

Evaluative Comments for The New American Academy Charter School Renewal Site Visit Report 2022-2023

Page #	Performance Benchmark	Original Text From the NYSED Renewal Site Visit Report	Evaluative Comments
11	Benchmark 1: Student Performance	<i>Over this charter term, the trajectory for this benchmark has been consistent as an Approaches due to the school not meeting expectations articulated in Attachment 1.</i>	While The New American Academy Charter School (TNAACS) received an Approaches for Benchmark 1, the school has demonstrated strong academic performance in some academic subject areas when compared to other similar schools. An analysis of the Similar Schools Comparison provided by the 2022 Charter School Information Dashboard showed TNAACS scored 6% points above the mean in ELA. TNAACS outperformed 72% of similar schools in ELA and TNAACS outperformed 67% of those schools by 10% or more. In addition, An analysis of the Similar Schools Comparison provided by the 2022 Charter School Information Dashboard showed TNAACS scored 4% above the mean in science, outperforming 60% similar schools and TNAACS outperformed 44% of those schools by 10% or more. It is also important to note that while improvemrnt in mathematics performance is a focus at TNAACS, An analysis of the Similar Schools Comparison provided by the 2022 Charter School Information Dashboard showed TNAACS still outperformed 46% of similar schools, and outperformed 52% of those schools by 10% or more. In addition, it is important to note t is important to note that not only has TNAACS maintained the accountability status of "Good standing" throughout the length of the current charter term in all areas, all of TNAACS' accountability scores are either Level 3 - 50.1%- 75% Statewide or Level 4 - Greater than 75% Statewide. Of the twenty accountability scores given to TNAACS across a variety of achievement, performance and growth levels, 25% of them were scored Level 3 and 75% were scored Level 4, the highest rating possible.
22	Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Student and Family Engagement	<i>The 2021 response rate for the parent survey were below the target rates and the sample sizes for the 2022 surveys each failed to meet a 90 percent confidence level. The aggregate results for both years' parent surveys are not statistically dependable. The 2021 response rate for the teacher survey was above the target rate making the aggregate results statistically relevant, however, the sample size for the 2022 teacher survey failed to meet a 90 percent confidence level making the aggregate results undependable.</i>	In working to engage families to complete thre NYSED Parent Surveys for the 2022-2023 school year, several parents shared that there are too many surveys at once. Several families requested support with understanding the vocabulary and the questions being asked. Some expressed the surveys being quite long. One parent mentioned having difficulty due to English being their second language. It is our belief that these factors led to a lower than anticipated response rates to the parent surveys.
27	Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance	<i>Over this charter term, the trajectory for this benchmark has been consistent as an Approaches, due to the board's need to add members with identified expertise, identify a board treasurer, set board</i>	The New American Academy Charter School Board currently has seven members, two more than the minimum required by NYS charter law. Their areas of expertise are well aligned with the areas TNAACS needs support with. This includes academics, community outreach, recruitment, and principal

		<i>goals, and be able to clearly describe how it works to ensure that the school is meeting the standards of the NYSED Charter School Performance Framework.</i>	coaching. For example, one current TNAACS board member is a Certified Public Accountant with 23 years of financial and technology management experience along with extensive experience in marketing and sales processes. Another TNAACS board member is currently a Director of School Support at a nonprofit dedicated to educational equity. This board member has experience coaching principals, and supports school leaders in developing academic priorities and strengthening instruction. The TNAACS Chairman of the board is a former NYCDOE Network Leader and Superintendent, where he administered and evaluated a citywide network of 25 schools with approximately \$50M of aggregate operating budget. He was also the Senior Project Director for the NYC Parent Academy.
33	Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements	<i>Over this charter term, the trajectory for this benchmark has declined from a Meets to an Approaches due to the lack of full implementation of all key design elements, including the four-person teaching team, lower student/teacher ratio, embedded master teacher, and five-week summer training program.</i>	The New American Academy Charter School (TNAACS) has fully implemented four of its Key Design Elements with fidelity and has substantially maintained the remaining four Key Design Elements. Modifications made to several of the design elements were based on changing schoolwide trends, including the school's retention of a more experienced teaching staff across years and enrollment trends. TNAACS could not maintain four person teaching teams with two classes on a grade level. Additionally, we found that having a Director of Teaching and Learning (formerly known as Master Teacher) on each team was not feasible budgetarily. As stated, our staff has become more experienced and we currently have five partner-level teachers. These partner teachers provide guidance, mentorship and training to less experienced teachers in the school. We modified our summer training based on teacher feedback and teacher and staff needs. (See more detailed response regarding summer training below.) Although the summer training has been truncated, we have added several professional development days throughout the school year. We have found this approach more responsive to the needs of our teachers and students as all the training is not front-loaded. We are able to adjust and provide training as needed. For example, we provide training in formation and execution of small groups <i>after</i> school has started and teachers have compiled and reviewed relevant data. These modifications made have not had a negative impact on TNAACS as demonstrated by the Renewal reports finding of a Meets in Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning, Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate and Family Engagement and Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity. These ratings have been consistently maintained throughout the life of the school.
33	Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements	Four Person Teaching Team: <i>In addition to a master teacher (now DTL that support each teaching team), each team includes both the general education and licensed special education and/or English Second Language (ESL) teacher. As reported in the school's renewal application, each multi-person teaching team holds responsibility for one grade level cohort; teaching teams do not include four persons.</i>	At The New American Academy Charter School (TNAACS), The Four Person Teaching Team was designed to service a cohort of 60 to 65 students. In grade level cohorts that serve less than 60 to 65 students there are less teachers on the teaching team because there are less students in the cohort. In addition, while each grade level team holds responsibility for one grade level cohort, this teaching team loops with their students across a 3-year looping cycle. Our kindergarten team, however, does include a four person teaching team.
34	Benchmark 8: Mission and	Lower Teacher/Student Ratio: <i>Each teaching team works with a group of 60-65 students. While the KDE states the</i>	The New American Academy Charter School (TNAACS) has constantly maintained a lower student to teacher ratio than NYCDOE schools, whose average class size grades k-8 in 2021-

	Key Design Elements	<i>school will maintain a 15:1 teacher student ratio, the ratio observed during classroom observations was slightly higher, with 18 or 20:1 in some classrooms. The school, in the renewal application, explains the ratio is lower than the average class size in New York City public schools (24:1). As observed, when teaching assistants support and students receive push-in services, the ratio decreases.</i>	2022 was 23.7. The current average class size at TNAACS is 19.7. However, when Teaching Assistants who regularly work across several classrooms, are included in this calculation, the average student to staff ratio in TNAACS classrooms decreases to 15:1. When ICT Special Education Teachers, who push into TNAACS classrooms regularly are included in this calculation the staff to student ratio in TNAACS classrooms decreases to 13:1.
34	Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements	Five Week Summer Training Program: <i>As shown in the calendar and described by focus group members, employees are required to attend a two-week summer training program at the school not a five-week summer training program that begins with a week-long seminar at Harvard.... additional training has been embedded through the school year for new teachers.</i>	The New American Charter School (TNAACS) has consistently demonstrated it's commitment to in-depth, ongoing systemic, professional development for it's teachers across the life of the school. When initially chartered the Five Week Summer Training Program was designed to acculture our new staff and introduce them to our academic and cultural philosophies and was designed to front load this before new staff began working with our students. As TNAACS has evolved staff retention has decreased the need to front load this training in the summer. As of 2022/2023, the average number of years a staff member has been at TNAACS is 5.3 years, the average number of years a teacher has been at TNAACS is 4.4 years and 37% of our staff has worked at TNAACS for 8 years or more. The week-long seminar at Harvard was specifically designed to train and acculture first year staff members at TNAACS and based on our current staff retention rates this is no longer applicable. As a result ,TNAACS has pivoted to providing two weeks of training in the summer, followed by continous training and professional development throughout the school year. This modification to the Summer Training model ensures the professional development needs of our current staff are met. In addition, the modification of having two weeks of training in the summer also takes into account the need for staff work life balance and the increase in teacher stress and burn out post COVID. "Teacher attrition, the tendency of teachers to quit their jobs or their profession entirely, is strongly correlated with burnout and is a big concern for schools and policymakers in many countries" (Madigan and Kim, 2021a).
34	Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements	Embedded Master Teacher: <i>According to the renewal application and organizational chart, master teachers have been re-organized to serve as directors. Directors serve teaching teams within the lower or upper loop, providing coaching, support and feedback. Each team does not have its own dedicated master teacher; however, one DTL has been assigned to each loop.</i>	The position of Master Teacher (now known as Director of Teaching and Learning) at The New American Academy Charter School has been an integral part of the TNAACS model since our school opened in the fall of 2013. DTLs at TNAACS demonstrate the highest level of pedagogical expertise and promote adult professional development. As our instructional model has evolved and our student cohort size has changed, the need to have a Master Teacher or Director of Teaching and Learning with each cohort is not necessary, as our current DTLs have been effectively providing mentorship and leadership to the staff assigned to them. In addition, as we have built out the TNAACS model we have determined that it is not fiscally responsible or sustainable to have such a large number of leadership positions relative to student enrollment. Post COVID as we work toward increasing student enrollment we will consider adding another Director of Teaching and Learning if warranted. As our enrollment continues to increase, we foresee adding additional DTLs in the future.

37	Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention	<i>The school is authorized to serve 370 students in kindergarten through Grade 5. For the 2021-2022 school year there were 235 students enrolled with the school serving 64 percent of its maximum authorized enrollment, which is less than the 85 percent threshold. In 2020-2021, the school was also below that threshold, at 78 percent.</i>	While The New American Academy Charter School (TNAACS) has seen a decrease in enrollment, this decrease is consistent with our district of location. Between 2018/2019 and 2021/2022, the last year that enrollment data is available on the NYSED data website, CSD 18, our district of location, has seen a 27% drop in enrollment of students in grades k through 5, while TNAACS saw a 27% drop in enrollment during the same time period. In addition, P.S. 233, the NYCDOE elementary school TNAACS is co-located with in district 18, has seen a 41% drop in enrollment for the same time period. It is also important to note that TNAACS saw an 11% increase in enrollment in 2022/2023 and we anticipate that this trend will continue for the 2023/24 school year.
37	Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention	<i>As shown in board meeting minutes, TNAACS reports enrollment data and discusses enrollment strategies with the board. According to ELT members and the renewal application, the strategies are garnering positive results (evidenced by number of student registrations).</i>	For the 2020-2021 school year, TNAACS has 45 completed registrations. For the 2021-2022 school year, TNAACS had 59 completed registrations. For the 2022-2023 school year TNAACS had 125 completed registrations. This is a 211% increase in the number of registrations from the 2021-2022 school year to present.