New York State Education Department

Renewal Site Visit Report
2019-2020

Health Sciences Charter School

Visit Date: October 29, 2019 – October 30, 2019
Date of Report: March 5, 2020

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary[1]

Name of Charter School	Health Sciences Charter School
Board Chair	Dr. Richard Hershberger
District of Location	Buffalo Public Schools
Opening Date	Fall 2010
Charter Terms	• Initial Term: September 15, 2009 - June 30, 2014 • First Renewal Term: July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2017 • Second Renewal Term: July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2020
Current Term Authorized Grades/ Approved Enrollment	Grades 9-12/ 480 students
Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/ Proposed Approved Enrollment	Grades 9-12/ 480 students
Facilities	1140 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, New York 14209 - Private Space
Mission Statement	*To provide high-school age youth with an academically challenging learning environment that prepares them to communicate effectively, think and reason critically, value diversity, engage in service learning, pursue academic excellence, obtain sustainable and quality careers in the healthcare industry and become productive and valued members of the community.*
Key Design Elements	• Year-round instruction • State-of-the-art laboratory instruction Responsive Classroom • Industry-specific curriculum • Mentoring • Service learning • Internships • Individual career guidance • Hands-on instruction from leading industry and educational professionals • Wellness emphasized throughout all facets of classroom instruction • Dual college credit courses
Requested Revisions	None

Noteworthy: Health Sciences Charter School's (HSCS) graduation rates outperform the rates of schools with similar grade spans and demographics. The four-year graduation rate surpassed the NYS graduation

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

in 4 out of the last 5 cohorts. Eighty-nine percent of the 2015 cohort graduated in four years, surpassing the NYS average by 6 percentage points in 2018-2019, and showing an increase of 10 percentage points over the prior year. The five-year graduation rate surpassed the NYS average for each of the three cohorts for which data is available.

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.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Current Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2017 to 2018	Year 2 2018 to 2019	Year 3 2019 to 2020
Grade Configuration	Grades 9-12	Grades 9-12	Grades 9-12
Total Approved Enrollment	480	480	480

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

	Year 1 2020 to 2021	Year 2 2021 to 2022	Year 3 2022 to 2023	Year 4 2023 to 2024	Year 5 2024 to 2025
Grade Configuration	Grades 9-12	Grades 9-12	Grades 9-12	Grades 9-12	Grades 9-12
Total Proposed Enrollment	480	480	480	480	480

METHODOLOGY

A two-day renewal site visit was conducted at Health Sciences Charter School on October 29, 2019 – October 30, 2019. The New York State Education Department's Charter School Office (CSO) team conducted focus groups with school leaders, board members, the special populations team, and the student support team. In cooperation with school leadership, the CSO administered an anonymous online survey to teachers and parents.

The team conducted 18 classroom observations in Grades 9-12. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the inquiry coach; literacy and assessment coordinator; and mathematics teacher mentor.

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

a. **Current organizational chart** showing all key staff positions, names of staff in those positions, and the school's reporting structure;
b. **A master school schedule** showing each class, grade or course, and teacher(s). Note what days are A, B, C days and which classrooms include ELLs/MLLs and SWDs;
c. **A map of the school** showing a basic floor plan, including classroom numbers, teacher names, and offices;
d. **Board materials**, strategic plan (if applicable), and a narrative describing the board's self-evaluation process;

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

e. **Narrative describing the process used to evaluate school leadership;**
f. **Narrative describing the process school leadership uses to evaluate teachers;**
g. **School administered Student Risk Survey, May 2018**
h. **NYSED CSO Parent Survey;**
i. **NYSED CSO Teacher Survey;**
j. **School's Student Risk Behavior Survey;**
k. **Narrative describing the school's progress and efforts made toward reaching its enrollment and retention targets** *(including ELLs/MLLs, SWDs, EDs; if the school is not meeting its targets, describe the efforts made to do so, the evaluation of those efforts, and the results of the evaluation.)***;**
l. **Admissions and Waitlist**;
m. **Faculty/Staff Roster**;
n. **Job descriptions for school leaders and staff;**
o. **Principal's 2018-2019 Staff Opinion Poll;**
p. **Professional development schedule for summer 2019;**
q. **Work-Based Learning Programming document; and**
r. **Minutes of the Regular meetings of the board of trustees**

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

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

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

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

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

For the site visit conducted from October 29, 2019 to October 30, 2019 at Health Sciences Charter School see the following Performance Framework benchmark ratings and narrative.

New York State Education Department
Charter School Performance Framework Rating

	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).	Approaches
	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 &	**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.	Approaches
	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.	Approaches

Summary of Findings

- The Health Sciences Charter School (HSCS) is in year 10 of operation and serves students in Grades 9-12. During its current charter term, the school is rated in the following manner: exceeding 0 benchmarks, meeting 6 benchmarks, approaching 4 benchmarks, and falling far below 0 benchmark. Additional details regarding those ratings are provided below.

- **Areas of Strengths**:
  - HSCS' graduation rates tend to outperform the rates of schools with similar grade spans and demographics. At 89%, the four-year graduation rate surpassed the NYS graduation rate by six percentage points in 2018-2019, showing an increase of 10 percentage points over the prior year.
  - The five-year graduation rate surpassed NYS for three of the four cohorts for which data is available, matching the state for the 2014 cohort. Over the charter term, Regents assessment performance improved in five of the 10 tests administered at the school.
  - The school has experienced transitions in leadership and has added staff and reorganized roles and responsibilities to focus on implementation of the school's mission and key design elements.
  - HSCS is in sound financial condition after remediation of earlier deficiencies.

- **Areas in Need of Improvement**:
  - Regents performance declined over the charter term in five of the 10 tests administered to HSCS students. Although the school showed improvement in five tests administered over the charter term, the school's 2018-2019 Regents performance was below the state average in all but one area.
  - According to NYSED data, of the 102 students in the 2016 ninth grade cohort, 52% are on track to graduate. In that cohort, none of the 10 students with disabilities (SWDs)are on track to graduate. Of the original 108 students in the 2015 cohort, 65% persisted to graduation in four years. Of the 14 original SWD members of the 2014 cohort, 9 (64%) persisted to graduate in four years. Overall, HSCS retains a lesser percentage of students than Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) (74% vs. 88%).
  - The school has not met its authorized chartered enrollment of 480 students (93%) over the current charter term. While the school enrolls SWDs at a proportion close to BPS, and EDs over the district, it falls 15 percentage points below the district for English language learners (ELLs)/Multilingual learners (MLLs).

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: Approaches

Academic Program for High School:

- The HSCS academic program is designed to prepare students to graduate with a Regents diploma or a Regents diploma with distinction. HSCS students take core courses in ELA, math, science, and social studies aligned with the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLS). Additional courses include visual arts, physical education and either Spanish or French.
- In recognition of the gaps in students' academic readiness in prerequisite skills, the school scheduled ninth graders for a second "lab" period in ELA and math every other day starting this school year (2019-2020), resulting in seven class periods a week for these two core subjects.
- The school launched its Work-Based Learning Program in 2019-2020 by implementing a Career Awareness course for all ninth graders.
- The school eliminated the Math 9 remedial course used in prior years and enrolled all incoming freshmen in Algebra to allow students to have the opportunity to take college courses in their senior year once their graduation requirements are met.

Academic Program for Students with Disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs)/Multilingual Learners (MLLs):

- HSCS offers integrated co-teaching (ICT) and resource room services to support students with disabilities.
- ELLs/MLLs receive support in the classroom from an English as a New Language (ENL) teacher. Two students receive sustaining ELL/MLL support.
- Additional supports are offered to SWDs and ELLs/MLLs who participate in the after-school program.

See Attachment 1 for data tables and additional academic information.

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.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2:

1. **Element: *Curriculum***:
   - **Indicator a: According to school leaders,** HSCS has a documented curriculum aligned with the NYSLS. School leaders reported that they began updating and upgrading the curriculum in 2018-2019. The school adopted the *New Visions* curriculum for social studies, which consists of open source libraries of resources teachers can use to create lesson and unit plans customized for HSCS students. For life science, HSCS adopted *The Science Education for Public*

Understanding Program (SEPUP), an issues-focused approach to the Regents living environment curriculum developed by the Lawrence Hall of Science at UC Berkeley. School leaders reported they are still trying to determine the best curricula for certain other subject areas.

- **Indicator b:** As described in school documents and during the focus group with school leaders, teachers prepare lesson plans in collaboration with their subject area colleagues during daily professional learning community (PLC) time. Lesson plans are submitted electronically and reviewed by school leaders assigned to the subject area. The lesson plans provided to the renewal site visit team vary slightly in format, but generally include the learning goal, lesson agenda, and instructional steps to implement the lesson. Most of the plans include lists of accommodations for students with IEPs, or general modifications in anticipation of student misconceptions. Few of the lesson plans described learning activities that involved complex materials or higher order, conceptual understanding. Rather, most plans set expectations that students would complete practice problems, fill in worksheets, or copy notes from the screen.
- **Indicator c:** As reported by school leaders, by working in content area PLCs to develop lesson and unit plans, teachers ensure that the curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms and between teachers. The Regents content area courses do not represent a continuum of concepts or skills that require vertical alignment.
- **Indicator d:** Many of the lesson plans provided to the site visit team listed accommodations and modifications for students with diverse learning needs. However, students were completing the same task at the same pace in almost all classes visited with little evidence of differentiation. Students receiving the support of the ICT were completing the same tasks as their peers, with the support of the ICT.
- **Indicator e:** School leaders indicated they began a review of the curriculum in 2018-2019 and initiated several changes to the academic program and sequence in 2019-2020. One key change was eliminating the Math 9 course and assigning all ninth graders to Algebra. To address gaps in students' prerequisite skills and knowledge in both ELA and math, HSCS scheduled a second class, the ELA or Algebra 'lab', every other day for all freshmen. The additional two classes per week in both ELA and math are designed to provide more practice, remediation and support so that students can succeed on the Regents exams and potentially earn four Regents credits by the end of ninth grade.

2. **Element: *Instruction***:
   - **Indicator a:** School leaders explained they introduced teachers to "explicit direct instruction" (EDI) as a recommended instructional approach during summer professional development. The site visit team observed many teachers providing direct instruction by presenting information, but there were few instances observed where students had opportunities to demonstrate their understanding, a key element of the EDI model.
   - **Indicator b:** In classes observed during the site visit, many students were completing the tasks assigned, with a higher degree of attentiveness and care in the upper level classes. In classes consisting of mostly ninth graders, team members noted students filling in answers on worksheets and copying from videos or teacher examples. While classes were orderly with few disruptions and students were passive and obedient, they did not often display active engagement with the concepts in the lesson by asking questions or volunteering ideas.

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

   - **Indicator a:** As described in the renewal application, the school uses a collection of formative, diagnostic, and summative assessments to monitor student learning and track student progress. School leaders reported that all entering students take the Achieve 3000 literacy assessment to identify a Lexile (reading) level that is shared with teachers to inform their instructional decisions. Content area PLCs collaborate on the development of interim and summative assessments using Regents items as resources. In their focus group, leaders reported that response to intervention (RTI) teachers and ICTs monitor the progress of students during and following intervention activities.
   - **Indicator b:** According to school leaders, HSCS contracts with BOCES to provide professional development and support to help teachers use both quantitative and qualitative data to inform their instructional decisions. In the focus group, teachers explained that they meet as a content area PLC and in half-day professional development with the ICT and RTI staff to review data on student progress and to share observations of student performance in order to revise and refine instructional strategies.
   - **Indicator c:** School leaders reported that the decision to modify the academic program to incorporate seven periods of ELA and math each week into the ninth-grade schedule was informed by the Achieve 3000 data showing the gaps in skill and knowledge among entering freshmen. Similar considerations informed the decision to eliminate the remedial Math 9 course and place all students in Algebra, with added support, so that students would be better able to stay on track to graduate by completing four Regents courses in their ninth-grade year.

4. **Element: *Supports for Diverse Learners***:
   - **Indicator a:** In the focus group, teachers providing support for diverse learners described a variety of strategies to meet the needs of HSCS students. SWDs receive scheduled time with the ICT during class to meet the requirements of their IEPs. The renewal application lists services provided before and after school for SWDs. ELL/MLL students receive support from the ENL teacher both in the classroom and in pull-out sessions.
   - **Indicator b:** Teachers and school leaders explained that interventionists (RTI staff) and classroom teachers meet four days a week in their PLCs. Each content area PLC is assigned the special educator who provides services to students in their classes. By participating in regular PLC meetings, the ICT remains involved in the design of lessons and can contribute suggestions for modifications to the content or pace of lesson activities to address specific student needs.

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:** HSCS has a written discipline policy included in its student handbook. Three levels of infractions are defined, with a range of consequences outlined for each. The school's discipline policy indicates that administrators have discretion in their assignment of consequences for prohibited behavior. Two assistant principals (AP) divide responsibilities for students alphabetically, but in the focus group interview, they reported that they collaborate to resolve issues regardless of the student's last name.
- **Indicator b:** Forty-four of the 49 parents responding to the NYSED CSO survey agreed that HSCS is safe. While hallways were boisterous during passing time, monitors were in position

to ensure student energy remained within acceptable levels. School leaders reported they are investigating options to ensure their students are safe during their travel to and from school. One strategy recently initiated is to invite the Buffalo Police officers assigned to the nearby public transit stop to visit the school and meet the students, in the hopes of building relationships between the police and the school.

- **Indicator c:** HSCS provides training to staff to ensure the environment is free from harassment and discrimination. School leaders provided a calendar of professional development conducted prior to the school opening this fall which lists sessions on classroom management, discipline and safety, as well as training on harassment. One assistant principal is the school's Dignity for All Students (DASA) coordinator and reports that all teachers have received training in DASA. The student handbook includes a paragraph defining bullying and outlining school expectations in keeping with DASA requirements.
- **Indicator d:** Classrooms were orderly and well managed and generally free from disruption. Across the 18 classes observed during the visit, students were polite and obedient and attentive to the assigned task. To build workplace competencies beyond academics, HSCS designates one student "ambassador" per classroom to greet visitors as an opportunity to practice handshakes, introductions, eye contact, and conversation skills.

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

- **Indicator a:** The school communicates with families via the website, social media, and a parent portal to eSchool where families can check class assignments and grades for their child. In addition, the renewal application lists newsletters and the Remind app as tools for sharing classroom as well as school-wide information with families. While the renewal application cites the establishment of an engagement committee headed by a member of the board of trustees, school leaders and board members were unable to offer details on the activities of that committee and its progress toward the goals listed in the renewal document, one of which is to increase parent attendance at school events.
- **Indicator b:** Teachers communicate with families about student strengths and weakness using the eSchool portal where class assignments and student grades are listed as described in the renewal application and in focus group interviews. Some teachers interviewed on the site visit reported they use the Remind app to inform families and students about due dates and special assignments. Teachers can send compliments and concerns to individuals without exposing teachers' private contact information. Forty of the 49 parents responding to the NYSED CSO survey agreed that teachers regularly communicate with parents and families.
- **Indicator c:** According to the renewal application, HSCS assesses family satisfaction by soliciting input at school events and at one-on-one meetings. On the NYSED CSO survey, 44 of the 49 parents agreed that the school seeks feedback from families, while seven disagreed. In contrast to what is described in the renewal application, school leaders and the board reported they have not conducted a systematic survey of families or students, explaining that a recent effort to survey student satisfaction had too few usable responses to be helpful. The renewal application states that in May 2018 the school conducted a student risk behavior survey which led to changes in practices and services being initiated this year.
- **Indicator d:** According to the renewal application, HSCS responds to family concerns on an individual basis. Concerns are shared with the assistant principals who confer with the family to develop a plan of action to resolve the issue. On the NYSED CSO survey, 43 of the 49 parents responding agreed that the school has a clear complaint policy, with six respondents

disagreeing. The school's complaint policy is not included on the HSCS website in the list of board policies but appears at the end of the student handbook.

- **Indicator e:** While parents receive reports of their child's individual results on school and state assessments, there is no evidence in renewal documents or from interviews that HSCS regularly shares school-level academic data with the broader school community. A link to the NYS report card for HSCS is not included on the HSCS website. On the NYSED CSO survey, 16 of the 49 respondents (33%) indicated "no" when asked if the school informs parents how it performs compared to other schools in the district and New York State.

3. Element: ***Social-Emotional Supports***:
    - **Indicator a:** Through its student support team (SST), HSCS implements a collection of practices to support the social-emotional needs of individual students. Members of the SST interviewed at the renewal visit described their procedures when a student is identified as needing support or intervention by teachers, administrators, parents, or by the students themselves. The school employs a mental health counselor, two guidance counselors and contracts for services with a local mental health agency to help students deal with the impacts of trauma, grief, and other problems prevalent among the adolescent population.
    - **Indicator b:** Members of the SST collect and use data to document and track the impact of their actions on the social and emotional well-being of the individual students they support. SST members enter descriptions of their actions in electronic journals, accessible to selected members of the staff, that include contact with families, interventions used, and the impact on the student. SST members described additional tracking systems used by teachers and administrators to document parent phone calls that can be accessed by a broader range of individuals. The system is designed to facilitate communication and awareness among the staff of actions on behalf of students that are in process while maintaining student privacy.
    - **Indicator c:** While SST members collect and use data on the impact of interventions on individual students, HSCS has not implemented a school-wide program to address the significant social and emotional health needs of HSCS students cited by the SST. HSCS contracted with an outside agency, Via Evaluation, to conduct a student risk behavior survey in 2018 to identify school-wide areas of concern. In response to the survey, HSCS increased the contracted hours of mental health counseling provided by a local agency. In the renewal application, the school indicates it is pursuing but has not yet finalized additional mental health services from other agencies.

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

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

Finding: **Meets**

Important Notes:

- The key financial indicators used to evaluate this benchmark will be presented within a separate fiscal dashboard instrument that will provide context for the school's performance on each of the metrics, outline the specific targets for each metric, and provide additional subsidiary detail on each calculation.
- Unless otherwise indicated, financial data is derived from the school's annual independently audited financial statements.

1. Near-Term Indicators:	
1a.	Current Ratio
1b.	Unrestricted Days Cash
1c.	Enrollment Variance
1d.	Composite Score
2. Sustainability Indicators:	
2a.	Total Margin
2b.	Debt to Asset Ratio
2c.	Debt Service Coverage Ratio

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.

Financial Condition

Health Sciences Charter School appears to be in adequate financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the school's independently audited financial statements.

Overall Financial Outlook

A *composite score* is an overall measure of financial health. This score is based on a weighting of primary reserves, equity, and net income. A charter school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is considered to be in good financial health. Health Sciences Charter School's 2018-2019 composite score is 1.13.

Composite Scores
2014-2015 to 2018-2019

Year	*Composite Score*
2014-2015	-.3
2015-2016	.4
2016-2017	1.0
2017-2018	.4
2018-2019	1.13

It is important to note that the school has increased its cash position by 45% over 2017-2018 and it has over 128 days in cash on hand for 2018-2019 as well. Additionally, the school has successfully refinanced its building loans into long-term loans during the 2018-2019 school year. This results in the school nearly tripling its composite score from 2017-2018.

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:
The Charter School Office reviewed Health Sciences Charter School's 2018-2019 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that could be considered material weaknesses.

In 2017, NYSED's Office of Audit Services (OAS) conducted an audit of the school with the objective of ensuring the adequacy and reliability of its internal controls, including the policies and procedures for collecting and reporting financial data (http://www.oms.nysed.gov/oas/Audit_Report/documents/HSCSFinalReportCH-0816-02.pdf) for the period July 1, 2014 through March 31, 2017. The audit findings are as follows:

- Internal controls were not adequately established.
- There were minor billing errors in invoices to students' districts of residence.

The school submitted a corrective action plan to address the findings of the audit.

In 2019, the NYS Office of the State comptroller (OSC) http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/audits/schools/2019/health-sciences-charter-2019-99.htm conducted an audit of the school with the objective of determining whether student enrollment and billings to school districts of residence were accurate and supported for the period July 1, 2017 to April 9, 2019. The audit finding resulted in identification of minor billing errors in invoices to students' districts of residence. The school submitted a corrective action plan to address the findings of the audit.

In the fall of 2019, the CSO conducted a desk audit of the Health Sciences Charter School to review the school's term loans, sales tax, credit/debit card purchases, billings, payments, written policies and procedures, and fair value for services. The existing NYSED's OAS and OSC audits as well as the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 financial audits conducted by the school's independent auditors were used during the desk audit.

The desk audit review findings are as follows:

- The credit card was not always paid in a timely manner, resulting in penalties and interest assessed by the card issuer.
- There were 20 student records lacking emergency contact information.

The school's accounting firm submitted a draft credit card corrective action plan on 1/24/2020 that will be submitted to the board of trustees for review and approval. The accounting firm became aware of the students lacking contact information and stated the missing information was placed in the student records after the school became aware of the situation.

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:** According to the board interview, HSCS recruits and selects members to complement existing expertise and to further the mission of the school. Over the course of the current charter term, eight members have joined the board and nine have left. In 2018, the board amended its by-laws to decrease the maximum number of board members from 20 to 12, with a minimum number reduced from 12 to five. The board indicated it has candidates "in the pipeline" to be seated when two November 2019 vacancies occur. According to board minutes, two new members were seated in July 2019 to begin their nine-year terms. The board reported that it sees a need for an individual with real estate expertise to help manage the sale of a property owned by the school and an individual with development experience to help raise funds to implement the school's career training plans.
- **Indicator b:** As described in the renewal application, the board established eight organizational and fiscal goals aligned with the school's mission. Some of the goals describe specific actions (development and implementation of a work-based learning [WBL] program; development of a freshman summer ramp-up program) and some goals represent core governance responsibilities of the board (provide appropriate oversight of school finances; continue to develop internal controls for the protection of school assets; ensure the school operates in an economically sustainable manner). Despite several board members reporting they bring strategic planning expertise to the board, members reported they have not created a comprehensive strategic plan with defined measurable benchmarks and timelines for each of their goals. Instead, the board explained they assign responsibility for monitoring goal progress to each relevant board committee which then reports the results to the full board.

- **Indicator c:** The board oversees school management and fiscal operations and tracks progress toward meeting its organizational and academic goals through regular reports from each board committee at monthly meetings. Board minutes posted on the website list reports from the academic committee, the finance committee and the personnel committee. There is insufficient detail in the board minutes to determine which measures each committee is using to track progress toward its goals that could enable the board to accurately assess overall organizational effectiveness.
- **Indicator d:** In the renewal application, the board asserts that it regularly updates school policies. On the school's website, the board policies tab lists seven policies which were adopted across a range of years starting in 2016. The consent agendas in board minutes mention a variety of policy changes or updates presented by committees to the full board, most of which are not posted on the website. The board does not post committee minutes where discussion of policy updates occurs.
- **Indicator e:** The board adopted the McRel Principal Evaluation rubric as the performance-based evaluation tool for the head of school. According to the head of school, he has not been formally evaluated since his tenure began in 2018. In the renewal application, the board provided a statement that it evaluates its own performance yearly and presents the findings at the annual retreat. However, minutes from the July 2019 annual retreat include no mention of a board self-evaluation. The board did not provide details on the criteria and standards used in its evaluation of its own performance. The board reported that it delegates responsibility for the evaluation of school staff and providers to the head of school.
- **Indicator f:** As stated in the renewal application, the board relies on notices from the NYSED Charter School Office for information about its legal obligations to the school and its stakeholders. In its renewal documents, the board mentions working with Charter Board Partners to ensure policies are aligned with state regulations but offers no details on the process or products of those consultations.

Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity

The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure and 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 leadership team at HSCS has refocused staff on the school's core mission and academic goals, according to the board focus group[discussion. Administrators acknowledged that attention had wavered from the school's work-based learning aims in prior years. According to the renewal application, the 2018 reorganization of the leadership structure designated specific members of the leadership team to focus on academic or operational aspects of the school rather than dividing their energy across all areas. While academic goals are shared with

staff, board members explained they have not shared their organizational and financial goals with all stakeholders.

- **Indicator b:** School leaders shared job descriptions for the many leadership and coordinator positions assigned to manage the various academic and operational needs of the school. In the focus group interviews, teachers and leaders were familiar with the distinct areas of responsibility for each administrator, supervisor, counselors, interventionists and support staff.
- **Indicator c:** The school employs a variety of communication systems to ensure efficient and clear exchange of information across roles. The school's administrative team and student support team meet regularly to share information and to monitor the effectiveness of strategies and interventions. Electronic logs document teacher, counselor and parent communications, some of which are open, and others limited in access to ensure the privacy of sensitive student information. Email, text messages, and face to face meetings are the most commonly used means of communication mentioned in focus groups and renewal documents.
- **Indicator d**: As shown on the organizational charter, HSCS is staffed at the administrative level with key personnel, some of whom have been recently hired. In their focus group interviews, school leaders and board members acknowledged the challenge of recruiting, hiring and retaining high quality teachers which is confirmed by high levels of teacher turnover and a novice teaching staff. Seven teachers are in their first year at HSCS, including those teaching in subject areas that are central to the school's mission. The school currently employs eight classroom teachers who do not hold New York State certification and are not exempt. School leaders reported they are working with uncertified staff to help them obtain the necessary credentials and the board reported they provide funding to help teachers meet certification requirements. School leaders reported that staff have been released if they cannot provide the quality of services needed to move the school forward.

2. **Element:** ***Professional Climate***

- **Indicator a:** The school is staffed for each administrative and operational function and the school's job descriptions define a range of qualifications that reflect varying degrees of rigor. For example, the position with responsibility for maintaining instructional quality requires only a bachelor's degree, no education experience, and building leader certification, while the qualifications for director of student support include five years' teaching experience, NYS certification, and a master's degree. From the staff roster provided with the renewal application, some staff have served the school for many years, including the director of human resources and the school business manager, while others were hired this year, including seven classroom teachers and the two guidance counselors.
- **Indicator b:** The school day at HSCS is structured to allow daily collaboration among teachers. Teachers of the same content area meet before school as PLCs to develop unit and daily lesson plans, to create common assessments and to share instructional strategies. Four days a week the PLCs include teachers providing support to students on individual education plans (IEPs) and once a week the ICTs meet to monitor the progress of the students they support and to share intervention strategies. In addition, every other week teachers meet in interdisciplinary grade level groups.
- **Indicator c:** According to school documents, HSCS ensures that staff has the requisite skills and expertise through a series of professional development offerings scheduled over the summer and during the school year. New teachers participate in a three day "boot camp" in August prior to the five-day pre-opening meetings for all staff. The schedule for the summer training sessions lists topics including the use of data to inform instruction led by a contracted BOCES consultant, the use of eDoctrina and eSchool to manage student information led by the technology coordinator,

and modifications and supports for SWD led by the teachers of students with additional needs (SWANs). In addition, the school calendar lists half-day workshops during the school year planned to address student behavior, instructional support and literacy classes. Teachers and leaders reported in their focus groups that they have the option to participate in training by outside agencies as well.

- **Indicator d:** The school has a formal process for teacher evaluation based on the Danielson Framework. The school's collective bargaining agreement outlines the methods to be used for teacher observation. According to the school's renewal application, school administrators conduct three informal observations daily and provide feedback to improve instruction. In the focus group for the renewal visit, teachers indicated that the BOCES consultant and the new instruction and curriculum coach help determine the supports teachers need. Teachers noted that professional development is differentiated to better match individual teacher needs.
- **Indicator e:** The school solicits teacher feedback and gauges teacher satisfaction using formal and informal methods. According to the renewal application, the personnel committee of the board conducts twice yearly surveys to assess progress toward the school's goals; however, the results of those surveys were not included with the renewal documents. In the board focus group, members acknowledged their ongoing challenge of recruiting and retaining teachers and mentioned resuming an annual "stay" interview with individual staff to anticipate faculty transitions for the coming year. The head of school conducted an informal survey at the end of 2018-2019 inviting input from teachers on adjustments to the school schedule, duty preferences, training needs to better implement the explicit instructional model, and an open-ended question about the greatest barrier to teaching at HSCS. The school leader reported using that input to inform decisions for the current school year.

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

Not Applicable.

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: Approaches

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:** ***Mission and Key Design Elements***

- **Indicator a:** School staff share a common understanding that the school's mission is to prepare students for careers in the healthcare industry. Work-based learning and attention to both the "hard" and "soft" skills needed for success in the workplace were mentioned by teachers and administrators as central to the school's academic program. Board members cited characteristics that reflect on the school's mission, mentioning "passion," "commitment," and "striving for excellence" as core features. Board members also commented that the school had become distracted from its healthcare focus but now has renewed attention to the work-based learning key design element central to its charter. While most parents responding to the NYSED CSO survey were familiar with the school's mission and agreed that the school is fulfilling its mission, 15 of the 49 respondents (30%) indicated they were not familiar with the mission and could not say that the school is achieving its goals.
- **Indicator b:** HSCS is taking steps to implement the nine key design elements included in the approved charter, some of which have not yet been implemented and remain in the planning stages.
    1. Year-round instruction: School leaders reported that all students are required to attend a four-week summer program to work on enrichment, credit recovery, internships, summer school or to retake Regents examinations. Attendance data was not verified during the renewal visit to confirm that all students participate.
    2. Exposure to the latest industry technology and laboratory techniques: According to the renewal application and the 2018-2019 Annual Report, some students participate in tours of medical facilities and in special activities led by health care professionals. Participation logs were not available for review to determine whether all students have access to the opportunities cited.
    3. Industry-specific curriculum: For the current school year (2019-2020), HSCS initiated an "Introduction to Careers" course for all ninth graders and plans to offer Personal Trainer certification for selected students. Other than *Chemistry for the Health Sciences*, curricula specific to the healthcare field have not been fully implemented.
    4. Honors and dual college credit course: According to school leaders, starting in 2019-2020, selected juniors and seniors will have opportunities to take college level courses when they complete their graduation requirements. The school is in discussions with area colleges to establish the details of these opportunities. The school is investigating funding

options to cover the costs of the college courses for HSCS students. Although the school has been in operation for 10 years, this design element remains in the planning stages.

5. Mentoring: As part of its student supports, volunteer staff members take on the role of mentors for juniors who are at risk for attendance, behavior or academic issues. The after-school program run by the Buffalo Urban League provides informal mentoring to the students who attend. Students wishing to participate in the school's athletic program are required to participate in the Athletic Academic Table to ensure their academic performance meets eligibility standards.
6. Service Learning: HSCS students participate in a variety of community and school-based activities to meet the required 100 hours of service credits to quality for graduation. According to school leaders, all graduates have met this criterion.
7. Internships: The school's renewal application states that students have participated in paid and unpaid internships in a variety of settings, from health centers, hospitals, veterinary offices, and schools, and were placed through the school, through the Buffalo Urban League or the mayor's office. A list of students and their placements was not available to the renewal visit team to determine how many students take part in these opportunities.
8. Individual career guidance/career development activities: HSCS hired a career coordinator in January 2018 to design and coordinate the work-based learning activities central to the school's mission. New activities launched for 2019-2020 include a careers course for ninth graders and the infusion of workplace language into the core curricula to be promoted by the school's VISTA volunteer. The renewal visit team confirmed that career development classes are included on the master schedule. The school provided a plan to add courses in future years that will comprise a career development sequence.
9. Health and wellness: The HSCS annual report and renewal application claim that health and wellness are emphasized throughout classroom instruction, as well as being addressed in after school clubs and by ensuring meals provided at the school reflect healthy habits. The renewal visit team did not identify any examples of the classroom emphasis on health and wellness claimed by the school in its documents. In a focus group interview, the mental health counselor reported that she includes health and wellness issues when working with her clients. The nurse is new to the school this year and reported she will be doing eye exams for some grades this year but was not certain when or if dental exams would be offered. The nurse added that she can work with students to obtain glasses free of charge through regional agencies

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:** ***Targets are met***

- **Indicator a:** Not applicable.

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

- **Indicator a:** While the school enrolls a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students than BPS, HSCS is not making regular annual progress toward meeting the enrollment of SWDs and ELL/MLL students. Over the charter term, the school has enrolled fewer SWDs and remains nine percentage points below BPS. The school has increased the number of ELL/MLL students enrolled but remains 15 percentage points below the district. In addition, the school is below its chartered enrollment, reporting 394 students enrolled as of June 30, 2019 on its 2018-2019 Annual Report, 82% of its chartered enrollment of 480. According to the most recent state data, the school retains only 79% of its students, compared with 97% in BPS. The school provided retention and attrition data in its renewal application showing that 20 of the 65 SWDs left or did not re-enroll in 2018-2019, a 69% retention rate.
- **Indicator b:** NYSED required HSCS to enter into a Corrective Action agreement to address issues of under-enrollment of SWDs and ELL/MLL students. Part of that agreement is to undertake extensive recruitment strategies and to enact programs that will attract and retain students from the three priority populations. In the renewal application, the school reports that it has launched a three-year plan to increase enrollment and retention that focuses on

increasing family-based activities and heightening the visibility of the school across the community. The renewal documents describe a board-led engagement committee designed to improve family involvement with the school, in recognition of the value of word of mouth in recruiting new students. However, when asked during the focus group interview, board members could not describe the activities of that committee and could not confirm whether the committee is making progress toward its goals.

- **Indicator c:** The school relies on anecdotal information to evaluate its recruitment and outreach strategies, citing word of mouth as the strategy they perceive to be most effective in reaching prospective students. In the renewal application, the school explains that it is limited in its ability to recruit students in the target populations because of competition from specialized schools run by BPS. While the renewal document cites several strategies used successfully by the BPS schools, the school has not elected to adopt those approaches to strengthen its own efforts to recruit new students.

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: Approaches

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:

- **Indicator a:** The school has generally complied with most applicable state and federal laws and the provisions of its charter, with the exceptions noted under Benchmark 8. The school has not complied with several requirements of the Open Meetings Law, including public notice of committee meetings, posting of committee minutes, and attendance and voting by telephone. The school's by-laws require that a majority be present to establish a quorum, and under the 2018 revision, action cannot be taken unless seven members of the 12 are present. Minutes of board meetings for 6/13/2019, 4/11/2019, 2/14/2019, and 11/8/2018 do not reflect that seven members eligible to vote were present. Also, the board by-laws indicate that election of officers is to take place at the annual meeting no later than June each year but voting on officers was tabled at the July 2019 meeting, labeled the "board retreat." Several policy documents are inconsistent with the law and/or NYSED guidance and require significant revisions.
- **Indicator b:** The board has entered into corrective action agreements with the Office of the Comptroller to address financial management issues and with the Charter School Office to address under-enrollment of target populations. Both corrective action plans are in progress.
- **Indicator c:** During the charter term, the board appropriately submitted a request to revise its by-laws to the Charter School Office and received approval in 2018.

Attachment 1: 2019-2020 Renewal Site Visit

Health Sciences Charter School

Benchmark 1:

Indicator 1: All Schools

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

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

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

In graduation rate, Health Sciences Charter School students did tend to outperform students in schools with similar grade spans and demographics.

Indicator 2: Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

(Not applicable to this charter school.)

Indicator 3: High School Outcomes

3.a.i. and 3.a.ii. Regents Testing Outcomes – Aggregate and Subgroup Annual Regents Outcomes: See Table 1 below.

Table 1: Annual Regents Outcomes

		All Students				SWD				ELL/MLL				ED			
		Charter Total Tested	Health Sciences Charter School	NYS	Differential to State	Charter Total Tested	Health Sciences Charter School	NYS	Differential to State	Charter Total Tested	Health Sciences Charter School	NYS	Differential to State	Charter Total Tested	Health Sciences Charter School	NYS	Differential to State
Algebra I (Common Core)	2016-2017	107	72%	70%	+2	9	67%	46%	+21	.	.	.	.	92	72%	63%	+9
	2017-2018	98	48%	64%	-16	11	18%	39%	-21	.	.	.	.	86	50%	56%	-6
	2018-2019	175	37%	66%	-29	16	13%	43%	-30	.	.	.	.	171	36%	59%	-23
Algebra II (Common Core)	2016-2017	18	39%	81%	-42	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	14	36%	70%	-34
	2017-2018	24	33%	82%	-49	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	22	32%	72%	-40
	2018-2019	24	38%	83%	-45	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	22	36%	72%	-36
Algebra II/Trigonometry	2016-2017	10	0%	34%	-34	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	9	0%	29%	-29
English Language Arts (Common Core)	2016-2017	146	66%	84%	-18	19	42%	59%	-17	.	.	.	.	131	66%	77%	-11
	2017-2018	127	58%	79%	-21	18	61%	52%	+9	.	.	.	.	117	61%	70%	-9
	2018-2019	127	68%	84%	-16	10	30%	61%	-31	7	57%	56%	+1	123	67%	78%	-11
Geometry (Common Core)	2016-2017	30	7%	63%	-56	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	30	7%	50%	-43
	2017-2018	13	62%	67%	-5	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	11	55%	54%	+1
	2018-2019	11	73%	70%	+3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	11	73%	57%	+16
Global History	2016-2017	210	39%	68%	-29	20	0%	38%	-38	.	.	.	.	189	39%	58%	-19
	2017-2018	53	11%	39%	-28	10	0%	23%	-23	.	.	.	.	52	10%	36%	-26
Global History Transition	2017-2018	130	51%	73%	-22	14	36%	45%	-9	.	.	.	.	122	51%	62%	-11
	2018-2019	158	27%	62%	-35	18	0%	34%	-34	5	40%	36%	+4	154	25%	51%	-26
Living Environment	2016-2017	189	35%	72%	-37	24	17%	45%	-28	.	.	.	.	167	34%	62%	-28
	2017-2018	91	30%	70%	-40	11	0%	44%	-44	.	.	.	.	86	28%	60%	-32
	2018-2019	129	32%	71%	-39	7	14%	45%	-31	.	.	.	.	127	31%	61%	-30
Physical Setting/Chemistry	2016-2017	8	63%	74%	-11	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	7	57%	61%	-4
	2017-2018	19	16%	72%	-56	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	18	17%	59%	-42
	2018-2019	17	47%	73%	-26	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	17	47%	60%	-13
Physical Setting/Earth Science	2016-2017	13	8%	64%	-56	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	12	8%	53%	-45
	2017-2018	54	19%	68%	-49	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	51	20%	58%	-38
	2018-2019	86	8%	64%	-56	.	.	.	.	5	20%	37%	-17	82	9%	53%	-44
US History and Government	2016-2017	110	68%	81%	-13	13	46%	55%	-9	.	.	.	.	100	69%	73%	-4
	2017-2018	116	73%	81%	-8	16	50%	56%	-6	.	.	.	.	107	74%	73%	+1
	2018-2019	110	44%	77%	-33	10	0%	51%	-51	.	.	.	.	107	43%	67%	-24

**See NOTES (2), (3), (4), and (7) below.*

3.a.iii. and 3.a.iv Regents Outcomes – Aggregate and Subgroup Total Cohort Regents Testing Outcomes: *See Table 2 below.*

Table 2: Regents 4-Year Cohort Outcomes

		All Students				SWD				ELL/MLL				ED			
		Charter Total Cohort	Health Sciences CS	NYS	Differential to NYS	Charter Total Cohort	Health Sciences CS	NYS	Differential to NYS	Charter Total Cohort	Health Sciences CS	NYS	Differential to NYS	Charter Total Cohort	Health Sciences CS	NYS	Differential to NYS
ELA	2012 Cohort	102	85%	85%	0	8	63%	53%	+10	.	.	.	.	83	83%	79%	+4
	2013 Cohort	129	91%	85%	+6	14	64%	55%	+9	.	.	.	.	120	91%	80%	+11
	2014 Cohort	106	80%	84%	-4	14	64%	54%	+10	.	.	.	.	97	80%	78%	+2
	2015 Cohort	123	83%	84%	-1	13	62%	55%	+7	7	86%	55%	+31	120	83%	79%	+4
Global History	2012 Cohort	102	65%	78%	-13	8	38%	42%	-4	.	.	.	.	83	60%	70%	-10
	2013 Cohort	129	60%	78%	-18	14	14%	42%	-28	.	.	.	.	120	60%	70%	-10
	2014 Cohort	106	58%	77%	-19	14	29%	42%	-13	.	.	.	.	97	58%	69%	-11
	2015 Cohort	123	63%	78%	-15	13	15%	43%	-28	7	71%	48%	+23	120	63%	70%	-7
Math	2012 Cohort	102	96%	86%	+10	8	100%	52%	+48	.	.	.	.	83	95%	81%	+14
	2013 Cohort	129	90%	85%	+5	14	71%	50%	+21	.	.	.	.	120	91%	80%	+11
	2014 Cohort	106	81%	83%	-2	14	36%	49%	-13	.	.	.	.	97	81%	77%	+4
	2015 Cohort	123	82%	84%	-2	13	54%	51%	+3	7	86%	60%	+26	120	82%	78%	+4
Science	2012 Cohort	102	80%	84%	-4	8	50%	51%	-1	.	.	.	.	83	80%	78%	+2
	2013 Cohort	129	84%	84%	0	14	64%	52%	+12	.	.	.	.	120	84%	78%	+6
	2014 Cohort	106	75%	83%	-8	14	43%	52%	-9	.	.	.	.	97	75%	76%	-1
	2015 Cohort	123	72%	83%	-11	13	31%	51%	-20	7	86%	51%	+35	120	72%	76%	-4
US History	2012 Cohort	102	77%	81%	-4	8	38%	49%	-11	.	.	.	.	83	75%	74%	+1
	2013 Cohort	129	81%	81%	0	14	50%	49%	+1	.	.	.	.	120	81%	74%	+7
	2014 Cohort	106	75%	80%	-5	14	64%	48%	+16	.	.	.	.	97	75%	72%	+3
	2015 Cohort	123	78%	79%	-1	13	31%	48%	-17	7	100%	48%	+52	120	78%	71%	+7

**See NOTES (2), (3), (4), and (7) below.*

3.b.i. and 3.b.ii. Graduation Outcomes – Aggregate and Subgroup Cohort Graduation Rates: See Table 3 below.

Table 3: High School Graduation Rates by Cohort

		All Students				SWD				ELL/MLL				ED			
		Charter Total Cohort	Health Sciences CS	NYS Graduation Rate	NYS Differential	Charter Total Cohort	Health Sciences CS	NYS Graduation Rate	NYS Differential	Charter Total Cohort	Health Sciences CS	NYS Graduation Rate	NYS Differential	Charter Total Cohort	Health Sciences CS	NYS Graduation Rate	NYS Differential
2011 Cohort	4 Year	109	83%	80%	+3	20	70%	54%	+16	.	.	.	.	94	84%	73%	+11
	5 Year	108	88%	84%	+4	20	80%	60%	+20	.	.	.	.	89	90%	79%	+11
	6 Year	108	88%	85%	+3	20	80%	62%	+18	.	.	.	.	87	91%	81%	+10
2012 Cohort	4 Year	102	83%	82%	+1	8	75%	57%	+18	.	.	.	.	83	83%	75%	+8
	5 Year	99	86%	85%	+1	8	75%	62%	+13	.	.	.	.	77	84%	80%	+4
	6 Year	98	87%	86%	+1	8	75%	64%	+11	.	.	.	.	76	86%	82%	+4
2013 Cohort	4 Year	129	87%	82%	+5	14	71%	58%	+13	.	.	.	.	120	87%	76%	+11
	5 Year	128	90%	85%	+5	14	71%	64%	+7	.	.	.	.	119	90%	80%	+10
	6 Year	128	91%	86%	+5	14	79%	66%	+13	.	.	.	.	119	91%	82%	+9
2014 Cohort	4 Year	106	79%	83%	-4	14	79%	60%	+19	.	.	.	.	97	79%	76%	+3
	5 Year	103	86%	86%	0	14	86%	66%	+20	.	.	.	.	87	87%	81%	+6
2015 Cohort	4 Year	123	89%	83%	+6	13	85%	62%	+23	7	100%	58%	+42	120	88%	77%	+11

**See NOTES (2), (3), (5), and (7) below.*

3.b.iii. and 3.b.iv. Graduation Outcomes – Aggregate and Subgroup On-Track to Graduate: *See Table 4 below.*

Table 4: Third Year On-Track to Graduate – Target = 75%

Health Sciences Charter School	All Students			SWD			ELL/MLL			ED		
	Charter Total Cohort	Total On-Track	On-Track	Charter Total Cohort	Total On-Track	On-Track	Charter Total Cohort	Total On-Track	On-Track	Charter Total Cohort	Total On-Track	On-Track
2012	103	77	75%	6	3	50%	.	.	.	82	58	71%
2013	134	101	75%	18	10	56%	.	.	.	118	93	79%
2014	108	65	60%	14	3	21%	.	.	.	101	61	60%
2015	108	70	65%	13	5	38%	.	.	.	99	65	66%
2016	102	53	52%	10	0	0%	5	0	0%	98	51	52%

**See NOTES (2), (3), and (9) below.*

3.b.v. and 3.b.vi. Graduation Outcomes – Aggregate and Subgroup Student Persistence: See Table 5 below.

Table 5: High School 4-Year Persistence Rates – Target = 85%

Health Sciences CS	All Students			SWD			ED		
	Original Cohort	Persistent	4 Year Persistance	Original Cohort	Persistent	4 Year Persistance	Original Cohort	Persistent	4 Year Persistance
2013 Cohort	126	82	65%	.	.	.	107	73	68%
2014 Cohort	101	57	56%	14	9	64%	88	50	57%
2015 Cohort	110	64	58%	16	9	56%	89	50	56%

**See NOTES (2), (3), (7), and (10) below.*

Benchmark 9:

Table 6: Student Demographics

	SWD			ELL/MLL			ED		
	Health Sciences CS	Buffalo Public Schools	Differential to District	Health Sciences CS	Buffalo Public Schools	Differential to District	Health Sciences CS	Buffalo Public Schools	Differential to District
2015-2016	13%	18%	**-5**	1%	14%	**-13**	42%	76%	**-34**
2016-2017	13%	18%	**-5**	1%	14%	**-13**	90%	72%	**+18**
2017-2018	14%	18%	**-4**	1%	19%	**-18**	92%	76%	**+16**
2018-2019	9%	18%	**-9**	4%	19%	**-15**	100%	77%	**+23**

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

Table 7: Retention – Aggregate and Subgroups

	All Students			SWD			ELL/MLL			ED		
	Health Sciences Charter School	Buffalo Public Schools	Differential to District	Health Sciences Charter School	Buffalo Public Schools	Differential to District	Health Sciences Charter School	Buffalo Public Schools	Differential to District	Health Sciences Charter School	Buffalo Public Schools	Differential to District
2016-2017	84%	86%	**-2**	84%	80%	**+4**	83%	81%	**+2**	90%	86%	**+4**
2017-2018	79%	88%	**-9**	80%	82%	**-2**	75%	83%	**-8**	81%	86%	**-5**
2018-2019	74%	88%	**-14**	72%	84%	**-12**	100%	82%	**+18**	76%	86%	**-10**

**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).

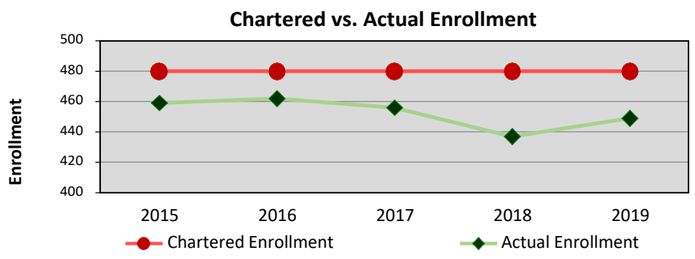
Charter School Fiscal Accountability Summary

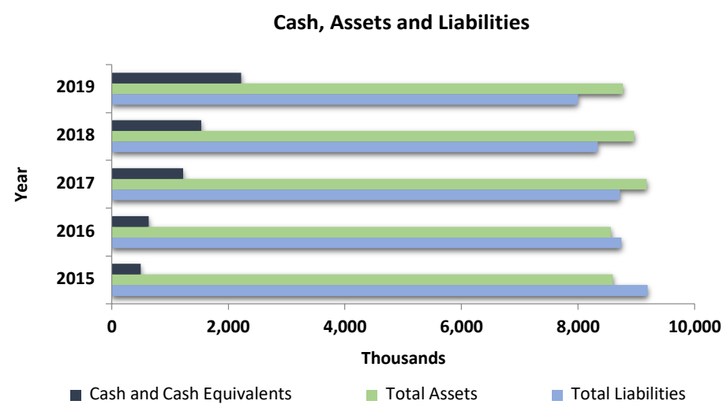
HEALTH SCIENCES CHARTER SCHOOL

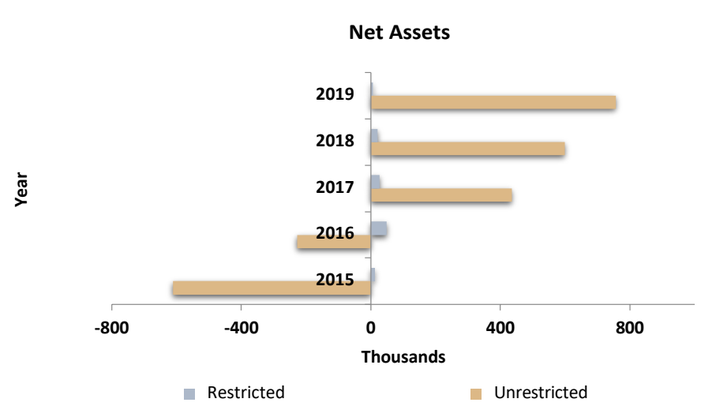
AUDITED FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Grades Served	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12
Maximum Chartered Grades Served	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12
Chartered Enrollment	480	480	480	480	480
Maximum Chartered Enrollment	480	480	480	480	480
Actual Enrollment	459	462	456	437	449
ASSETS					
Current Assets					
Cash and Cash Equivalents	495,629	635,324	1,224,004	1,536,852	2,222,448
Grants and Contracts Receivable	133,554	-	-	349,603	172,478
Prepaid Expenses	49,151	44,473	49,718	28,226	15,618
Other Current Assets	34,729	362,279	542,763	-	-
Total Current Assets					
Non-Current Assets					
Property, Building and Equipment, net	7,886,557	7,495,986	7,321,665	7,019,741	6,344,252
Restricted Cash	-	-	-	-	-
Security Deposits	-	27,153	-	-	8,845
Other Non-Current Assets	-	-	40,877	25,323	2,900
Total Non - Current Assets					
Total Assets					
LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS					
Current Liabilities					
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	635,882	490,327	644,974	226,474	366,674
Accrued Payroll and Payroll Taxes	-	-	-	247,574	-
Due to Related Parties	-	-	-	-	-
Refundable Advances	-	-	-	-	-
Other Current Liabilities	296,557	197,803	208,222	1,883,804	229,113
Total Current Liabilities					
Long-Term Liabilities					
Deferred Rent	-	-	-	-	-
Other Long-Term Liabilities	8,266,177	8,056,624	7,863,531	5,981,520	7,407,184
Total Long-Term Liabilities					
Total Liabilities					
NET ASSETS					
Unrestricted	(610,365)	(227,601)	435,900	599,444	756,528
Restricted	11,369	48,062	26,400	20,929	7,042
Total Net Assets					
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	8,599,620	8,565,215	9,179,027	8,959,745	8,766,541

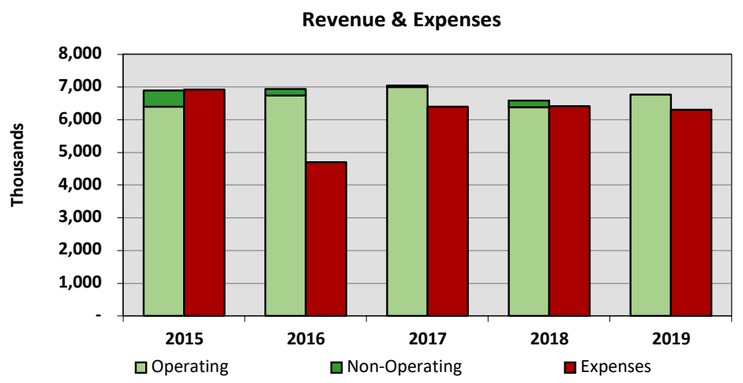


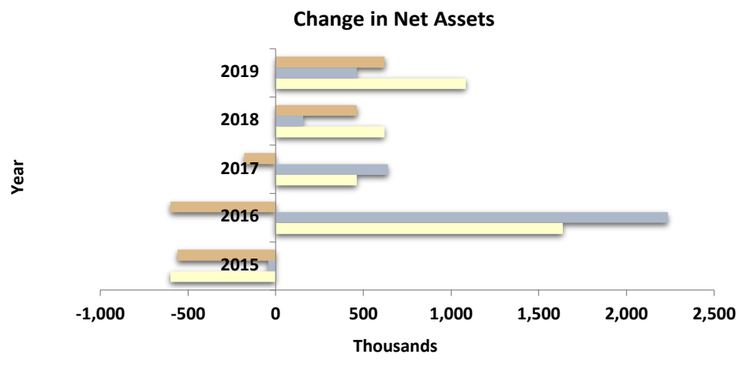




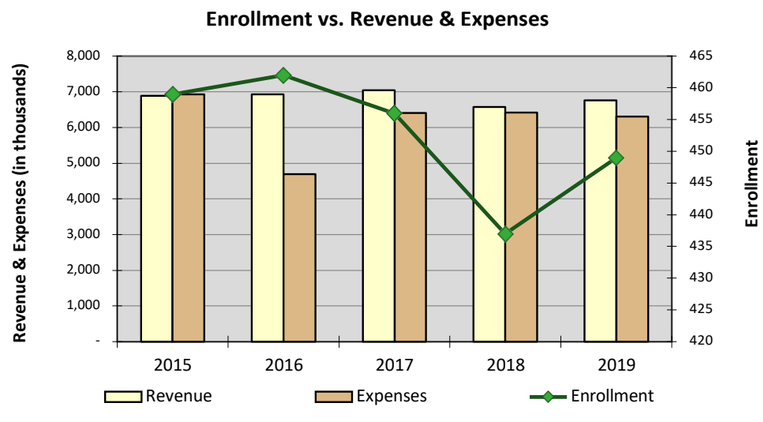
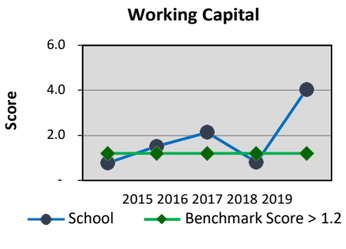
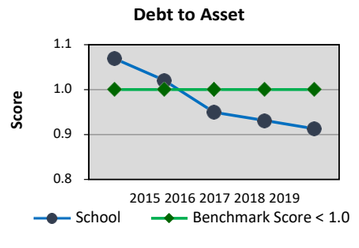
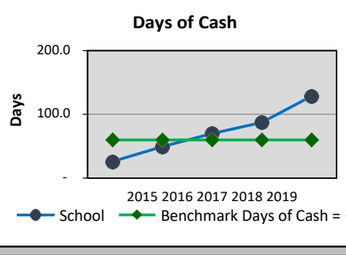
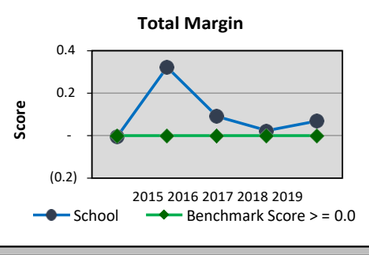
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

OPERATING REVENUE					
State and Local Per Pupil Revenue - Reg. Ed	5,401,851	5,507,767	5,628,979	5,388,479	5,713,177
State and Local Per Pupil Revenue - SPED	577,867	583,000	606,275	498,440	526,199
State and Local Per Pupil Facilities Revenue	-	99,388	-	-	-
Federal Grants	227,587	296,646	221,737	282,872	218,813
State and City Grants	-	13,500	205,889	8,835	19,595
Other Operating Income	192,693	247,913	340,107	206,315	289,886
Total Operating Revenue					
EXPENSES					
Program Services					
Regular Education	3,611,743	3,269,841	3,219,898	4,090,161	3,690,639
Special Education	448,402	491,812	465,883	347,978	500,869
Other Expenses	717,569	937,371	875,919	552,930	656,550
Total Program Services					
Supporting Services					
Management and General	2,152,005	S	-	1,432,358	1,456,246
Fundraising	-	-	1,841,811	-	-
Total Support Services					
Total Expenses					
Surplus/Deficit from Operations					
SUPPORT AND OTHER REVENUE					
Interest and Other Income	248,523	-	-	-	-
Contributions and Grants	13,794	98,469	22,363	22,112	-
Fundraising Support	4,628	-	-	-	-
Other Support and Revenue	222,893	89,012	20,000	174,447	-
Total Support and Other Revenue					
Change in Net Assets					
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	(559,113)	(598,996)	(179,539)	462,300	620,373
Net Assets - End of Year					





FISCAL ANALYSIS

RATIOS, BENCHMARKS and FINDINGS

REVENUE & EXPENSE BREAKDOWN					
Revenue - Per Pupil					
Operating	13,943	14,607	15,357	14,611	15,073
Support and Other Revenue	1,067	406	93	450	-
Total Revenue					
Expenses - Per Pupil					
Program Services	10,409	10,171	10,004	11,421	10,797
Mangement and General, Fundraising	4,688	-	4,039	3,278	3,243
Total Expenses	15,097				
% of Program Services	68.9%	100.0%	71.2%	77.7%	76.9%
% of Management and Other	31.1%	0.0%	28.8%	22.3%	23.1%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses	-0.6%				
FINANCIAL COMPOSITE SCORE					
Composite Score	(0.35)	0.44	1.01	0.35	1.13
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Strong; 1.5 - 3.0 / Adequate; 1.0 - 1.4 / Needs Monitoring; -1.0 - 0.9			Adequate	Needs Monitoring	Adequate
WORKING CAPITAL					
Net Working Capital	(219,376)	353,946	963,289	(443,171)	1,814,757
Working Capital (Current) Ratio	0.8	1.5	2.1	0.8	4.0
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or greater than 1.2	Does Not Meet Standard			Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard
DEBT TO ASSET					
Debt to Asset Ratio	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or less than 1.0			Partly Meets Standard		
CASH POSITION					
Days of Cash	26.1	49.3	69.8	87.3	128.7
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or greater than 60 days					
TOTAL MARGIN					
Total Margin Ratio	(0.0)	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.1
BENCHMARK and FINDING: Ratio should be equal to or greater than 0.0	Does Not Meet Standard