New York State Education Department

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

Brighter Choice Charter School for Boys

Remote Renewal Site Visit Dates: November 16 and 19, 2020
Date of Report: February 11, 2021

Charter School Office
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234
charterschools@nysed.gov
518-474-1762

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary[1]

Name of Charter School	Brighter Choice Charter School for Boys
Board Chair	Martha Snyder
District of location	Albany City School District
Opening Date	Fall 2002
Charter Terms	• Initial Term: January 10, 2001 - January 9, 2006 • First Renewal Term: January 10, 2006 - January 10, 2011 • Second Renewal Term: January 11, 2011 - June 30, 2015 • Third Renewal Term: July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2018 • Fourth Renewal Term: July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2021
Current Term Authorized Grades/ Approved Enrollment	K - Grade 5/ 325 students
Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/ Proposed Approved Enrollment	K - Grade 5/ 325 students
Comprehensive Management Service Provider	None
Facilities	116 North Lake Avenue, Albany - Private Space
Mission Statement	*The mission of the Brighter Choice Charter Schools is to ensure that Brighter Choice Charter School scholars have the same opportunities for future success as scholars attending the best public schools in the region. There are 3 significant components to achieving this mission:* • *Exemplary instruction that prepares scholars to think critically, problem-solve effectively, and to become engaged and responsible learners, successfully prepared for middle school, high school, and college* • *Focus on the development of social, behavioral, and organizational skills necessary for future school success* • *An education beyond the basics that includes performing arts, visual arts, science, and history*
Key Design Elements	• High Impact Professional Development for Educators • Engaging Academic Program • Integrated Studies • Data Driven Instructions • Focus on Character Development and Problem-Solving Skills • Parent and Community Partnerships • More Time on Task
Requested Revisions	**Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, amend the mission and Key Design Elements of the school's charter to align them with those proposed for the Brighter Choice Charter School for Girls**

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

Noteworthy: The Brighter Choice Charter School for Boys (BCCS-B) has developed a strong single-sex model, including curriculum, instruction, and a school culture designed specifically to engage boys.

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 2018 to 2019	**Year 2 2019 to 2020**	**Year 3 2020 to 2021**
Grade Configuration	K - Grade 5	K - Grade 5	K - Grade 5
Total Approved Enrollment	325	325	325

Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Projected Enrollment Requested by the School[2]

	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 5	K - Grade 5	K - Grade 5	K - Grade 5	K - Grade 5
Total Proposed Enrollment	325	325	325	325	325

METHODOLOGY

A two-day remote renewal site visit was conducted at Brighter Choice Charter School for Boys (BCCS-B) on November 16 and 19, 2020. The New York State Education Department's Charter School Office (CSO) team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership team, special populations support staff, culture/climate staff, teachers, and parents. In cooperation with school leadership, the CSO administered an anonymous online survey for parents.

The team conducted 12 remote classroom observations in K - Grade 5. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with instructional leaders. NYSED utilizes the

[2] This proposed chart was submitted by BCCSB in its renewal application. It is subject to change pending the final renewal recommendation and approval by the Board of Regents.

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;**
- **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;**
- **Pre-Renewal Site Visit School Self-Evaluation;**
- **Prior CSO monitoring reports (check-in, midterm, renewals);**
- **Spring 2020 Continuity of Learning Plan;**
- **School's 2020 renewal application; and**
- **Any supplementary evidence or data submitted to NYSED by 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 between November 16 and 19, 2020 at BCCS-B, see the following Performance Framework benchmark ratings and narrative.

New York State Education Department
2015 Charter School Performance Framework Rating[3]

	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

- BCCS-B is in year 19 of operation and serves students in K - Grade 5. 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**: Throughout the charter term, students at BCCS-B have outperformed the district of location in ELA and math. In 2018-2019, all students in the aggregate and students who are economically disadvantaged (ED) also outperformed the state in ELA while students with disabilities (SWDs), English language learners (ELLs), and ED students outperformed the state in math. The school has a cohesive curriculum in place that it continues to modify based on assessed student needs. As evidenced during the site visit, the school has a clear understanding of rigorous instruction and has developed an academic model around the specific needs of educating boys. It also implements a robust intervention program and has dedicated staff for supporting at-risk students. The school demonstrates a strong school culture, including a character education program, and actively communicates with and engages parents. BCCS-B has a stable leadership team that provides active supervision of and support to its faculty and offers targeted professional development (PD), especially with respect to adapting the school's academic model to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, the board provides active oversight and strategic planning.

- **Summary of Areas in Need of Improvement**: While the school has consistently met its targets for enrolling ED students, it continues to struggle to enroll a comparable number of SWDs and ELLs in relation to the district of location. In addition, BCCS-B has not implemented the 190 instructional days required in the charter. Finally, operational procedures need to be developed to ensure the school meets all legal operational requirements such as fingerprinting mandates.

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

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 (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

Element	*Indicators*
1. Curriculum	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. e. The curriculum is systematically reviewed and revised.
2. Instruction	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. Assessment and Program Evaluation	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. Supports for Diverse Learners	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.

Academic Program for Elementary School:

- BCCS-B is a single-sex elementary school for boys that uses heterogeneous classes to deliver instruction.

- The school uses core English language arts (ELA) and math curricula that are modified and integrated with other subjects, such as social studies.
- The school employs an extended day and year to provide additional time for student learning and teacher planning and collaboration.
- The school emphasizes social-emotional development as part of its curriculum and implements a formal character education program.

Academic Program for Students with Disabilities and English language learners:

- SWDs:
  - BCCS-B uses a direct consultant teacher model to provide push-in and pull-out special education services.
  - The school provides resource room for designated students four to five days per week.
  - The school provides speech and occupational therapy.
  - The school provides mandatory and non-mandatory counseling to students.
- ELLs:
  - The school has a dedicated English as a new language (ENL) teacher who uses NYSESLAT and other assessment results to target student needs.
  - The school uses a tracker to monitor the performance of ELL and former ELL students.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2:

1. Element: ***Curriculum***:
   - **Indicator a:** BCCS-B has a comprehensive curriculum in place. The renewal application indicates that the school's curricula includes *EngageNY Core Knowledge* and *Expeditionary Learning* for ELA and *EngageNY - A Story of Units* for math. Grade level teams and instructional leaders plan the school's scope and sequence for each school year. The application also states that the scope and sequence planning had been revised for the 2019-2020 school year to more accurately align their curriculum with Skills Progress Assessments. These assessments allow the school "to progress monitor scholars' proficiency with mastering the skills identified within NYSLS." In the focus group, school leadership reported that social studies is integrated into the ELA curriculum using *Expeditionary Learning*. They also reported that the science program has evolved into its own subject area at BCCS-B, integrating the *Mystery Science* program into its science curriculum over the last couple of years; it is now being implemented in all grade levels. Finally, the school's renewal application notes the use of a large list of intervention programs, including *Wilson Foundations*, *Leveled Literacy Intervention*, *Sadlier Phonics*, *Words Their Way*, and *Focused Reading* and *Math Instruction*, among others. In the culture/climate focus group, staff members reported that the school uses the *Second Step* program for social-emotional development. Participants in the school leadership focus group also noted that they have modified curriculum for remote learning, including the use of read-alouds instead of handwriting and the creation of standardized instructional packets for their students. They have also sent learning materials, such as math manipulatives, home for students to use.
   - **Indicator b:** The school is using content-based curriculum such as *Core Knowledge* and *Expeditionary Learning*. In addition to scope and sequences aligned to standards, lesson plans provided by the school in conjunction with classroom observations demonstrate references to state standards, and include essential questions and learning objectives, learning activities, differentiation strategies and assessment methods. Moreover, lesson plans have been tailored

for remote instruction, including references to technology platforms such as Nearpod. During the site visit, school leadership described the school's expectation for engaging lessons, including hooks, direct instruction, and opportunities for guided and independent practice, which were evident in reviewed lesson plans as well as observed instruction. School leadership also noted that teachers are asked to submit lesson plans two weeks in advance to allow ample time for collaboration and feedback aligned with the BCCS-B framework. In the focus group, teachers indicated that they generally follow the scope and sequence of their curriculum programs, but "just following the script is not acceptable." They use lesson planning to address priority standards and target student needs.

- **Indicator c:** The curriculum at BCCS-B is aligned vertically and horizontally. The school is using *EngageNY* modules for ELA and math that are vertically aligned across grades, and science and social studies have been integrated into thematic ELA units. According to the school's renewal application and school leadership, BCCS-B has scope and sequences that are annually reviewed by instructional leaders. In the focus group, teachers noted that the scope and sequences haven't changed very much with remote learning and that, through adjusting the pace and manner of the lessons, grade levels have been staying on track with what they had been doing before the pandemic.
- **Indicator d:** In addition to the range of intervention programs noted above, the renewal application describes a guided reading program using leveled texts and small-group instruction to provide differentiated curriculum. In the focus group, teachers stated that special education and ENL staff currently assist them in differentiating the curriculum packets that get sent home to students, such as providing some students with pre-set notes. Special populations staff provided other examples of differentiation methods such as tracing fonts, sentence starters, and anchor charts. They noted the importance of setting students up for success; teachers send lesson plans and exemplars to the SPED and ENL teachers in advance so that they can prepare their students prior to the lesson by, for instance, reading a text ahead of time and "anticipating vocabulary words." During classroom observations, the CSO team saw evidence of differentiation being used in all lessons, such as vocabulary guided notes, teacher modeling of responses, the use of manipulatives, and various visual, auditory, and tactile instructional supports.
- **Indicator e:** During the focus group, school leadership described ongoing curriculum review and revision based on student performance data. The school's renewal application indicates "While planning out our scope and sequence curricula tool, many of our revisions come from reflecting on the work done in the previous year, eliminating lessons that lacked rigor, and replacing them with lessons that are more aligned to the NYSLS." Participants in the teacher focus group reported that grade-level teams meet during summer PD to review the scope and sequence and determine what materials or applications they need to support curriculum in the classroom.

2. Element: ***Instruction***:
    - **Indicator a:** The school staff has a common understanding of high-quality instruction, and observed instructional practices align to this understanding. The renewal application reports that teachers use *Teach Like a Champion* strategies, which were also referred to in both the school leadership and teacher focus groups. School leadership stated that they expect teachers to provide engaging instruction that includes student dialogue and frequent checks for understanding (CFU). Teachers noted that "administration is very articulate about what they want" and, when observing classrooms, look for teachers to incorporate CFUs, instantaneous feedback to students, and real-time progress monitoring. School leadership also described instruction geared specifically to teaching boys, such as opportunities for movement and dialogue. Teachers noted their efforts to maintain quality education online and to maintain

consistency across in-person and hybrid learning. The school has provided live instruction from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM this year for both remote and in-person learning. The CSO team was able to observe samples of both types of instruction. Review of lesson plans and their delivery demonstrated lessons that all were well organized and purposeful with clear learning objectives. Evidence of rigor was evident in many observed lessons. For instance, teachers employed higher order questioning, asked students to expand on answers, and explored multiple ways to solve problems. As stated in the renewal application, the school also strives to create a "Culture of Error" in which teachers provide positive feedback to students and encourage them to "think about and discuss theirs or others' mistakes/errors." Within this culture, students feel comfortable "stepping out on a limb to answer, whether they are right or wrong" and teachers have a chance to better understand students' gaps in understanding and misconceptions and to best address them. The school has also leveraged technology tools to facilitate effective remote instruction; teachers noted that student computers are equipped with a variety of applications, including NearPod and FlipGrid. The CSO team has also observed the school's effective use of multiple adults in a classroom, even during remote learning, which made use of virtual breakout rooms to provide students with targeted assistance.

- **Indicator b:** Most students in observed instruction were attentive and many were cognitively engaged. Teachers generally maintained connections with remote students through techniques such as questioning, discussion, and feedback, although connection issues occasionally hampered communication. Teachers effectively used interactive technology, such as Zoom breakout rooms and NearPod, to engage students during remote learning. For example, one teacher posted student work on a collaborative board so the whole class could see and discuss and used real-time polls to check for understanding. Members of school leadership described various strategies to ensure students could maintain engagement, including taking pictures of written work and submitting it electronically for teacher feedback. They explained that, even though all students now have the use of technical devices, with boys, pen and paper remain important. They encourage teachers to employ instructional practices that are especially effective with boys, such as engaging hooks and visual content, and, since boys' attention spans can be shorter, teachers are expected to keep the lecture portion of their lessons brief and allow more time for questioning and student discourse. School leadership also noted that if students appear to be fidgeting or otherwise preoccupied, teachers allow for movement breaks where sometimes they use popsicle sticks to randomly choose a movement activity.

3. Element: ***Assessment and Program Evaluation***:
    - **Indicator a:** BCCS-B is using a balanced system of formative, diagnostic and summative assessments. The renewal application listed a variety of assessment strategies (e.g., exit tickets and questioning) and tools (e.g., *AIMSWeb*, *Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress* (STEP), and *Next Step Guided Reading Assessment* [NSGRA]). School leadership reported that the principal and teachers develop an interim assessment (utilizing *Achievement Series*), which they described as more rigorous than state tests. They stated that the school continues to assess students during remote learning: students who could come took the assessments in person, while those who could not continue to be progress monitored by teachers. During classroom observations, the CSO team saw evidence of regular checks for understanding, with some teachers using technology during remote instruction for real-time assessments. Some teachers also provided students with rubrics to self-evaluate their own work.
    - **Indicator b:** In the focus group, school leadership described the use of standardized and interim assessments to identify "hot standards" to inform instructional focus. Special populations staff described using a variety of assessments to identify students of concern, target interventions,

conduct progress monitoring, and refer students for special education evaluation. In addition, the school's renewal application indicates use of performance assessments for decision-making about tier groups and guided reading groups.

- **Indicator c:** School leadership described ongoing review and use of achievement and behavior data to inform curriculum, instruction, and professional development. Examples provided in focus groups by school leadership and other staff include modifying scope and sequences to align with priority standards and adopting and modifying curricular materials.

4. Element: ***Supports for Diverse Learners***:
    - **Indicator a:** The renewal application indicates that the school employs a full-time ENL teacher, three SPED-certified teachers, two RtI teachers, two school counselors, two student success coordinators, and an intervention coordinator. In focus groups, staff described a robust tiered intervention program. Teachers noted a variety of in-class Tier I and II interventions, including modified directions and curriculum and small-group instruction. Special populations staff note that they provide teachers with a list of Tier I strategies at the beginning of the year (visual aids, anchor charts, modifying assignments, seating change, parent communication, etc.) and also support teachers by offering PD throughout the year. Tier III student groups are pulled four times per week for targeted intervention. Teachers reported using a variety of curricula, including *Leveled Literacy Intervention*, *Focused Reading*, and *Sadlier Phonics*. Special populations staff indicated that, during remote learning, they are pushing into classes and using virtual breakout rooms to provide targeted support. The school provides a range of services, including direct consultant teacher push-in support for ELA and math, resource room, speech and occupational therapy, and testing accommodations. Staff indicated that the school has a clear process for 504 identification and accommodations. The school's Continuity of Learning Plan also states that, during COVID-19, BCCS-B is "continuing contracted services with Spotted Zebra Services to provide teletherapy for students with IEPs."
    - **Indicator b:** In the focus group, special populations staff, including RTI and ENL teachers, reported that they have regular check-ins with teachers and described how they frequently review assessment data, including *AIMSWeb*, STEP, running records, interim assessments and mid-module curriculum assessments. They also noted that the intervention department meets monthly with teachers to identify students of concern and review Tier I interventions provided in the classroom. In addition, a tracking form was created this year to monitor the performance of ELL and former ELL 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

Element	*Indicators*
1. *Behavior Management and Safety*	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. *Family Engagement and Communication*	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.
3. *Social-Emotional Supports*	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.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 3:

1. Element: ***Behavior Management and Safety:***
   - **Indicator a:** The school has a clear approach to behavior management as well as a written discipline policy in place. Participants in the parent focus group noted signing the school handbook and were clear about the school's procedures for behavior management. The school's renewal

application states, "To facilitate a safe and respectful learning environment, we use a 'Teaching Matrix for Behaviors' document that is posted and used in classrooms to teach and reinforce behaviors important to our core values; Perseverance, Integrity, Citizenship and Scholarship (PICS)." The school uses a PICS point system related to these school values to recognize positive behaviors. School leadership and staff indicated that teachers use restorative circles to address student issues and the "3R2" process to keep students on track in the classroom. This process involves: three reminders after which the student goes to the recovery area where he can write about his feelings and behavior; lastly, if the behavior occurs two more times, the student then goes to the Inspiration Room (IR). In the focus group, special populations staff described the IR where a seven-step process for students who need to leave the classroom for behavioral reasons is implemented. In the IR, students are given the space to calm down and, when they are ready, to discuss their behaviors and feelings with the dean of students or the behavior intervention specialist. Parents in the focus group said they were comfortable with their children being disciplined at BCCS-B and that the system is fair and effective in dealing with all students. School leadership described how the school adapted its classroom management strategies to the Zoom platform and remote teaching environment in order to maintain engagement and attention. For example, classroom observations found clear protocols for muting students and the use of hand signals as non-disruptive communication. Positive feedback and reinforcement were also evident in observed instruction; for example, a number of teachers called out students' positive behavior with "I see" statements.

- **Indicator b:** The school's renewal application describes detailed safety procedures. Participants in all focus groups described the school as safe. Observed classrooms appeared safe as well with no evidence of disruptive or unsafe behavior. Parents stated that the school was "absolutely" safe and noted regular drills and clear COVID-19 guidelines. They also noted the role that effective and efficient parent communication has in maintaining BCCS-B's safe environment.
- **Indicator c:** The school is using the *Second Step* curriculum in its character education program. Participants in the culture/climate focus group explained that the program addresses bullying, empathy, kindness, listening, and respect. School staff also noted several related initiatives, such as the school's partnership with the District Attorney's office in implementing the "Words Hurt Heal" anti-bullying campaign, bullying prevention month in October, and random acts of kindness submitted via an online system. Teachers are also provided with a folder containing DASA tools. In the focus group, parents stated that they did not feel bullying was a concern at BCCS-B and noted the school's anti-bullying curriculum. They said that their children talk to them frequently about what they learn in the program and that this training will be useful to them when they move on to middle school. Finally, the school's renewal application states, "BCCS-B provides training to all staff on New York State's Dignity for All Students Act."
- **Indicator d:** During classroom observations, the CSO team noted that, in the vast majority of lessons, students were engaged and most participated in the learning activities. Despite some technology challenges, such as frozen screens or muted students, teacher maintained the pacing of lessons while keeping students involved. School leaders and teachers said they have worked closely with parents to establish conducive learning environments in their students' homes; observed virtual lessons showed students participating from bedrooms, living rooms, and kitchens with other family members in the background. Nevertheless, background noise was minimal, and students were generally focused on their virtual classroom.

2. Element: ***Family Engagement and Communication:***
    - **Indicator a:** The school uses a variety of systems, programs and staff to facilitate communication with and engage parents. Participants in the culture/climate focus group indicated that the

behavior intervention specialist communicates with parents about students who are sent to the IR and holds meetings with them to discuss behavioral and other data. The school has also provided parents with workshops; for instance, last year the Cornell Cooperative provided a series of six workshops to expectant moms and families, four of which focused on parents building healthy relationships with their children, which were reportedly full to capacity. The school has developed communication strategies specifically to address remote learning this year. A letter was sent to all parents, and staff met with some parents to set expectations for remote learning time, which also provided opportunities for staff to ensure technology needs at home were being met. In the focus group, parents described the school as "very hands-on" and "informative," with frequent communication.

- **Indicator b:** The school's renewal application lists several strategies for communicating with parents, including daily homework/behavior reports, progress reports, monthly calls home, parent-teacher conferences, report cards, and monthly newsletters. In focus groups, staff and parents reported the use of the Remind and Class Dojo apps to facilitate constant communication between the school and families. Special populations staff stated that they have frequent communication with parents that is documented in logs. They also explained how the school leverages a partner organization to provide translation during family meetings for students with special needs. Participants in the parent focus group described frequent communication with the school via email, phone, texts, and apps as well as social media; one parent stated, "It's hard to miss messages." Parents noted their familiarity with the PICS point system and stated that teachers are proactive in alerting parents to issues with bullying, behavior, academics, etc. and are open to parents who want to come in for a classroom observation. One parent said, "If there is an issue, [teachers] don't dismiss it." Culture/climate staff noted that they don't talk to parents about students' "problems," but rather "concerns" they may have. They said that parents often reach out to the school asking for help because "they know that the school is there to support them."
- **Indicator c:** During the site visit, one parent noted that the school "partners with parents to solve problems." Board members also reported the use of parent surveys to solicit feedback and input from parents. For example, the school's renewal application states, "Surveys have also been circulated to families twice annually to elicit feedback about the school's food program allowing Revolution Foods to make numerous changes since their inception." The application also notes an "Open door policy for families to come in and observe classrooms and provide feedback to the principal about what was observed."
- **Indicator d:** The school administers surveys to families twice per year. In focus groups, school staff indicated that parents are comfortable sharing their concerns and parents expressed that they had a voice at the school, noting the school's use of surveys and the personal contact they have with staff. School leaders described strong ties to their parent community, noting specifically their response to the needs of families in temporary housing, including providing clothing, food and Wi-Fi hotspots. They cited the parent coordinator's support for families when technology, attendance, housing, food, or medical issues arise.
- **Indicator e:** School leaders indicated that they share overall school performance information with families at an open house at the beginning of the year. They said they share academic data, comparing the school to the district and state, as well as students' overall guided reading progress. They also post information about the school's performance on the BCCS-B website. Parents also cited schoolwide events where information about the school and its plans are shared.

3. Element: ***Social-Emotional Supports***:
    - **Indicator a:** Culture/climate staff described a structured character education program based on school values and the *Second Step* program. At the time of the site visit, students were discussing bullying, kindness, and how to understand others' feelings and perspectives. School leadership explained that counselors teach character education which includes targeted topics and in-depth discussions. Restorative circles provide another structured opportunity for social-emotional learning at BCCS-B. These sessions are facilitated by teachers and serve a safe place for students to express themselves and listen to others. In restorative circles, the level of questioning intensifies with each grade level. School leadership explained that older students can discuss more complex topics, such as the pandemic and its effects on families, because they are able to explain their feelings with more understanding and detail than students in the primary grades. School leaders and support staff noted that the school is also continuing to hold morning meetings and assemblies during remote instruction to maintain community, recognize and reward students, and motivate them. BCCS-B also continues to host dance parties remotely, which are held before assemblies and throughout the day.
    - **Indicator b:** Participants of the culture/climate focus group indicated that the school typically administers an annual behavior assessment in October. This data provides teachers with information regarding students' social, emotional, and behavioral competencies. Counselors use this data to form preventative (non-mandated) counseling groups. In addition, the school uses Review360 to track behavior referrals.
    - **Indicator c:** In the culture/climate focus group, staff indicated that teachers document all referrals to the behavior intervention specialist and log information in Review360. School staff examines this data, noting trends such as the time of day incidents occur or the frequent involvement of certain students or teachers, and tracking the interventions used and consequences given. They also reported that the implementation of character education at BCCS-B has led to reduced class disturbance from emotional outbursts as students can now express their feelings without being sent out of the room.

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:

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

BCCS-B is part of the Brighter Choice Elementary Charter Schools education corporation. The education corporation 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. Brighter Choice Elementary Charter Schools' 2019-2020 composite score is 2.22.

Composite Scores
2015-2016 to 2019-2020

Year	*Composite Score*
2015-2016	.14
2016-2017	.45
2017-2018	1.12
2018-2019	1.73
2019-2020	2.22

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 absences of a going concern disclosure.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 5:

NYSED CSO reviewed Brighter Choice Elementary Charter Schools' 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.

In 2018, the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) conducted an audit of Brighter Choice Elementary Charter Schools with the objective of determining whether internal controls were in place to ensure that employee compensation was accurate, supported, and properly authorized. OSC found that the school had effectively designed and implemented procedures to ensure that compensation payments were accurate and properly authorized. Accordingly, OSC made no recommendations as a result of the audit. (See https://www.osc.state.ny.us/local-government/audits/charter-school for the full audit report.)

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:

1. Element: ***Board Oversight and Governance:***
   - **Indicator a:** The board members possess a range of skills and expertise relevant to charter school governance, including education, human resources, finance, and law. The school's renewal application acknowledged that "At the time of this submission, we do not have a parent representative on our board." During the focus group, board members indicated that they are seeking to fill this position but have been challenged to do so during the pandemic. The former parent representative joined the board in 2014 and served until 2019, when his child graduated from BCCS. Board members explained that they have responded to past deficiencies by recruiting additional members to expand the board's skill sets but acknowledged that they still would like to have increased diversity on the board.
   - **Indicator b:** In the focus group, board members described their efforts in working with the principals of BCCS-B and the Brighter Choice Charter School for Girls (BCCS-G) to move the schools from "good to great." The priorities and goals identified by the board after the schools' last renewals have included closing the academic achievement gap across grade levels and subgroup populations, increasing the enrollment of SWDs and ELLs by evaluating the schools' recruitment strategies and programmatic supports, and building the board's capacity by adopting a committee structure (finance, academic, and governance), and maintaining financial gains. The board was also active in revising the organizational structure and operational/financial staffing to meet the needs of its two schools. In addition, board members reported that their finance committee has explored ways to diversify revenue. With enrollment uncertain because of COVID-19, the board

indicated it is examining enrollment models to identify any potential impact the pandemic has had on the academic model. During the site visit, school leadership noted that the board has been open to their suggestions and is responsive to any concerns/issues that are raised.

- **Indicator c:** During the site visit, board members reported that they receive and review a variety of data, including academic performance, enrollment, and financial data. Board minutes show evidence of regular presentations and/or discussions related to data that address student performance, enrollment, and student and staff attendance. School leaders indicated that they provide monthly reports to the board and that they are held accountable for the academic performance of their students. The board uses a committee structure to delve into specific issues; for example, its academic committee examines internal and external student performance data. In the focus group, board members demonstrated active monitoring of key indicators, including familiarity with assessment results and enrollment. In response to the school's heightened needs during the pandemic, the board met bi-monthly last spring and summer. School leaders noted that they have been able to raise concerns to the board and receive feedback. For example, school leaders identified the need for a grant writer, which the board helped to secure. Board members reported that community surveys for teachers and parents help them identify concerns and issues, such as compensation and planning time. They noted that open-ended survey questions garner useful feedback.
- **Indicator d:** The board has worked with a consultant and Board on Track to systematize its processes and update policies. The school's renewal application indicates that policies are typically reviewed and revised "within two years of each renewal submission." The renewal application also notes that the board relies on input from its charter renewal consultant, school attorney, and board member expertise when updating policies.
- **Indicator e:** During the focus group, school leadership reported that the board has implemented a consistent evaluation process, which they find to be valuable. Board members described changes to their process, including a focus on leader self-evaluation and elimination of the "exceeds" rating category to focus on proficiency. Regarding board evaluation, the school's renewal application indicates that the board uses Board on Track "to monitor self-efficacy and gaps for improvement." Each August, the board engages in "self-assessment that includes knowledge of individual roles and responsibilities, skill set diversity and understanding of school performance." The board uses the self-assessment to identify targeted PD and improve the board's functionality both as a whole and within subcommittees. Finally, regarding evaluation of partners, the renewal application states, "The board relies on school leadership to monitor the activities and performance of all the vendors and partners."
- **Indicator f:** In the focus group, board members reported that they use contracted services to help the board fulfill its responsibilities and have re-adopted Board on Track to automate certain functions. The school's renewal application indicates "As a nearly twenty year old charter school, we have developed a full understanding of our obligation to maintain separation between our board's fiduciary responsibility to separate school-related business transactions from the personal and professional lives and benefit of our board members."

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

Element	*Indicators*
1. School Leadership	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. Professional Climate	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. Contractual Relationships ☐*N/A*	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:

1. Element: ***School Leadership:***

- **Indicator a:** The school has a stable instructional leadership team in place, including an experienced principal, assistant principal and instructional coach, that meets weekly. In the focus group, school leaders described how they set goals for student performance on state tests and use PD for teachers as well as ongoing observations and feedback to articulate and reinforce expectations for teaching and learning.

- **Indicator b:** Focus group discussions with school leadership, support staff, and teachers showed a common and clear understanding of staff roles and responsibilities, with the principal serving as the overall leader for the school program, the assistant principal overseeing many operational aspects of the school, and the instructional coach focused on professional development and teacher support and supervision. The renewal application also provides examples of job descriptions delineating clear roles and responsibilities.
- **Indicator c:** The renewal application outlines the various methods that school leaders use to communicate with the BCCS-B community. Methods for communicating with staff include "frequent email updates, staff meetings, scheduled one-on-one meetings, and the coaching cycle." In focus groups, school leaders and staff described the system of structured meetings among grade teams, support staff, and leadership that facilitate communication and decision-making. School leaders also described a teacher fellows program with mentor teachers providing guidance to their peers.
- **Indicator d:** The renewal application notes the school's emphasis on recruiting prospective staff members who are bilingual so the school can better support ELL students' families. In the focus group, school leaders stated that teacher turnover is a challenge; in exit interviews teachers often cite BCCS-B's longer school day and smaller retirement options than district schools as primary reasons for leaving. School leadership focuses on hiring qualified and certified teachers using hiring platforms and word of mouth. They noted, however, that when they do hire teachers with less experience, the school provides them with significant coaching. As stated in the school's renewal application, "The school also reviews teacher retention data to form strategies for increasing retention."

2. Element: ***Professional Climate:***
   - **Indicator a:** The school is fully staffed with high quality personnel to meet all its educational and operational needs. In the focus group, school leaders acknowledged that finding new teachers has been a challenge, citing a nationwide shortage. They said that teacher certification can sometimes be an issue. According to the renewal application, BCCS-B works with teachers who are interested in becoming certified by providing them a pathway to certification. Teachers receive financial assistance and guidance that explains the requirements needed for certification or recertification. School leadership noted that the coaching BCCS-B provides to new teachers, both certified and uncertified, is effective, and they can see the "benefits of equity after one year." Following the departure of the director of school quality (DSQ) at the end of the last charter term, the school restructured its organization. This charter term, the board has taken over the responsibility of evaluating the two schools' leaders (which had been done formerly by the DSQ) and created a new position, operations manager, who reports to both building leaders and is also evaluated by the board. Based on the CSO's interactions with the school over the course of the charter term, this structural change has proven effective in improving the school's record of compliance as evidenced by the timely and accurate completion of school submissions to NYSED.
   - **Indicator b:** During the site visit, school leaders and staff indicated that there are frequent opportunities for collaboration at BCCS-B, including staff and grade team meetings, common planning time, data meetings, and PD. Teachers stated that their lesson plans are submitted in advance to facilitate coordination with intervention and special education staff. As noted in Benchmark 2, student support staff review general education lesson plans, adding scaffolding to lessons as needed (e.g., previewing vocabulary for a novel study). Teachers explained that special education and ENL staff currently assist them in differentiating the curriculum packets that are sent home to students, such as providing some students with pre-set notes. School leaders also noted that BCCS-B and BCCS-G collaborate on curriculum, as both use EngageNY and Core

Knowledge programs, and have conducted joint professional development (e.g., *Teach Like a Champion* training).

- **Indicator c:** The school has a comprehensive PD program in place. The school's renewal application lists PD sessions and activities directly related to the school's model and mission. Some of the topics include "Engaging in best Checking for Understanding practices both in the classroom and virtually" and "Building a restorative classroom environment." According to the school's self-evaluation, PD sessions are often led, internally, by the principal, assistant principal, instructional coach, or other members of the staff. The school also brings in experts from the field to provide sessions. For example, the renewal application mentions "professional development provided by Kagan on cooperative learning and discourse." In the focus group, school leadership noted that the school offers PD on best practices specifically geared to teaching boys, such as including engaging hooks and questions, limiting the time spent on lectures, and offering opportunities to show work. They noted that the school currently has PD tailored to hybrid instruction, such as the summer training teachers received on interactive technologies and remote guided reading instruction. During the teacher focus group, participants expressed the value of summer PD, including training on the school's behavior point system, curriculum, *Teach Like a Champion* strategies, lesson planning, as well as grade team discussions of resources for remote learning. School leadership also highlighted the school's implementation of the new EdLight platform, a collaboration with Uncommon Schools and *Teach Like a Champion*, to share remote learning best practices.
- **Indicator d:** School leaders indicated that grades and certain subjects have been divided among instructional leaders for supervision and evaluation. During the site visit, school leaders explained how they observe classroom instruction weekly and prioritize teachers with higher needs. They use Observe4Success, a system that provides teachers with immediate feedback, and a six-step protocol for providing faculty with feedback. They noted that they leave teachers with "two bite-size practices to work on." For teachers in need of significant improvement, school leaders develop improvement plans built around benchmarks and rubrics.
- **Indicator e:** According to the renewal application, the school solicits teacher feedback through the coaching cycle and grade-level lead teachers. In addition, the school conducts a staff culture survey, after which school leadership has one-on-one conversations with each staff member. Modifications that were made as a result of this process include more prep time in the schedule for teachers and a change in the staffing model to include two science teachers and a school culture coordinator.

3. Element: ***Contractual Relationships***:
   - **Indicator a:** Not applicable
   - **Indicator b:** Not applicable
   - **Indicator c:** The renewal application states that school leadership monitors the activities and performance of the vendors and partners contracted by the school. The leadership team, which includes operations, finance, and academic personnel, evaluates vendor performance annually. The board is involved in engaging the contracts and is kept informed by school leadership throughout the year of vendor performance.

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:

1. Element: ***Missions and Key Design Elements:***
   - **Indicator a:** In the focus group, school leadership highlighted BCCS-B's emphasis on academic achievement and a focus on empowering students to become responsible learners. They described their focus on boys' education, such as providing consistency and concrete learning. They also reiterated that, despite the challenges of remote learning, they have maintained rigor and have not scaled back their standards. Participants in the teacher focus group noted the school's emphasis on instilling a sense of responsibility in students and providing them with a well-rounded education; they also described the school's mission as offering students an education "beyond the basics." Some examples of this were mentioned in focus groups, including the school's track, basketball, and gardening programs and the CARE Through Cops program, which offers students the chance to have a meaningful connection with the local police. Parent focus group participants characterized the mission as developing "strong, intelligent, and respectful men." Board members described the school's mission as more than just achievement, and that its programs are designed to address gender-specific needs. One example of this is BCCS-B's efforts to revise its intervention strategies to more effectively work with boys.
   - **Indicator b:** In the focus group, school leadership described the school's model as data-driven, with a focus on academic achievement and character education. The school provides students with *more time on task* by having an extended school day and school year. The Benchmark 2 summary discusses how the school's *use of data drives the instructional program*. It also describes the *integration* of social studies and science into the curriculum and the many ways in which the *academic program is engaging* and tailored to meet the needs of boys. The summary for Benchmark 3 describes the ways by which the school *partners with parents and the community* and *focuses on character development and problem-solving skills* through its character education program, which is integrated throughout the curriculum, and its restorative approach to behavior management. Finally, Benchmarks 2 and 7 discuss the school's use of *professional development* to support teachers' growth.

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

Element	*Indicators*
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	a. The school is making regular and significant annual progress toward meeting the targets. 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. 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.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

1. Element: ***Target are met:***
   - **Indicator a:** N/A

2. Element: ***Targets are not met:***
   - **Indicator a:** At the time of the renewal visit, school leaders reported a total enrollment of 268 students, which they acknowledged is lower than past years due to the pandemic. Enrollment data from 2016-2017 to 2019-2020 show the school's total enrollment has been at or above 94%. Teachers also reported low attendance at the beginning of the school year but noted that it had improved significantly once students received computers. The school's renewal application states that the school offers "an incentivized attendance program for scholars with low attendance." According to NYSED data, BCCS-B's enrollment of ED students in 2019-2020 was 96%, which was 31 percentage points higher than the district of location. The school's enrollment of SWDs, however, is 10 percentage points below the district. From 2016-2017 to 2019-2020, the school's SWD population rose from 4% to 7%. The school's ELL population has also increased within the same timeframe, going from 3% to 8%, which narrows the differential to the district to -5 percentage points.
   - **Indicator b:** According to the school's renewal application, BCCS-B enrolls a large percentage of economically disadvantaged students and will continue to use its current recruitment strategies

to maintain that population. With regards to recruiting SWD and ELL students, the renewal application enumerates multiple recruitment strategies employed by the school, including broadening media resources to include stories from parents and scholars with disabilities, highlighting services offered for SWDs, and connecting with organizations that are led by and work with people with disabilities. The school has also created an ELL community liaison position to connect the school with prospective families and provides translated recruitment materials and translation at recruitment events. According to the school's renewal application, BCCS-B is "partnering with community based organizations and distributing marketing materials at local grocery stores, laundromats, restaurants, salons, parks or any location that is used as a gathering place within the community." The school has also built a relationship with the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. During the visit, school leadership and the board discussed the school's potential plan to offer more restrictive classes, e.g., 12:1:1. For ELL students, they noted increased contact with the local Muslim community and enhanced partnerships and translation to reach out to ELL families.

- **Indicator c:** During the visit, school leaders and board members were familiar with the school's enrollment and retention targets and indicated that they monitor enrollment data. In addition, the school's renewal application states "We continue to build capacity with current staff to service the needs of ELLs through professional development opportunities with CASDA and University of Albany and opportunities for collaboration with the ELL teacher at BCCS-G." It also reports that the school can collect Title 3 funds since it has joined the Title 3 consortium. These funds will "help ensure that ELLs attain English language proficiency and meet state academic standards."

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

Element	*Indicators*
1. Legal Compliance	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 provisions of its charter. Throughout the charter term, the board and school leadership have responded promptly to CSO requests for additional information and revisions. For example, some of the CSO policies that were submitted with the renewal application this fall required revision to be legally compliant; the school has since worked with NYSED to revise these. However, the school has had uncategorized uncertified teachers during the charter term. In addition, while the school submitted its fingerprint clearance certificates in September 2020 as part of the renewal process, the CSO did not have those review results available during the site visit. Those results came after the site visit and show that school officials have not been complying with fingerprinting and clearance requirements for staff, a serious safety violation. The CSO will be in communication with the school to discuss this. 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 renewal application states, "BCCCS-B works with legal counsel to ensure that policies are up-to-date with recent laws and requirements. All BCCCS-B staff are trained in the applicable procedures and systems necessary to ensure that legal and charter requirements are met." Following the last charter renewal, the school has taken steps to ensure compliance with Open Meeting Laws and its implementation of the DASA Act.
   - **Indicator c:** The school's calendar lists 185 instructional days, which is fewer than the 190 days indicated in the school's charter. In September 2018, the Board of Regents approved a revision to amend the school's organizational chart (as described in Benchmark 7). In October 2018, NYSED approved the school's admissions policy, which was revised to add a weight for SWDs.

Attachment 1: 2020-21 Renewal Site Visit

Brighter Choice Charter School for Boys

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 ELA, math, and 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.

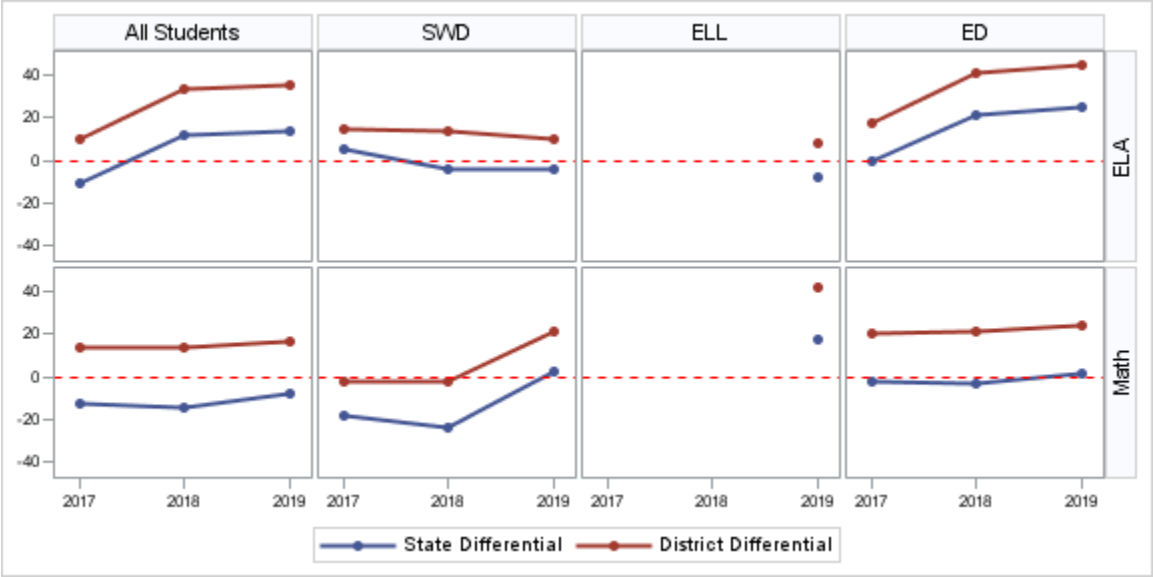
Table 1: Elementary/Middle School Trending Toward Proficiency – Target = 75%

		All Students	SWD	ED
ELA	2016-2017	31%	.	34%
	2017-2018	57%	0%	57%
	2018-2019	65%	17%	67%
Math	2016-2017	41%	.	39%
	2017-2018	43%	20%	43%
	2018-2019	52%	17%	51%

**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				
		Brighter Choice CS for Boys	Albany CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS	Brighter Choice CS for Boys	Albany CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS
All Students	2016-2017	29%	19%	+10	40%	-11	32%	18%	+14	45%	-13
	2017-2018	57%	23%	+34	45%	+12	35%	21%	+14	49%	-14
	2018-2019	60%	24%	+36	46%	+14	42%	25%	+17	50%	-8
SWD	2016-2017	17%	2%	+15	12%	+5	0%	2%	-2	18%	-18
	2017-2018	17%	3%	+14	21%	-4	0%	2%	-2	24%	-24
	2018-2019	13%	3%	+10	17%	-4	25%	4%	+21	22%	+3
ELL	2018-2019	25%	17%	+8	33%	-8	57%	15%	+42	39%	+18
ED	2016-2017	29%	11%	+18	29%	0	31%	11%	+20	33%	-2
	2017-2018	56%	15%	+41	35%	+21	35%	14%	+21	38%	-3
	2018-2019	61%	16%	+45	36%	+25	42%	18%	+24	40%	+2

**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				
		Brighter Choice CS for Boys	Albany CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS	Brighter Choice CS for Boys	Albany CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS
Grade 3	2016-2017	33%	20%	+13	43%	-10	37%	24%	+13	48%	-11
	2017-2018	68%	26%	+42	51%	+17	35%	25%	+10	54%	-19
	2018-2019	58%	31%	+27	52%	+6	45%	31%	+14	55%	-10
Grade 4	2016-2017	33%	20%	+13	41%	-8	29%	14%	+15	43%	-14
	2017-2018	56%	25%	+31	47%	+9	29%	20%	+9	48%	-19
	2018-2019	77%	25%	+52	48%	+29	42%	24%	+18	50%	-8
Grade 5	2016-2017	17%	17%	0	35%	-18	29%	15%	+14	43%	-14
	2017-2018	39%	18%	+21	37%	+2	45%	16%	+29	44%	+1
	2018-2019	41%	16%	+25	38%	+3	39%	21%	+18	46%	-7

**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		
	Brighter Choice CS for Boys	Albany CSD	Differential to District	Brighter Choice CS for Boys	Albany CSD	Differential to District	Brighter Choice CS for Boys	Albany CSD	Differential to District
2016-2017	4%	13%	-9	3%	12%	-9	91%	57%	+34
2017-2018	5%	13%	-8	4%	13%	-9	93%	71%	+22
2018-2019	7%	16%	-9	6%	14%	-8	94%	72%	+22
2019-2020	7%	17%	-10	8%	13%	-5	96%	65%	+31

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

Table 5: Retention – Aggregate and Subgroups

	All Students			SWD			ELL			ED		
	Brighter Choice CS for Boys	Albany CSD	Differential to District	Brighter Choice CS for Boys	Albany CSD	Differential to District	Brighter Choice CS for Boys	Albany CSD	Differential to District	Brighter Choice CS for Boys	Albany CSD	Differential to District
2016-2017	75%	87%	**-12**	75%	90%	**-15**	75%	86%	**-11**	77%	88%	**-11**
2017-2018	81%	85%	**-4**	50%	86%	**-36**	100%	82%	**+18**	79%	87%	**-8**
2018-2019	80%	85%	**-5**	75%	86%	**-11**	69%	84%	**-15**	81%	87%	**-6**
2019-2020	80%	84%	**-4**	61%	86%	**-25**	90%	82%	**+8**	81%	84%	**-3**

**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).

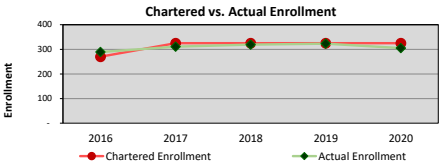
Charter School Fiscal Accountability Summary

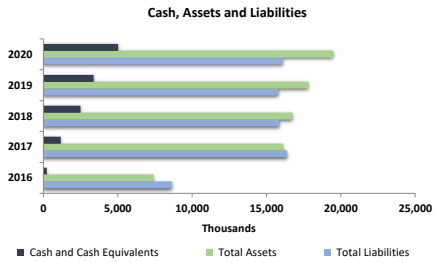
BRIGHTER CHOICE CHARTER SCHOOL FOR BOYS

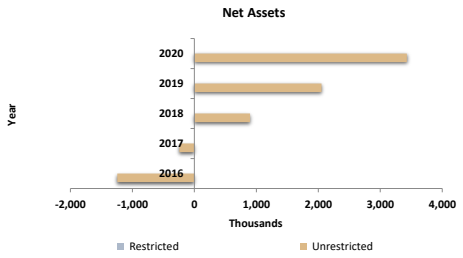
AUDITED FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Grades Served	K-4	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5
Maximum Chartered Grades Served	K-4	K-4	K-4	K-4	K-4
Chartered Enrollment	270	325	325	325	325
Maximum Chartered Enrollment	270	270	270	270	270
Actual Enrollment	289	311	319	323	305
ASSETS					
Current Assets					
Cash and Cash Equivalents	227,317	1,167,933	2,491,745	3,377,605	5,019,493
Grants and Contracts Receivable	121,678	967,258	359,561	653,000	826,352
Prepaid Expenses	8,146	16,706	-	-	-
Other Current Assets	1,193,549	680	539	-	-
Total Current Assets	1,550,690	2,152,577	2,851,845	4,030,605	5,845,845
Non-Current Assets					
Property, Building and Equipment, net	5,873,289	11,540,172	11,251,016	10,860,648	10,508,906
Restricted Cash	-	2,448,407	2,655,180	2,937,925	3,144,965
Security Deposits	-	-	-	-	-
Other Non-Current Assets	-	-	-	-	-
Total Non - Current Assets	5,873,289	13,988,579	13,906,196	13,798,573	13,653,871
Total Assets	7,423,979	16,141,156	16,758,041	17,829,178	19,499,716
LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS					
Current Liabilities					
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	172,722	411,188	417,192	745,264	578,188
Accrued Payroll and Payroll Taxes	225,266	640,886	575,985	614,333	712,823
Due to Related Parties	-	-	-	-	-
Refundable Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Other Current Liabilities	615,056	478,777	505,173	566,959	580,219
Total Current Liabilities	1,013,044	1,530,851	1,498,350	1,926,556	1,871,230
Long-Term Liabilities					
Deferred Rent	-	-	-	-	-
Other Long-Term Liabilities	7,653,514	14,852,030	14,361,762	13,852,317	14,198,818
Total Long-Term Liabilities	7,653,514	14,852,030	14,361,762	13,852,317	14,198,818
Total Liabilities	8,666,558	16,382,881	15,860,112	15,778,873	16,070,048
NET ASSETS					
Unrestricted	(1,242,579)	(241,725)	897,929	2,050,305	3,429,668
Restricted	-	-	-	-	-
Total Net Assets	(1,242,579)	(241,725)	897,929	2,050,305	3,429,668
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	7,423,979	16,141,156	16,758,041	17,829,178	19,499,716

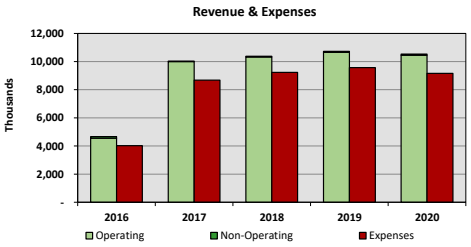


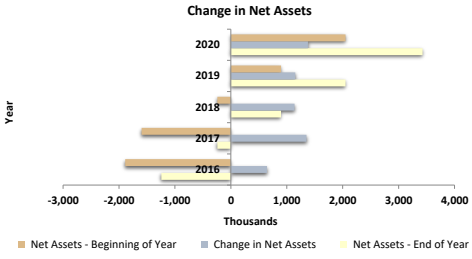




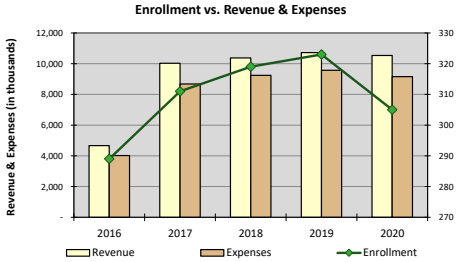
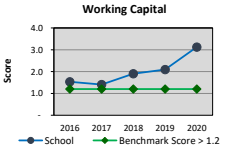
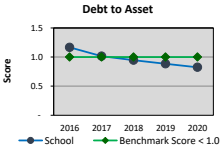
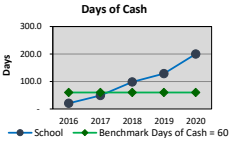
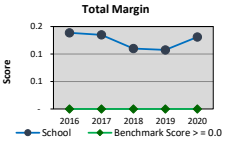
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

OPERATING REVENUE					
State and Local Per Pupil Revenue - Reg. Ed	4,092,440	8,901,881	9,377,862	9,417,410	9,410,269
State and Local Per Pupil Revenue - SPED	-	-	-	-	203,706
State and Local Per Pupil Facilities Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Grants	151,021	254,250	322,975	341,777	319,363
State and City Grants	62,386	267,829	30,675	175,536	-
Other Operating Income	248,857	579,002	592,344	725,298	522,242
Total Operating Revenue	4,554,704	10,002,962	10,323,856	10,660,021	10,455,580
EXPENSES					
Program Services					
Regular Education	2,502,426	5,242,114	5,587,675	5,796,962	5,672,027
Special Education	227,567	295,788	255,849	399,790	436,961
Other Expenses	522,727	1,649,226	1,832,727	1,699,192	1,276,991
Total Program Services	3,252,720	7,187,128	7,676,251	7,895,944	7,385,979
Supporting Services					
Management and General	767,808	1,491,957	1,561,023	1,675,843	1,770,989
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-
Total Support Services	767,808	1,491,957	1,561,023	1,675,843	1,770,989
Total Expenses	4,020,528	8,679,085	9,237,274	9,571,787	9,156,968
Surplus/Deficit from Operations	534,176	1,323,877	1,086,582	1,088,234	1,298,612
SUPPORT AND OTHER REVENUE					
Interest and Other Income	121	635	22,353	44,072	71,862
Contributions and Grants	20,683	-	-	-	-
Fundraising Support	18,261	28,071	30,719	20,070	8,888
Other Support and Revenue	73,788	450	-	-	-
Total Support and Other Revenue	112,853	29,156	53,072	64,142	80,750
Change in Net Assets	647,029	1,353,033	1,139,654	1,152,376	1,379,362
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	(1,889,608)	(1,594,758)	(241,725)	897,929	2,050,306
Net Assets - End of Year	(1,242,579)	(241,725)	897,929	2,050,305	3,429,668





FISCAL ANALYSIS

RATIOS, BENCHMARKS and FINDINGS

REVENUE & EXPENSE BREAKDOWN					
Revenue - Per Pupil					
Operating	15,760	32,164	32,363	33,003	34,281
Support and Other Revenue	390	94	166	199	265
Total Revenue	16,151	32,258	32,530	33,202	34,545
Expenses - Per Pupil					
Program Services	11,255	23,110	24,063	24,446	24,216
Mangement and General, Fundraising	2,657	4,797	4,893	5,188	5,807
Total Expenses	13,912	27,907	28,957	29,634	30,023
% of Program Services	80.9%	82.8%	83.1%	82.5%	80.7%
% of Management and Other	19.1%	17.2%	16.9%	17.5%	19.3%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses	16.1%	15.6%	12.3%	12.0%	15.1%
FINANCIAL COMPOSITE SCORE					
Composite Score	(0.20)	0.45	1.12	1.73	2.22
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Strong; 1.5 - 3.0 / Adequate; 1.0 - 1.4 / Needs Monitoring; -1.0 - 0.9	Needs Monitoring	Needs Monitoring	Adequate	Strong	Strong
WORKING CAPITAL					
Net Working Capital	537,646	621,726	1,353,495	2,104,049	3,974,615
Working Capital (Current) Ratio	1.5	1.4	1.9	2.1	3.1
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or greater than 1.2	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
DEBT TO ASSET					
Debt to Asset Ratio	1.2	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or less than 1.0	Does Not Meet Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
CASH POSITION					
Days of Cash	20.6	49.1	98.5	128.8	200.1
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or greater than 60 days	Does Not Meet Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
TOTAL MARGIN					
Total Margin Ratio	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or greater than 0.0	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard