p>2016-2017 and 2017-2018 1214 Lincoln Avenue, Utica, New York 13502 (6-7) and 160 School Lane, Frankfurt, New York 13340 (8-12)</p> <p>2015-2016 1214 Lincoln Avenue, Utica, New York 13502 (6-7) and</p> <p>160 School Lane, Frankfurt, New York 13340 (8-11)</p> <p>2014-2015 1214 Lincoln Avenue Utica, New York 13502 (6-7) and 160 School Lane, Frankfurt, New York 13340 (8-10)</p> <p>2013-2014 1214 Lincoln Avenue, Utica, New York 13502 (6-9)</p>
Mission Statement	<i>Utica Academy of Science Charter School (UASCS) will provide support, challenges, and opportunities for its students, and it will instill the necessary skills and knowledge in math, science, and technology to empower students, through high intellectual standards, preparing them for college, career and citizenship. The school seeks to graduate students who can think critically and creatively, who are committed to a lifetime of learning and civic involvement, and who are conscious of local, global, and environmental issues.</i>
Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - College preparation - Stem and environment focused - Student centered - Glocal education - Parent involvement and home visits - Performance based accountability
Requested Revisions	<i>Add grades K-5 over next charter term</i>

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

Renewal Outcomes

The following renewal outcomes are possible:

- **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.

School Characteristics

Approved Enrollment for the Current Charter Term

	Year 1 2013 to 2014	Year 2 2014 to 2015	Year 3 2015 to 2016	Year 4 2016 to 2017	Year 5 2017 to 2018
Grade Configuration	Grades 6-9	Grades 6-10	Grades 6-11	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
Total Approved Enrollment	176	242	352	387	452

Proposed Enrollment for the Renewal Charter Term

	Year 1 2018 to 2019	Year 2 2019 to 2020	Year 3 2020 to 2021	Year 4 2021 to 2022	Year 5 2022 to 2023
Grade Configuration	Grades K-1, 6-12	Grades K-2, 6-12	Grades K-3, 6-12	Grades K-4, 6-12	Grades K-12
Total Approved Enrollment	594	660	726	792	858

METHODOLOGY

A two-day renewal site visit was conducted at Utica Academy of Science Charter School (UAS) on November 8 and 9, 2017. The CSO team conducted interviews with the Board of Trustees, school leadership teams, and parents. In cooperation with school leadership, the NYSED Charter School Office (CSO) administered an anonymous online survey to teachers.

The team conducted 20 classroom observations in Grades 6 through 12. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the instructional coaches, Deans of the Middle School and High School, and the Regional Director of Academics.

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

- **Renewal Application**
- **Academic data**
- **Enrollment data including subgroups**
- **Teacher roster**
- **Renewal Site Visit Workbook**

- **Current organizational chart**
- **A master school schedule**
- **Map of school with room numbers and teacher names**
- **Board materials (roster, minutes, and self-evaluation form)**
- **Board self-evaluation processes and documents**
- **Student/family handbook**
- **Staff handbook and personnel policies**
- **A list of major assessments**
- **Teacher and administrator evaluation processes**
- **Interventions offered at the school**
- **School-conducted surveys of teachers and parents**
- **NYSED teacher survey**
- **Professional development plans, schedules, and materials**
- **Efforts towards achieving enrollment and retention targets**
- **School submitted annual reports**
- **Curricular documents (units, lessons, pacing guides)**

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The 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 [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 strengths will precede the benchmark analysis. Each benchmark will be rated; however, the report narrative will highlight those indicators not fully met by the school.

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 8 to 9, 2017, at Utica Academy of Science Charter School, see the following Performance Framework benchmark scores and discussion.

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

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

Summary of Findings

The Utica Academy of Science Charter School (UAS) is the first charter school in the Utica City School District and serves middle and high school students. The school is focused on providing a highly supportive, small school environment where students develop strong skills in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); are prepared and motivated to attend college; and closely collaborate with their community.

Using the advice of many experts and several data sources to target their improvements, the UAS has made substantial progress over the past four years toward meeting each of the Performance Framework benchmarks. Systematic routines at all levels of the organization are in place for goal setting, action planning, evaluating, providing feedback for growth, and developing interventions. These efforts have paid dividends at the school as proficiency is on the rise. At the middle school level, students improve their proficiency between grades 6 and 8 in ELA and Math, and surpass the local district at many points. At the high school level, data is limited for assessing long term trends, but Regents exam pass rates continue to rise for all subgroups in Algebra I (Common Core) and Living Environment, while yet some other subjects, such as Geometry (Common Core) and Chemistry, have seen decline and passing percentages substantially below the state average. The school has met and exceeded the overall enrollment targets, maintained strong financial stability, and recently celebrated the first exiting class where, according to school leaders, 100% of the students graduated and were accepted into college. While not yet released, the school leaders stated that 2016-17 pass rates continued to improve in the five Regents exams required for graduation.

As the school moves toward its goal of exceeding the Performance Framework benchmarks, it will continue to use the systematic accountability routines that are in place to strengthen a few school-wide practices. These include the implementation of innovative programs, services, and recruitment strategies to attract, retain and improve the proficiency of students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged subgroups. While all students have opportunities for dual enrollment and upper level math courses this practice should continue to expand to further highlight the STEM theme. School leaders will continue to facilitate collaboration and sharing of promising practices across grade levels and content areas, and to build more consistent differentiation of instruction and high levels of cognitive engagement. While the school has a positive, supportive atmosphere with high expectations for learning, leaders might consider developing a system for explicit instruction of social emotional skills at each grade level, so that all students at the school can improve their social emotional health.

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:

Indicator 1: All Schools

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

This school has received the ESEA designation of good standing from the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

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

In the 2017 Charter School Renewal Application and through interviews, the school leaders provided analysis of proficiency using 13 schools provided by the CSO and one additional school with characteristics similar to UAS. According to the complete list provided by the CSO, in Grades 6-8 the average proficiency of similar schools in English language arts (ELA) is 41% versus 24% reported by UAS. In math, the average proficiency for similar schools in Grades 6-8 is 33% versus 28% reported by UAS. The school reported that after filtering the list to omit 4 schools with specific screening processes or reserved seats, and adding a charter school with characteristics similar to UAS, the proficiency of the UAS students was closer to the similar school averages. In ELA the average of the revised list of 10 similar schools was 29% which still exceeded UAS proficiency. In Math, UAS exceeded the average of the 10 similar schools, which fell to 20% proficiency.

Indicator 2: Middle School Outcomes

2.a.i. Trending Toward Proficiency – Aggregate Standards-Based Trend Toward Proficiency:

In the 2017 Charter School Renewal Application and school leader interviews, the school reported that middle school students made progress in improving math and ELA performance. In math, the school reported that between 2015 and 2017 the number of students who gained a performance level on the NYS assessments increased from 16 to 51. In that same time period, students who performed at a proficient level decreased from 31% to 28%, while the NYS average increased slightly from 33% to 34%. In ELA, the school stated in the application that the number of students who improved one or more levels increased from 4 to 58. Student proficiency has also steadily increased between 2015 and 2017, from 14% to 24% where the NYS average proficiency only increased from 31% to 40%.

2.a.ii. Trending Toward Proficiency - Subgroup Standards-Based Trend Toward Proficiency:

Over the three-year span between 2015 and 2017, students with disabilities have not shown gains in the proficiency rate in either ELA or Math. For the English language learner subgroup, while 0% of students showed proficiency gains between 2015 and 2017 in ELA, the school reported that results on the NYSESLAT test showed 100% of ELL students improved, and 63% of them moved to the next proficiency level. In math, while proficiency decreased slightly from 6% to 5%, UAS continued to outperform the local district and trailed the NYS average by only 4% in 2017. In the economically disadvantaged subgroup, while math proficiency percentages declined somewhat from 31% to 26% from 2015 to 2017,

ELA proficiency rose by 10%, from 12% to 22% so that in 2017, economically disadvantaged students exceeded the local district in both content areas.

2.b.i. Proficiency - Aggregate School Level Proficiency for All Students: See Table 1 below.

Between 2015 and 2017, the growth in ELA proficiency at UAS outpaced the growth at both the local district and across the state. With a 10% increase in proficiency, the variance in ELA student proficiency between UACS and NYS has decreased from -18% to -16%, where the local district variance has increased from -16% to -18%. In math, between 2015-2017, the variance in student proficiency between UAS and NYS has widened from -2% to -6%, while the variance in student proficiency between the local district and NYS average has improved from -17% to -16%. Although the UAS variance from the NYS average has widened at a greater rate than the local district, student proficiency is still 10% greater at UAS.

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

All Students	ELA					Math				
	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	14%	17%	-3	31%	-17	31%	16%	15	33%	-2
2015-2016	19%	21%	-2	37%	-18	24%	21%	3	34%	-10
2016-2017	24%	22%	2%	40%	-16	28%	18%	10	34%	-6

2.b.ii. Proficiency – Subgroup School Level Proficiency: See Tables 2-4 below.

In the subgroup students with disabilities, no students at UAS have performed at proficiency in ELA and math, which remains below the local district and state averages. In the English language learner (ELL) subgroup, UAS students have performed at proficiency at higher rates than the local district but do not yet reach the state average in Math. However, in ELA no students have performed at proficiency at UAS, which falls slightly behind the district and state at 1% and 2%, respectively. In the economically disadvantaged subgroup, while Math proficiency percentages have declined from 2015-2017 to 26% proficient in 2017, they still substantially exceed the district proficiency of 15% in 2017, and are above the NYS average of 24%. ELA proficiency also exceeded the local district proficiency of 19% in 2017, but remained 8% below the NYS average of 30%.

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

Students with Disabilities	ELA					Math				
	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	0%	1%	-1	5%	-5	0%	0%	0	7%	-7
2015-2016	0%	1%	-1	7%	-7	0%	7%	-7	7%	-7
2016-2017	0%	1%	-1	8%	-8	0%	2%	-2	7%	-7

Table 3: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup – English Language Learners: *School, District & NYS Level Aggregates*

English Language Learners	ELA					Math				
	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	0%	2%	-2	2%	-2	6%	1%	5	9%	-3
2015-2016	0%	1%	-1	2%	-2	4%	3%	1	8%	-4
2016-2017	0%	1%	-1	2%	-2	5%	2%	3	9%	-4

Table 4: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup – Economically Disadvantaged Students: *School, District & NYS Level Aggregates*

Economically Disadvantaged	ELA					Math				
	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	12%	16%	-4	21%	-9	31%	16%	15	23%	8
2015-2016	17%	19%	-2	27%	-10	21%	20%	1	24%	-3
2016-2017	22%	19%	3	30%	-8	26%	15%	11	24%	2

2.b.iii. Proficiency – Grade Level Proficiency: See Table 5 and 6 below.

Considering the cohort trends in the three years of data between 2015 and 2017, proficiency improved as students moved from Grade 6 to 8 at UAS, in both ELA and Math. In 2015, 20% of the Grade 6 students were proficient in ELA and 35% were proficient in Math. That same cohort of students in 2017 after Grade 8, had proficiency percentages of 29% and 37%, respectively. While student growth in proficiency in Math exceeded that of ELA at UAS, proficiency of Grade 6 students exceeded the ELA performance of the local district by 4% and exceeded in Math by 9%. However, as Grade 8 students this same cohort exceeded the local district by 5% and 36% in ELA and Math, respectively.

The Grade 6 program however, exits students with ELA and Math proficiency below both the local district and state averages in 2016 and 2017, with a declining overall trend between 2015 and 2017. The Grade 7 program, however, saw steady gains in ELA proficiency and closing of the gap between the district and state continuously between 2015 and 2017. The Grade 7 math program has seen a decline in student proficiency percentages between 2015 and 2017 from 33% to 27%, which has widened the gap between the school and the state average, but continues to widely outperform the local district. In both ELA and Math, the Grade 8 program has seen consistent increases in the proficiency of exiting students between 2015 and 2017, and surpassed the district in the past two years in both subjects. Relevant to the state averages, the Grade 8 ELA proficiency falls around 15% below the state average, while Math students exceeded the state average by the same margin.

Table 5: Grade Level Proficiency for All Students: 2014-2015

	ELA					Math				
	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015										
Grade 6	20%	16%	4	31%	-11	35%	26%	9	39%	-4
Grade 7	9%	14%	-5	29%	-20	33%	11%	22	35%	-2
Grade 8	13%	22%	-9	35%	-22	26%	3%	23	22%	4

Table 6: Grade Level Proficiency for All Students: 2015-2016

	ELA					Math				
	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS
2015-2016										
Grade 6	11%	22%	-11	34%	-23	28%	32%	-4	40%	-12
Grade 7	19%	21%	-2	35%	-16	26%	15%	11	36%	-10
Grade 8	26%	21%	5	41%	-15	15%	3%	12	24%	-9

Table 7: Grade Level Proficiency for All Students: 2016-2017

2016-2017	ELA					Math				
	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS
Grade 6	13%	20%	-7	32%	-19	18%	28%	-10	40%	-22
Grade 7	28%	23%	5	42%	-14	27%	15%	12	38%	-11
Grade 8	29%	24%	5	45%	-16	37%	1%	36	22%	15

Indicator 3: High School Outcomes

3.a.i. Regents Testing Outcomes – Aggregate Annual Regents Outcomes: See Table 8.

As this school is completing the first charter period, several Regents exams have been administered for only one or two years, limiting trend analysis over time. However, in two of the Regents exams required for graduation, Algebra I (Common Core) and Living Environment, the school posts three years of student data demonstrating an improving trend. Algebra 1 (Common Core) saw the greatest improvement where the percentage of student performing at proficiency (levels 3, 4 and 5) increased from 26% in 2014 to 60% in 2015, with a dip in proficiency in 2016 of 13%. This represents a narrowing of the gap between UAS performance and NYS average proficiency by more than 30%, where UAS students performed 12% below the state average. Living Environment pass rates have improved from 62% to 63% between 2014 and 2016, but fell to 15% below the state average in 2016.

In other courses with at least two years of data, the school posts assorted trends. Earth Science pass rates have seen a sharp decline from 47% to 28% and variance from the state average of -25% to -43%. Similarly, in Geometry (Common Core), pass rates have shown declines from 16% to 10% passing in 2016, which had declining variance from the stage average of -47% to -43%. Students passing the Global History and Geography exams increased from 50% to 55% in 2016, representing an improvement in the gap from the state average of -17% to -13%.

Table 8: Annual Regents Outcomes – Aggregate

	2013-2014			2014-2015			2015-2016		
	CS	NYS	Variance	CS	NYS	Variance	CS	NYS	Variance
Algebra 2 / Trigonometry	-	66%	-	-	60%	-	0%	55%	-55
Algebra I (Common Core) (levels 3, 4 & 5)	26%	68%	-42	13%	62%	-49	60%	72%	-12
Algebra II (Common Core) (levels 3, 4 & 5)	-	X	-	-	X	-	60%	74%	-14
English Language Arts (Common Core)	-	75%	-	-	80%	-	76%	86%	-10
Geometry (Common Core) (levels 3, 4 & 5)	-	X	-	16%	63%	-47	10%	63%	-53
Geometry (>65)	-	73%	-	25%	72%	-47	0	38%	-38
Global History and Geography (>65)	-	66%	-	50%	67%	-17	55%	68%	-13
Integrated Algebra (>65)	37%	72%	-35	55%	62%	-7	-	58%	-
Living Environment (>65)	62%	78%	-16	55%	77%	-22	63%	78%	-15
Physical Setting/Chemistry (>65)	100%	73%	27	100%	75%	25	0%	76%	-76
Physical Setting/Earth Science (>65)	-	72%	-	47%	72%	-25	28%	71%	-43
US History and Government	-	80%	-	-	84%	-	76%	82%	-6

3.a.ii. Regents Testing Outcomes – Subgroup Annual Regents Outcomes: See Tables 9-11.

The proficiency of students with disabilities in Algebra I (Common Core) has increased by 10% over the past three years, but has remained around 30% below the state averages. Students passing the Living Environment exam have also increased from 0% to 50% in 2016, which exceeds the NYS average passing percentage by 2%. Passing percentages remain at 0% for all other exams, but it is unclear how many students sat for the exam during each year, if any.

English language learners also demonstrated consistent increases in the proficiency in Algebra I (Common Core) which has increased from 0% to 39% between 2014 and 2016, resulting in a score 4% below the state average. Similarly, this subgroup of students has also seen more passing scores in Living Environment in 2016 than in 2014 as percent passing increased from 14% to 29%. All other tested subjects indicate 0% passing, but is also unclear how many students sat for the exams, if any.

Students in the Economically Disadvantaged subgroup demonstrated similar improvements in Algebra I (Common Core) and Living Environment when compared to the other subgroups. In Algebra I (CC) proficiency has increased from 21% in 2014 to 58% in 2016 and in Living Environment student passing percentages have increased from 53% to 58% in the same time. While both continue below the state average, the gap has closed significantly in the past three years. In several other subjects: Geometry, Global History and Geography, and Earth Science, two years of data show a decline in the percent of student passing these exams in the Economically Disadvantage subgroup, and those passing percentages remain below the state average.

Table 9: Annual Regents Outcomes – Students with Disabilities

	2013-2014			2014-2015			2015-2016		
	CS	NYS	Variance	CS	NYS	Variance	CS	NYS	Variance
Algebra I (Common Core) (levels 3, 4 & 5)	0	31%	-31	0	27%	-27	10%	41%	-3%
Global History and Geography (>65)	-	33%	-	0	34%	-34	0	36%	-3%
Integrated Algebra (>65)	0	41%	-41	0	39%	-39	-	34%	-
Living Environment (>65)	0	48%	-48	25%	46%	-21	50%	48%	2
Physical Setting/Earth Science (>65)	-	41%	-	0	42%	-42	0	40%	-40

Table 10: Annual Regents Outcomes – English Language Learners

	2013-2014			2014-2015			2015-2016		
	CS	NYS	Variance	CS	NYS	Variance	CS	NYS	Variance
Algebra I (Common Core) (levels 3, 4 & 5)	0	27%	-27	10%	27%	-	39%	43%	-4
English Language Arts (Common Core)	-	24%	-	-	34%	-	0	40%	-40
Geometry (Common Core) (levels 3, 4 & 5)	-	X	-	0	33%	-33	0	31%	-31
Geometry (>65)	-	73%	-	0	48%	-48	-	38%	-
Global History and Geography (>65)	-	34%	-	20%	36%	-16	0	33%	-33
Integrated Algebra (>65)	0	50%	-50	40%	47%	-7	-	44%	-
Living Environment (>65)	14%	42%	-28	23%	40%	-17	29%	42%	-13
Physical Setting/Chemistry (>65)	-	40%	-	-	46%	-	0	41%	-41
Physical Setting/Earth Science (>65)	-	33%	-	0	32%	-	0	29%	-29
US History and Government	-	46%	-	-	52%	-	0	48%	-48

Table 11: Annual Regents Outcomes – Economically Disadvantaged

	2013-2014			2014-2015			2015-2016		
	CS	NYS	Variance	CS	NYS	Variance	CS	NYS	Variance
Algebra 2 / Trigonometry	-	53%	-	-	48%	-	0	45%	-45
Algebra I (Common Core) (levels 3, 4 & 5)	21%	53%	-32	20%	49%	-29	58%	63%	-5
Algebra II (Common Core) (levels 3, 4 & 5)	-	X	-	-	X	-	67%	74%	-7
English Language Arts (Common Core)	-	65%	-	-	73%	-	65%	80%	-15
Geometry (Common Core) (levels 3, 4 & 5)	-	X	-	22%	48%	-26	10%	48%	-38
Geometry (>65)	-	60%	-	33%	60%	-27	0	33%	-33
Global History and Geography (>65)	-	54%	-	75%	56%	19	53%	57%	-4
Integrated Algebra (>65)	33%	64%	-31	80%	58%	22	-	57%	-
Living Environment (>65)	53%	69%	-16	45%	68%	-23	58%	69%	-11
Physical Setting/Chemistry (>65)	100%	58%	42	100%	62%	-	0	63%	-63
Physical Setting/Earth Science (>65)	-	57%	-	77%	59%	18	30%	57%	-27
US History and Government	-	70%	-	-	76%	-	65%	74%	-9

3.a.iii. High School Outcomes – Aggregate Total Cohort Regents Testing Outcomes: See Table 12. The first graduating class from UAS was the 2013 cohort, and therefore no data is available for cohort trends or comparisons.

3.b.iii. and 3.b.iv. Graduation Outcomes – Aggregate and Subgroup On-Track to Graduate: This data is not yet available for the 2016-17 school year; however, the school reported a graduation rate of 100%.

3.b.v. and 3.b.vi. Graduation Outcomes – Aggregate and Subgroup Student Persistence: This data is not yet available for the 2016-17 school year; however, the school reported as below.

Student Persistence - 2015-16 (% of Students who remained enrolled in the school)

	2015-2016		
	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance
All Students	58%	77%	-19
English Language Learners	49%	74%	-25
Economically Disadvantaged	58%	76%	-18
Students with Disabilities	31%	67%	-36

Note:

Continuity Ratio = Students served in the fall of 2016 divided by students who left between the fall of 2015 and the fall of 2016 and Students served in the fall of 2016.

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.

Finding: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Curriculum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to the NYSLS. 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. c. The curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and vertically between grades. d. The curriculum is differentiated to provide opportunities for all students to master grade-level skills and concepts.
2. <i>Instruction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school staff has a common understanding of high-quality instruction, and observed instructional practices align to this understanding. b. Instructional delivery fosters engagement with all students.
3. <i>Assessment and Program Evaluation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school uses a balanced system of formative, diagnostic and summative assessments. b. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to inform instruction and improve student outcomes. c. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the academic program, and modifies the program accordingly.
4. <i>Supports for Diverse Learners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2:

The school staff uses a variety of resources to develop curricula in all content areas aligned to the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLS), including EngageNY modules, Next Generation Science Standards, College Board, Newsela, and Khan Academy. Under the guidance of the school leaders, experienced instructional coaches and higher education instructors, teachers design and adapt units and lessons using an “Understanding by Design” (UBD) format as they archive units in the curriculum mapping tool, Rubicon Atlas. School leaders, coaches, and teachers use Rubicon Atlas and frequent classroom observation to ensure that the curriculum is aligned horizontally across grade levels and vertically within departments.

The school leaders indicate that they provide training for teachers as well as professional time each summer and throughout the school year to meet with their content and grade level colleagues, to review the curricula and make adaptations. During classroom observations, reviewers analyzed more than 25 lesson plans across all grade levels to confirm that teachers develop lessons aligned to the standards and require complex materials and higher order thinking to accomplish the clearly defined learning targets. While lesson plans contain differentiation strategies, adaptations for various learning needs, and extensive classroom activities to stimulate active engagement, variable effectiveness was observed in meeting the specific learning needs of some students, especially students with disabilities and English language learners.

The school uses the Danielson Framework for Teaching to train, evaluate, and provide feedback to all teachers about high-quality instruction. Leaders use the online platform Teachscape to capture observation and feedback information and share it with teachers and coaches. From this framework for teaching, the school leaders and instructional coaches identify, communicate, and monitor school-wide 'core practices' that are expected to be in place to foster student engagement in learning. During classroom observations, reviewers consistently saw teachers using many of these practices to facilitate "bell to bell" standards-based instruction in well-managed classrooms. While all students were compliant in all classes, learning activities were inconsistently differentiated and adapted for specific student needs, and therefore did not sufficiently engage or cognitively challenge some students.

To measure the effectiveness of instruction and the growth of student understanding, the staff reports using a variety of assessments, on a weekly, monthly, and quarterly basis, such as: STAR ELA and STAR math, classroom formative assessments, DataDirector, and readyNY. The data from these assessments is organized into reports and charts so that leaders and staff can analyze the strengths and deficiencies in student learning in a timely manner. With this information, leaders, teachers and coaches collaborate during regular meetings to plan and implement tiered interventions for each student at all grade levels. Interventions have included curricular adaptations, small-group re-teaching, and individual tutoring, using both push-in and pull-out services. Although the leaders indicated that a full continuum of special education services is not available to students in this school at this time, they have increased staff and supports for students with disabilities and English language learners in the recent past, and worked closely with families and teachers to customize programs and interventions for these students.

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>
1. <i>Behavior Management and Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
2. <i>Family Engagement and Communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Teachers communicate with parents to discuss students’ strengths and needs. 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. c. The school has a systematic process for responding to parent or community concerns. d. The school shares school-level academic data with the broader school community to promote transparency and accountability among parents, students and school constituents.
3. <i>Social-Emotional Supports</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. School leaders collect and use data to track the socio-emotional needs of students. b. School leaders collect and use data regarding the impact of programs designed to support students’ social and emotional health.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 3:

The school distributes a student handbook that contains clear policies, procedures, and routines for behavioral and academic expectations. Students and parents are expected to read and sign off on the policies, and students are expected to comply with them. The school administration reports it has recently added an administrative position, “Director of Student Affairs,” as well as additional behavioral specialists to improve relationships and increase the supports provided to families and struggling students.

Discipline procedures, steps for resolving concerns and appealing decisions are clearly delineated and understood by the students, parents, and the staff. While the school does not use a school-wide curriculum for teaching the behavioral expectations or social emotional skills, leaders and staff communicate school values and principles to guide the school community and learning environment. These values are described in the “core practices” and are universally evident across the school in the positive relationships between students, adults and students, as well as families and the school staff. Given the ethnic, social, and economic diversity in the school, the staff prioritizes a “growth mindset” with fairness and respect so that all students have an opportunity to learn. Reviewers confirmed this

approach while observing classrooms, where each environment was physically and emotionally safe wherein students challenged ideas, collaborated on projects, and celebrated each other's learning accomplishments.

Parents and school leaders also reported in focus groups that the school staff uses a variety of methods to share school and student information including websites, public forums, home visits, community engagement events, cultural celebrations, the online parent portal, automated calls home, written newsletters and reports, that result in frequent and thorough communication. In addition, the Director of Student Affairs as well as the Parent Involvement Committees lead extensive community forums and outreach events to further identify the families' needs and then use that information to customize their outreach efforts.

School leaders and parents reported that the school surveys parents and teachers annually to gain understanding about their concerns and needs. Documents and interviews confirmed that over the charter period parents have raised issues, such as discipline decisions and the availability of dual enrollment and advanced STEM courses at the secondary level. Parents and school leaders stated that through genuine collaboration with teachers, staff, and leaders, the school has acted to improve several procedures and offerings.

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

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

Finding: Meets

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 4:

Financial Condition

Utica Academy of Science 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.

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 to be in strong financial health. Utica Academy of Science Charter School's composite score for 2015-2016 is 1.7. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2013-2014 to 2015-2016.

**Utica Academy of Science Charter School's Composite Scores
2013-2014 to 2015-2016**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2015-2016	1.7
2014-2015	2.4
2013-2014	2.1

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 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 2016-2017, Utica Academy of Science Charter School had a

current ratio of 2.3.

Unrestricted cash measures, in days, whether the charter school can meet operating expenses without receiving new income. Charter schools typically strive to maintain at least 90 days of cash on hand. For fiscal year 2016-2017, Utica Academy of Science Charter School operated with 57 days of unrestricted cash.

Enrollment maximization 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. Utica Academy of Science Charter School's enrollment stability for 2016-2017 was at 93 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 2016-2017, Utica Academy of Science Charter School's debt to asset ratio was 0.3.

Total margin measures the deficit or surplus a charter school yields out of its total revenues; in other words, whether 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 2016-2017, Utica Academy of Science Charter School's total margin was 9 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.

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:

The Charter School Office reviewed Utica Academy of Science Charter School's 2015-16 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: Meets

Element

Indicators

1. Board Oversight and Governance

- 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:

The UAS Board of Trustees has increased from five to seven members during this initial charter term. The board reports it has a detailed process for recruitment, nomination, election, and training of its members, which has been used over the course of the charter to replace two resignations and increase the size of the board by two members. The previous and current trustees demonstrated appropriate skills and experiences to provide a wide range of organizational, fiscal, instructional, and community based leadership to the school. Several trustees possess extensive higher education and experience in STEM fields and professions, while other trustees are embedded in the community and service organizations of the local region; all of which align with the key design elements of the charter in the areas of STEM, college preparation, and “Glocal” education.

The board uses a variety of sources to identify priorities for improvement and has enacted strategic planning to attain the school’s mission. Use is made of assessment results, parent and teacher surveys, and financial audit reports. Trustees stated that they used the NYSED CSO mid-term report to make targeted improvements in several areas such as classroom rigor, teacher evaluation, accountability for school leaders and staff, and semi-annual teacher surveys. As indicated in the meeting agendas and minutes, the board has established structures and procedures to receive regular information from the school about progress toward each of their goals and school targets. Based on this information, the board made strategic decisions and targeted resource allocations to support improved outcomes, such as increased retention of high quality staff; additional staff positions to provide interventions for students; a revised organizational structure to increase management efficiencies; active community partnerships to enhance the school mission and vision; and fiscal and legal compliance across the organization.

The board further provides accountability for all school staff through the recent addition of an Assistant Superintendent for Accountability, utilizing the “Marzano School Leader Evaluation Model Rubric” to evaluate the performance of the school leadership, as well as full implementation of the Danielson FFT to evaluate and provide feedback to each of the teachers. Trustees reported during the focus group that they also have adopted a self-evaluation form for their performance that addresses: knowledge of school and board meetings, the instructional program, planning and supervision, and community relationships. The board has used the information gained from that evaluation this year to improve their routines for implementing the “*Open Meetings law*” at their meetings, and timing of strategic planning.

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

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>School Leadership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. c. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place which ensure effective communication across the school. d. The school successfully recruits, hires, and retains key personnel, and makes decisions – when warranted – to remove ineffective staff members.
2. <i>Professional Climate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school is fully staffed with high quality personnel to meet all educational and operational needs, including finance, human resources, and communication. b. The school has established structures for frequent collaboration among teachers. c. The school ensures that staff has requisite skills, expertise, and professional 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.
3. <i>Contractual Relationships</i> <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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:

With the recent re-organization of the supervisory structure in the middle school and high school, the superintendent is supported by a team consisting of the regional director of academics, and two assistant superintendents, according to the school leaders. This team oversees all academic, operational, and accountability aspects at each school. The leaders have clearly outlined the roles and responsibilities of each member of their teams, and implemented mechanisms to hold staff accountable for meeting the school's expectations.

Both a dean and an operations manager lead the middle and high schools, where they also supervise specialized faculty and staff who teach and support students, as well as maintain a safe, clean, and efficient school site. Each leader uses regular meetings, newsletters, and multiple data points to monitor the activities in the school so that student learning and safety are maximized. The regional director, deans, and coaches regularly walk through the classrooms to provide feedback to teachers and staff about the quality of their instruction and the students' engagement. This monitoring has resulted in addition of intervention personnel, replacement of ineffective teachers, improved curricula, and increase of professional development coaches and courses.

Each summer the staff attends two weeks of intensive professional development to gain understanding and skill in meeting the school's instructional, engagement, and climate expectations. Additional training and support are provided to teachers throughout the year by a team of coaches and teacher leaders. Teachers participate in a survey twice each year to provide feedback about all aspects of the school. While not all teachers expressed full understanding of the communications procedures and discipline policies, school leaders indicated that concerns identified in surveys are addressed through improvements in communication routines and professional development, in a timely manner.

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

Element

Indicators

1. *Mission and Key Design Elements*

- 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:

Reviewers saw the school’s mission posted in the school and evident in sample public communications. The student handbook and communications with parents contain the mission as well as expectations related to several of the design elements, including: accountability, parent involvement, and college preparation. Documentation for the summer professional development courses contains evidence of the school mission being taught and discussed in several workshops with the staff.

Parents stated that this school is totally focused on “helping these kids get into college.” The high school has a dedicated college counseling center with application and testing procedures highlighted on bulletin boards and in workshop materials. Advanced placement and dual enrollment courses provide opportunities for student to experience college level curricula and earn college credits. The school fosters partnerships with colleges in the region, such as Utica College, Mohawk Valley Community College, and Hamilton College. School leaders stated that these efforts have contributed to the school’s self-reported 100% graduation rate and fostered the 100% college acceptance rate for the 2017 graduating class.

The design element, STEM education, is widely evident across the school from the expertise of several trustees, to the slate of course offerings, requirements, and extracurricular clubs, to the content knowledge of the science, technology, and math department leadership and faculty. While observers noted that some department staff are still learning consistent pedagogical techniques to differentiate and fully engage students in STEM based inquiry, teachers’ content knowledge and commitment to student success breeds enthusiasm for STEM related study.

Parents and leaders stated that the school actively collaborates with families and the community to promote involvement in realizing the school’s mission. Although school leaders indicated that most staff do not conduct 12 visits as projected in the charter renewal application, many do visit student homes to build relationships and collaboration, which is valued by the parents and the staff. In addition, students are required to spend 50 hours in community service oriented projects and events, which further enhances the school’s design of connecting families, communities, and students.

The core practices explicitly define values, principles, and routines that put students at the center of the school’s focus. Reviewers witnessed this attitude and the core practices while observing in the

classrooms, hallways, and through interviews with staff. Parents further stated that small class sizes are valued in the school and help their children feel welcome and supported.

The Board of Trustees, school leaders, teachers, staff, and students are systematically held accountable for improving the performance of all students in the school. Assessment and data systems, staff and leader evaluation tools, analysis and intervention protocols as well as evolving curricula and instruction enable the school community to focus on the key design element of performance based accountability.

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: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. Targets are met	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. Targets are not met	<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>

Student Demographics – Utica Academy of Science Charter School Compared to District of Location

	2015-2016			2016-2017		
	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance
Students with Disabilities	8%	18%	-10%	7%	16%	-9%
English Language Learners	16%	19%	-3%	16%	19%	-3%
Economically Disadvantaged	75%	86%	-11%	86%	83%	3%

Student Persistence - 2015-16 (% of Students who remained enrolled in the school)

	2015-2016		
	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance
All Students	58%	77%	-19%
English Language Learners	49%	74%	-25%
Economically Disadvantaged	58%	76%	-18%
Students with Disabilities	31%	67%	-36%

Note:

Continuity Ratio = Students served in the fall of 2016 divided by students who left between the fall of 2015 and the fall of 2016 and Students served in the fall of 2016.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

The school has consistently increased overall enrollment since opening and has recently had a waiting list for the first time. The NYSED CSO found that the school has 96% enrollment stability and only four enrolled students were retained in the same grade level this year.

The school leaders reported that staff engages in extensive outreach and communication with several cultural and community groups across the region, resulting in the enrollment of additional English language learners. However, even as ELLs are added to the school roster, current students are expanding their language skills in the extensive ELL services offered and in turn are exiting ELL status, which contributes to a static ELL enrollment percentage for the past two years.

The school leaders stated that they have had setbacks in recruiting and admitting students with disabilities and therefore have a population that is less representative of the local district. Achievement challenges and limitations in the availability of a full continuum of special education services have contributed to the under-representation of this subgroup of students. The school has made staffing decisions to add interventionists and replace the coordinator, to enhance these services and recruitment efforts.

Recruitment efforts have steadily increased the school’s success in admitting economically disadvantaged students where this group surpassed school enrollment targets and the local district percentage of 83% in 2016-17.

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:

The New York State Education Department confirmed that that no complaints or reports of non-compliance for this charter school have been received.