



03/19/2021

New York State Charter School Office
Attn: Susan Gibbons, CSO Liaison
Cc: David Frank, Executive Director

Re: Evaluative Comments: Niagara Charter School (the “School”) Remote Renewal Site Visit Report for BoR-Authorized Charter Schools under the 2015 Charter School Performance Framework 2020-2021 (the “Report”)

Dear Ms. Gibbons,

Thank you for providing us with the Report conducted by your office on December 7-8, 2020 and dated March 4, 2021. After careful review of the Report, we have noted some evaluative comments to be included as a separate document with the Report.

As per your email to Darci M. Novak Ph. D. of March 16, 2021 we understand there is a transition between the 2015 and 2019 Performance Frameworks, and that moving into the next charter term, the School will be rated using the designations listed under the 2019 Performance Framework.

Notwithstanding, the School is currently chartered under the 2015 Performance Framework and evaluated using the 2015 Performance Framework ratings as indicated in the title of the Report. Therefore, the School sets forth the following comments:

A. 2015 PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

On page 7 of the Report, the 2015 Performance Framework indicator rating scale was used and each benchmark is described as follows:

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.



B. BENCHMARKS 2,3,4,6,7,8

Based on the provided indicators and descriptions, no concerns were noted for the following Benchmarks but they were only rated as “MEETS”:

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING;
3. CULTURE, CLIMATE, AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT;
4. FINANCIAL CONDITION;
6. BOARD OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNANCE,
7. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY; AND
8. MISSION AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS.

Since no concerns have been noted, accordingly we as a School, believe we meet the EXCEEDS rating for Benchmarks 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8.

C. Benchmark 5

This Benchmark is rated as “APPROACHES.” Based on the descriptions of each rating, this would indicate that a number of concerns were noted for the School’s Financial Management; however, only two items were so noted and were resolved quickly as follows:

- The deficiency in internal controls was remedied immediately upon issuance of the Auditors recommendation; and
- Corrective action for the 2018 IT audit was resolved before the 2019-2020 School year.

Accordingly, we as a School believe this Benchmark indicator should be a “MEETS” rating.

Thank you for your attention to these comments. Please include this letter as a separate document with the School’s final Report.

Sincerely,

Darci M. Novak, Ph.D.
CAO

James C. Muffoletto
Board President

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