



New York State Education Department

2023-2024 Renewal Site Visit Report for Board of Regents-Authorized Charter Schools under the 2019 Charter School Performance Framework

Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology

Renewal Site Visit Dates: December 6 and 7, 2023

Date of Final Draft Site Visit Report: April 4, 2024

Date of Final Site Visit Report: April 5, 2024

[Charter School Office](#)

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary¹

Name of Charter School	Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology
Board Chair	Maya Crane
District of Location	Rochester City School District
Initial Commencement of Instruction	Fall 2017
Charter Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Charter: August 21, 2017 - June 30, 2022 First Renewal: July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2024
Current Term Authorized Grades/ Approved Enrollment	K - Grade 5 / 475 students
Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/ Proposed Approved Enrollment	K - Grade 5 / 475 students
Comprehensive Management Service Provider	None
Facilities	1001 Lake Avenue, Rochester, New York 14613 - Private Space
Mission Statement	<i>The mission of Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology is to engage students, their families, and the community in the processes of scientific inquiry and the use of innovative technology to develop the social, emotional, and academic tools necessary to thrive in school and in today's interconnected world.</i>
Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-Cutting Curricular, Scientific Inquiry, and Lab-Based Learning Opportunities • Balanced and differentiated Instruction & Rigorous Standards • Ongoing Professional Development and Learning • Data-Driven Instruction and Accountability • Aligned to rigorous Academic Standards • Community Connections and Partnerships • Serving the Diverse Needs of All Students
Requested Revisions (Revisions are not approved unless approved by the Board of Regents.)	None.

Innovative and Noteworthy Programs: Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology (Exploration) integrates social emotional learning and supports throughout the curricular and support services offerings, with instructional staff and support staff sharing responsibility for implementation. The school has placed an emphasis on the “STEM” aspects of its program and continues to identify opportunities for growth through curriculum offerings and community partnerships.

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

Renewal Outcomes: Reference the [Board of Regents Renewal Policy](#).

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Current Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2022 to 2023	Year 2 2023 to 2024
Grade Configuration	K - Grade 5	K - Grade 5
Total Approved Enrollment	475	475

Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Proposed Enrollment Requested by the School²

	Year 1 2024 to 2025	Year 2 2025 to 2026	Year 3 2026 to 2027	Year 4 2027 to 2028	Year 5 2028 to 2029
Grade Configuration	K - Grade 5	K - Grade 5	K - Grade 5	K – Grade 5	K - Grade 5
Total Proposed Enrollment	475	475	475	475	475

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Renewal Report

The primary purpose of the renewal site visit to Board of Regents-authorized charter schools is to supplement and validate the information collected over the charter term by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Charter School Office (CSO). This information is used to inform the action taken by the Board of Regents to approve, modify, or disapprove the charter school's request for renewal. In advance of action by the Board of Regents, the CSO prepares a renewal recommendation that is based on the school's performance in three broad areas:

1. The school's **academic success** and ability to operate in an educationally sound manner;
2. The school's **organizational viability** and ability to operate in a fiscally sound manner; and
3. The school's faithfulness to the terms of its charter and **adherence to applicable laws and regulations**.

² This proposed chart was submitted by the Exploration elementary Charter School for Science and Technology in its renewal application. It is subject to change pending the final renewal recommendation and approval by the Board of Regents. This chart should not be used to determine the final approved grade levels or enrollment of the school in the subsequent renewal term.

In addition, NYSED, on behalf of the New York State Board of Regents, is a community-based authorizer committed to principles of equity and access for all students across New York State. Community-based authorizing is based on the principle that community stakeholder voice, and response to community need, is an integral component of charter school decision making at all levels. During the renewal visit, the CSO will look for evidence of community voice across the school from governance to the educational program, as well as a commitment to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, in the school's policies and practices.

A two-day renewal site visit was conducted at Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology on December 6 and 7, 2023. The New York State Education Department's Charter School Office (CSO) team conducted interviews with the school leader, senior leadership team, instructional leadership team, intervention team, and the board of trustees.

The team conducted twelve classroom observations in K - Grade 5. The observations were approximately 30 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the principal and academic coach. NYSED utilizes the CSO's Classroom Observation Worksheet as a lens for classroom observations. It is shared with the school prior to the site visit, and can be found in the 2023-2024 [Renewal SV Protocol](#).

To draft this report, the CSO site visit team reviewed school-specific documents and data such as the school's 2023-2024 renewal application, 2022-2023 annual report, surveys, data and fiscal dashboards, CSO site visit reports and memos, complaints, and corrective action plans.

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The 2019 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 2019 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
Meets	The school generally meets or exceeds the performance benchmark; few concerns are noted. May be a potential exemplar, if 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.

**New York State Education Department
2019 Charter School Performance Framework Rating³**

2019 Performance Benchmark		Level
Educational Success	Benchmark 1: Student Performance: The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic proficiency, trends toward proficiency, similar schools, college and career readiness, and high school graduation, if applicable. Proficiency at the elementary/middle school level shall be defined as achieving a performance level of 3 or higher on Grade 3-8 state assessments in ELA, math, and science. At the high school level, passing shall be defined as obtaining a Regents exam score of 65 or higher.	Falls Far Below
	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 implements research-based practices and has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to New York State Learning Standards 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 Student and Family Engagement: The school has systems in place to support students' social and emotional health and to provide for a positive, safe, and respectful learning environment that prepares all students for college and career. 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. High schools are meeting persistence rates commensurate with the NYSED target.	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

- Exploration is in year seven of operation and serves students in K - Grade 5. During its current charter term, the school is rated in the following manner: meeting eight benchmarks, approaching one benchmark, and falling far below one benchmark. A summary of those ratings is provided below.
- **Summary of Areas of Growth and Strengths:**

Over the current charter term, the school has demonstrated growth in the areas of teaching and learning, board oversight, organizational structure and oversight, mission and key design elements implementation, and legal compliance. The school has broadened commitment and implementation of its STEM program, expanded community partnerships, reorganized its leadership team, improved use of data to drive instruction and academic program design, and restructured its board of trustees to improve governance.

The school's approach to social emotional learning (SEL) is particularly worthy of highlighting: rather than provide an SEL curriculum in isolation, the school's mental health support staff collaborate with general instructional staff to provide the SEL curriculum within the classroom and provide professional development to staff to support behavior management, ensuring a cross-school shared understanding of and responsibility for student social and emotional wellbeing.

- **Summary of Challenges:**

The school's growth in the areas of teaching and learning has not translated into measurable academic achievement as yet. It appears that the new initiatives may have had a negative effect on academic achievement, thus far. The school's current aggregate enrollment falls slightly below the required 85 percent benchmark and raises concern over financial sustainability. The school's subgroup enrollment for students with disabilities (SWD) and English language learner(s) (ELL) is consistently below the district of location and, while the school has made some progress toward these goals, it does not exhibit a comprehensive plan or prioritization of meeting them.

Extensive discussion was held during the site visit with school leadership and the board regarding the critical academic situation at the school and how to get the teaching and learning initiatives to positively affect the outcomes. The school has committed to using their 2024-2025 Action Plan to effectuate the change.

Benchmark 1: Student Performances

The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic proficiency, trends toward proficiency, similar schools, college and career readiness, and high school graduation, if applicable. Proficiency at the elementary/middle school level shall be defined as achieving a performance level of 3 or higher on Grade 3-8 state assessments in ELA, math, and science. At the high school level, passing shall be defined as obtaining a Regents exam score of 65 or higher.

Finding: Falls Far Below

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1:

Over the term of this charter, the trajectory for this benchmark has declined from an Approaches to a Falls Far Below due to declining results on the NYSTP 3-8 Assessments for ELA from the 2022 to the 2023 administrations of the exams.

The school's proficiency rate on the NYSTP 3-8 Assessments for ELA dropped from 33 percent in 2022 to 17 percent in 2023 and while the school is currently +3 percentage points above the district of location (DOL), Rochester City School District (RCSD) it is also -29 percentage points below NYS. Math proficiency is currently, based on the 2023 results, at 19 percent and is +5 percentage points above RCSD but it is also -34 percentage points below NYS.

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 implements research-based practices and has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLs) for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.

Finding: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to current New York State learning standards.b. The curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and vertically between grades.c. The curriculum and corresponding materials are differentiated to provide opportunities for all students to master grade-level skills and concepts, including students with disabilities, English language learners/multi-lingual learners, economically disadvantaged students, and other subgroups.d. The curriculum is systematically reviewed and revised.
2. Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The school staff has a shared understanding of high-quality instruction that supports all learners and observed instructional practices align to this understanding.b. Instructional delivery fosters engagement with all students.c. The school differentiates instruction to ensure equity and access for all students.d. The school provides staff with professional development opportunities that promote best practices and improves all students' success, including sub-groups.
3. Assessment and Program Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The school uses a 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 for both individual students as well as subgroups.d. The school uses multiple measures to assess student progress toward State learning standards.
4. Supports for Diverse Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The school follows the NYSED approved identification process for students with disabilities and English language learners/multi-lingual learners.b. The school provides supports to meet the academic needs for all students including, but not limited to: students with disabilities; English language learners/multi-lingual learners; and economically disadvantaged students.

Element

Indicators

c. The school has systems to monitor the progress of individual students and to facilitate communication between interventionists and classroom teachers regarding the needs of individual students.

Academic Program for Elementary School:

- ES:
 - English Language Arts: Amplify's Core Knowledge Language Arts 2.0
 - Math: Eureka Math & Eureka Math-Squared
 - Science: school-developed and fully integrated science curriculum aligned to New York's Next Generation Science Standards and integrated into Core Knowledge Language Arts 2.0
 - Social Studies: New York State Social Studies Learning Standards integrated into Core Knowledge Language Arts 2.0

Academic Program for Students with Disabilities and English language learners:

- SWD:
 - Integrated co-teaching model in designated classes with full-time special education teacher alongside general education teacher
 - Daily math and ELA intervention periods for all students and additional pull-out instruction based on IEP requirements
- ELL:
 - Push-in and pull-out services provided by full-time English as a second language teacher

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2:

Over the term of this charter, the trajectory for this benchmark has remained as Meets.

1. Element: ***Curriculum:***

- **Indicator a:** The school has maintained New York State Learning Standards aligned curriculum throughout the current charter term, with modifications and revisions made as necessary in alignment with student performance data review. The school has adopted proven curricula in ELA and math, integrated NYSLS social studies standards within its ELA curriculum, and has developed its science curriculum in accordance with the Next Generation Science Standards. The school has continued to develop its science curriculum in accordance with its implementation of its key design elements, with expanded course offerings and integration of STEM concepts throughout the full curriculum. During the current charter term, the school has added a computer science course offering for all students and continues to explore additional curriculum options to strengthen its STEM offerings.
- **Indicator b:** Instructional team summer planning ensures horizontal and vertical alignment of the curriculum and academic program, while Academic coaching, grade-level and subject-specific planning time, and lesson plan review throughout the year ensure alignment to pacing guides and

scope and sequence guidelines. The principal conducts bi-weekly meetings with grade and subject-area team leads to discuss alignment and necessary updates or changes.

- **Indicator c:** The school's integrated co-teaching (ICT) staffing model ensures, as regularly as possible, either a teacher and a teaching assistant/aide or a teacher and a special education co-teacher in all classrooms. The ICT approach is crucial to the school's "serving the diverse needs of all students" key design element, enabling a variety of differentiated instructional models, including student grouping, blended learning, and targeted support. The school contracts with Wayne-Finger Lanes BOCES for targeted professional development on ICT support. During the site visit, differentiation of curriculum and curriculum materials was observed in all classes, with instructors using direct instruction, small group instruction, one-on-one support, blended learning, and, in upper grade-level courses, peer-to-peer instruction.
- **Indicator d:** The school leadership team and instructional team annually review and evaluate the school's curriculum and academic program against student performance data to identify gaps and shortcomings. The school is currently in the second full year of implementing a revised curriculum and is in the process of collecting staff feedback on how to modify the curriculum in subsequent years: one early consensus feedback has been regarding course pacing, with school leadership preparing to review and revise pacing guides over the summer.

2. Element: ***Instruction:***

- **Indicator a:** Over the current charter term, the school has refocused its use of Academic coaches to emphasize rigorous, high-quality instruction. While the school has budgeted for two Academic coaches, one position is currently vacant: the school has been unsuccessful in recruiting a qualified candidate, although it has an internal candidate prepared to take the role after the current school year. As a result, the principal has played a more direct role in Academic coaching. Academic coaches emphasize consistent use of identified instructional strategies, including concept-based teaching, cooperative and small-group learning, project-based learning, and blended learning, and set and monitor quarterly rigor and engagement goals for all instructional staff. The school has adopted the SchoolWorks MORE system for Academic coaching observations, which has been integrated with the school's Frontline platform, which provides tailored professional development support to teachers.
- **Indicator b:** The school leadership and instructional team emphasized the importance of lesson planning in ensuring engaging instructional delivery, requiring lesson plans to include clear identification of relevant standards, identification of specific learning activities, and differentiation strategies. The school utilizes an in-house developed dashboard to track, on a weekly basis, teacher activities against five key instruction-related metrics: approved lesson plans, parent communications, morning announcement attendance, quarterly instructional rigor focus, and quarterly student engagement focus. Academic coaches regularly review lesson plans and provide feedback to teachers. The school's calendar provides a number of opportunities for individual and collaborative planning time for teachers each week.
- **Indicator c:** Teachers and Academic coaches collaborate weekly to discuss differentiation strategies and specific needs of individual students. Common differentiation strategies include student grouping, varied learning material media, blended learning, and targeted one-on-one support. The ICT model, supported by targeted professional development from Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES, is key to successfully implementing differentiated instruction. These differentiation strategies were observed in practice during classroom visits.
- **Indicator d:** Professional development is provided schoolwide prior to the start of the school year, focused primarily on orientation and onboarding of new staff as well as significant changes to the

curriculum and academic program. Additional professional development is provided throughout the year on early dismissal Fridays. Academic coaches provide targeted, real-time support and development with teachers on instructional practices and data usage.

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

- **Indicator a:** Exploration uses a variety of formative, diagnostic, and summative assessments to monitor student progress, including i-Ready (conducted three times annually), Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) (conducted four times annually), NYSITELL diagnostic assessment, Core Knowledge and Eureka curriculum-aligned formative assessments, and New York State summative assessments.
- **Indicator b:** Academic coaches prioritize data analysis to modify instructional practices with teachers. For example, data is used to modify the pace, depth, complexity, and differentiation of instruction on identified standards. The school uses i-Ready assessments, conducted three times annually, to drive quarterly instructional rigor and engagement priorities, which are then tracked by Academic coaches through an in-house developed dashboard. Instructional staff also coordinate with support staff to monitor and assess response to intervention (RTI) data. The school uses the Frontline platform for tracking and monitoring RTI data and is in the process of integrating its instructional observation system with the Frontline platform for targeted instructional support and professional development.
- **Indicator c:** The leadership team pointed to instructional team data analysis as leading to the adoption of universal intervention blocks and the adoption of supplemental instructional materials. Over the course of the charter term the school has also strengthened and expanded its STEM curriculum offerings in response to both data analysis and in furtherance of its key design elements, including adding a computer science course this school year.
- **Indicator d:** The school uses a variety of assessments and measures, including i-Ready assessments conducted three times annually and DESSA conducted four times annually, to monitor student progress towards State learning standards and identify students for intervention and additional support throughout the school year. The school also uses Core Knowledge and Eureka formative assessments, each of which are aligned to New York State Learning Standards.

4. Element: ***Supports for Diverse Learners:***

- **Indicator a:** The school has adopted and implements an approved process for identifying students with disabilities and English language learners, including universal screening of all students within the first month of school and a home language survey for newly enrolled students without sufficient academic records.
- **Indicator b:** The school's staffing plan and instructional staff arrangement, with two instructional staff, including a special education instructor per grade level, in each classroom, enable appropriate support for all students. The school provides supplemental intervention blocks in ELA and math for all students. Additional support for students with additional needs (SWANs) is provided through push-in and pull-out services. The school provides targeted professional development through a partnership with Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES on ICT instruction and coordinates with districts of location for required speech, physical, and occupational therapy services and assistive technology needs.
- **Indicator c:** The school uses a variety of in-house developed and commercially available tracking tools to monitor student academic and non-academic performance. Shared planning time between grade levels, subject areas, and with intervention specialists ensures communication regarding individual student progress and needs.

Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Student and Family Engagement

The school has systems in place to support students' social and emotional health and to provide for a positive, safe and respectful learning environment that prepares all students for college and career. Families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school's academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.

Finding: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. Measures of Culture, Climate, and Student Engagement	<p>a. The school has processes and procedures in place to address chronic absenteeism for all students and sub-groups such that all students are fully engaged within the school community and have access to the educational program. Given the increased autonomy to engage students, chronic absenteeism rates are expected to be equal to or less than those of the district of location. In New York City, the district of location is the community school district. Charter schools that have a mission or key design element to serve students in a particular school district will also be compared to that school district. In addition, charter schools with more than 40% of enrolled students residing in districts other than the district of location, or the school district they are mandated to serve, will also be compared to the next highest district where students reside. ⁴</p> <p>b. The school has processes and procedures in place to address out of school suspension rates for all students and sub-groups such that all students are fully engaged within the school community and have access to the educational program. Given the increased autonomy to engage students, out of school suspension rates are expected to be equal to or less than those of the district of location. In New York City, the district of location is the community school district. Charter schools that have a mission or key design element to serve students in a particular school district will also be compared to that school district. In addition, charter schools with more than 40% of enrolled students residing in districts other than the district of location, or the school district they are mandated to serve, will also be compared to the next highest district where students reside. ⁵</p> <p>c. The school has an NYSED approved process in place to measure and evaluate school climate and culture.</p>
2. Behavior Management and Safety	<p>a. The school has a clear approach to behavioral management, including a written discipline policy that is applicable to all students, includes a policy that addresses a school's stance toward in and out of school suspensions, and is implemented throughout the school by all school staff with fidelity.</p>

⁴ See <https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/P-12%20New%20York%20State%20Safe%20Schools%20Task%20Force%20Recommendations%20Status%20Update%20.pdf>.

⁵ Student Suspension rate is determined by dividing the number of students who were suspended from school (not including in-school suspensions) for one full day or longer anytime during the school year by the Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) day enrollments for that school year. A student is counted only once, regardless of whether the student was suspended one or more times during the school year. Data Source: L2RPT Report SIRS-351: Student Attendance Summary Report - http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/level2reports/documents/SIRS_351-360-361-370AttendanceAbsenceandDayCalRptGuiderev3.6.18.pdf.

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
	<p>b. The school uses a tiered approach to behavioral interventions that support student social-emotional development.</p> <p>c. The school appears safe and all school constituents are able to articulate how the school community maintains a safe environment.</p> <p>d. The school has systems in place to ensure that the environment is free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination in accordance with the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). The school has a DASA Coordinator that staff can identify.</p> <p>e. Classroom environments are conducive to learning and generally free from disruption.</p>
3. <i>Family Engagement and Communication</i>	<p>a. The school communicates with families in their preferred language to discuss students' strengths, progress, and needs and engages them as part of the school community.</p> <p>b. The school uses multiple methods of family engagement for all communication with all parents, in their preferred language, regardless of the disability status or language ability of their children.</p> <p>c. The school assesses family satisfaction using strategies such as surveys, feedback sessions, community forums, or participation logs, and considers results when making schoolwide decisions.</p> <p>d. The school has a systematic and transparent process for responding to family or community concerns.</p> <p>e. The school shares NYSED school report card data with parents and the broader school community to promote transparency and accountability.</p> <p>f. The school shares its New York State exam participation rate compared to the district of location.</p>
4. <i>Social-Emotional and Mental Health Supports</i>	<p>a. The school has systems, programs, and curriculum in place to support the social-emotional and mental health needs of all students.</p> <p>b. School leaders collect and use data to track the social-emotional needs of all students, including students in subgroups.</p> <p>c. School leaders collect and use data regarding the impact of programs designed to support the social and emotional health of all students.</p> <p>d. The school provides staff with professional development opportunities to support the social-emotional and mental health of students in a culturally responsive manner.</p> <p>e. The school has processes and procedures in place to address the learning and social-emotional needs of McKinney-Vento eligible students such that all students are fully engaged within the school community and have access to the educational program. The school has a McKinney-Vento Coordinator that staff can identify.</p>

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 3:

Over the term of this charter, the trajectory for this benchmark has remained a Meets.

1. Element: ***Measures of Culture, Climate, and Student Engagement:***

- **Indicator a:** In 2022-2023 Exploration had a daily attendance rate of 88 percent, exceeding the district of location rate by 11 percentage points. The school leadership team and interventions team identified a number of practices to ensure continued satisfactory attendance rates, including a truancy tracker, tracking of key factors contributing to low attendance such as student health, and home calls and visits from the school's family liaison.
- **Indicator b:** The school has adopted a discipline policy with clear standards for what warrants an out-of-school suspension, as well as clear procedures for carrying out out-of-school suspensions. The school has adopted and implements a restorative approach to student discipline, with integration and coordination between the school's deans, mental health staff, and instructional staff.
- **Indicator c:** The leadership team conducts bi-annual climate surveys of students and staff to evaluate school climate, as well as conducting informal reviews including staff conversations and community town halls.

2. Element: ***Behavior Management and Safety:***

- **Indicator a:** The school has adopted a tiered code of conduct that integrates a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system, a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), and restorative practices, each of which reflect a behavioral management system built on intervention and prevention. The school identifies a specific SEL priority each quarter, with data tracking demonstrating that a targeted focus results in sustained outcomes: for example, in the first quarter of the current school year, the school focused on enforcing the student dress code, with sustained impact on related behavioral metrics through the time of the site visit at the end of the second quarter.
- **Indicator b:** The school has realigned the role of its student services support coordinator (SSSC) to centralize behavior management systems, including overseeing deans and tracking and monitoring student behavior and SEL metrics. The school has fully integrated social emotional learning across the school, with mental health staff coordinating with general instructional staff to provide SEL curriculum as well as providing professional development to general instructional staff to support classroom behavior management.
- **Indicator c:** All classrooms observed during the site visit appeared safe and conducive to learning.
- **Indicator d:** The school principal serves as the Dignity Act coordinator and ensures the school complies with and meets the requirements of the Dignity for All Students Act.
- **Indicator e:** All classrooms observed during the site visit appeared safe and conducive to learning. Teachers were organized, materials were readily at hand, and teachers and students alike made good use of available technology.

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

- **Indicator a:** The school uses online translation services as well as staff proficient in Spanish, the primary non-English language of families, to ensure communication with families in their preferred language.
- **Indicator b:** The school uses a number of methods to communicate with parents, including direct contact from teachers by phone and email, access to a web-based messaging portal, and an active

parents group called Parent Expo. The renewal application notes that data from the January 2023 school-administered parent survey, which indicated that only 77 percent of parents agreed that teachers and staff communicated regularly, led to adoption of a policy requiring that teachers provide weekly written updates to families: this is monitored via the school's internal dashboard which tracks staff engagement with key instructional and non-instructional practices. The school has also prioritized events and meetings with families, seeing regular event attendance of over 100 families.

- **Indicator c:** The school administers a bi-annual parent and family survey and collects informal input from the Parent Expo group and from informal interactions between parents and staff.
- **Indicator d:** The school's family handbook, which is available on the school's website and made available to parents and families annually, describes the process for filing a formal complaint with the school. The school also has informal policies on receiving and responding to family complaints.
- **Indicator e:** School-level data is shared with parents and the community through the school's website, which includes links to the school's state report card and the school's i-Ready results.
- **Indicator f:** The school's state report card, which includes exam administration data, is available through the school's website.

4. Element: ***Social-Emotional and Mental Health Supports:***

- **Indicator a:** The school has fully integrated its in-house SEL curriculum, developed by the school's mental health staff, into its general education program: over the course of the year, mental health staff lead instruction of the SEL curriculum during the first quarter, with general instructional staff attending. In the second quarter, mental health staff and general instructional staff co-teach the SEL curriculum, and by the third quarter the general instructional staff have taken over lead teaching of the SEL curriculum, with mental health staff in attendance to support. The deans have primary responsibility for both the PBIS and the restorative discipline process, which the school has identified as vital to building positive relationships with students. The school also has formal partnerships with a community provider, Catholic Family Services, to offer on-site mental health counseling for students and families.
- **Indicator b:** The school tracks qualitative and quantitative data on social emotional and mental health needs, including administering the DESSA four times annually and tracking discipline and other early indicator referral data. Collaborative planning time between general educators and interventionists also provides opportunities to discuss individual students and anecdotal evidence.
- **Indicator c:** Over the current charter term, the school has significantly changed how it implements its SEL curriculum, fully integrating the curriculum and instruction into the general classroom, in response to student academic and behavioral data.
- **Indicator d:** Over the current charter term, the school has provided staff with professional development on classroom management and therapeutic crisis interventions in schools (TCIS) (both via Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES) as well as trauma informed care (via SUNY Buffalo). Academic coaches also identify and support individual teacher needs regarding SEL support.
- **Indicator e:** The school complies with the requirements of McKinney-Vento. The leadership team identified the registrar as the coordinator.

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

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

Finding: Meets

Over the term of this charter, the trajectory for this benchmark has remained a 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

Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology 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. Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology's 2021-2022 composite score is 3.00.

**Composite Scores
2017-2018 to 2021-2022**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2017-2018	-.61
2018-2019	-.37
2019-2020	1.45
2020-2021	3.00
2021-2022	3.00

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

Over the term of this charter, the trajectory for this benchmark has remained a Meets.

Renewal is based on evidence that the following indicators are generally present:

1. The school has financial professionals assigned to manage school finances.
2. The school has an accurate and functional accounting system that includes monthly budgets.
3. The school sets budget objectives and regularly analyzes its budget, including detailed assumptions within the budget, in relation to those objectives.
4. 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.
5. The school has and follows a written set of fiscal policies.
6. The school has complied with State and federal financial reporting requirements.
7. The school has and is maintaining appropriate internal controls and procedures.
8. The school has procedures in place to ensure that programmatic and independent fiscal audits occur at least once annually, with such audits being comparable in scope to those required of other public schools. Audits will be undertaken by auditing firms with experience working with New York State charter schools and are peer reviewed.
9. The school follows generally accepted accounting principles as evidenced by independent financial audits with an unqualified audit opinion, a limited number of findings that are quickly corrected, and the absence of a going concern disclosure.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 5:

NYSED CSO reviewed Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology's 2021-2022 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.

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 utilizes an annual written performance-based evaluation process for evaluating school leadership, itself, and providers.
- b. The board recruits and selects board members with a diverse set of skills and expertise that meet the needs of the school and represent the community in which the school serves.
- c. The board demonstrates active oversight of the charter school's management, comprehensive service provider(s), if applicable, fiscal operations, and progress toward meeting academic and other school goals through written evaluation processes.
- d. The board engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning by setting priorities and goals that are aligned with the school's mission and charter.
- e. The board regularly updates school policies when needed and receives NYSED approval prior to applicable policy implementation.
- f. The board engages in ongoing professional development.
- g. The board demonstrates full awareness of its governance role, its legal obligations to the school and stakeholders, and requirements of the school's charter.
- h. The board is familiar with NYSED Charter School Performance Framework standards and has a plan to ensure that the school meets these standards.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 6:

Over the term of this charter, the trajectory for this benchmark has remained a Meets.

1. Element: **Board Oversight and Governance:**

- **Indicator a:** The board conducts an annual self-evaluation developed for the school with a consultant who has worked with the board since the school's founding. The board conducts the self-evaluation by the start of summer, reviews the self-evaluation with the consultant during the board retreat and uses the results to identify the board's priorities and metrics of success, then revisits the priorities with the consultant at midyear.

- **Indicator b:** The board currently has eight members, one of whom is pending final approval from the CSO. During the board focus group, the board stated that the school's bylaws permit it to include up to 11 members. Over the current charter term, the board has successfully recruited new members in targeted areas of need, including STEM and community partnerships.
- **Indicator c:** The school leadership provides a monthly report to the board that aligns to the school's performance benchmarks, as well as a data dashboard updated monthly with metrics aligned to the performance benchmarks and the school's key design elements. Members of the school leadership team attend and participate in all committees. The board uses a school leader evaluation tool adopted from BoardOnTrack, a national board development consultant.
- **Indicator d:** The board annually develops a strategic plan in response to the outcomes from the board self-evaluation, identifying two to three priorities for each year: in the current year, the board has identified communications, across the board and between the school leadership and the board, and development of community partnerships as priorities. The school also uses the 2022-2023 Action Plan, developed in response to the midyear site visit report, to monitor progress toward the performance benchmarks.
- **Indicator e:** Over the course of the charter term, the school has improved procedures for revising policies and ensuring revisions are submitted to CSO in a timely manner.
- **Indicator f:** The board contracts with professional development provider BoardOnTrack for ongoing training through webinars and a local consultant for its annual retreat. The board annually identifies two or three strategic priorities on which to receive targeted development: for the current year, for example, the board has prioritized intra-board communications.
- **Indicator g:** The school's 2022-2023 Action Plan is aligned to the school's performance benchmarks, and the board uses this plan to monitor the school's progress toward benchmarks. Additionally, the school receives a monthly report and data dashboard from school leadership aligned to the performance benchmarks.
- **Indicator h:** During the board focus group, all board members demonstrated familiarity with the performance framework standards.

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

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>School Leadership</i>	<p>a. The school has an effective school leadership team that communicates a clearly defined mission and set of goals to staff and the school community.</p> <p>b. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place to ensure effective communication across the school.</p> <p>c. The school successfully recruits, hires, and retains key personnel that meets the needs of all students and subgroups, and makes decisions – when warranted – to remove ineffective staff members.</p> <p>d. School leadership is familiar with NYSED Charter School Performance Framework standards and has a plan to ensure that the school meets these standards.</p>
2. <i>Professional Climate</i>	<p>a. Roles and responsibilities for leaders, staff, management, and the board of trustees are clearly defined and adhered to.</p> <p>b. The school ensures that staff has the requisite skills, expertise, and professional development necessary to meet all students’ needs, including students in subgroups.</p> <p>c. The school is fully staffed with personnel who are able to meet all operational needs, including finance, human resources, and communications.</p> <p>d. The school has established procedures for effective collaboration among teachers.</p> <p>e. The school has systems to monitor and maintain organizational and instructional quality through a formal evaluation process for teacher and other staff.</p> <p>f. The school has mechanisms to solicit teacher and staff feedback and to gauge their satisfaction.</p>
3. <i>Contractual Relationships (if applicable)</i>	<p>a. Changes in the school’s charter management or comprehensive service provider contract comply with required charter amendment procedures.</p> <p>b. The school monitors the efficacy of contracted service providers or partners and has established an effective working relationship.</p>

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 7:

Over the term of this charter, the trajectory for this benchmark has remained a Meets.

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

- **Indicator a:** The school has a small leadership team comprised of the principal, the finance and operations manager, and the student support services coordinator. The school's organizational chart includes an assistant principal position; however, the school has not sought to fill the position because of budgetary constraints. Each of the leadership team members has direct oversight responsibility of staff. The school uses school-wide morning meetings, weekly staff professional development, weekly and biweekly team meetings, and quarterly meetings to ensure effective communication across staff, grounded in the school's mission and key design elements.
- **Indicator b:** The school leadership team uses numerous formal and informal systems to communicate to staff, including school-wide professional development and planning during weekly early-release days, weekly PLC (Professional Learning Community) meetings, and informal meetings and conversations.
- **Indicator c:** Hiring decisions are deliberate and based on documented needs, prioritizing culture fit. For example, while the school has two vacant positions currently, it has identified in-house candidates to fill both positions but is holding off on rearranging staff until the end of the school year to minimize impact on the classroom. The school maintains that they have a staff retention rate of 90 percent based on the returning employment agreements that were offered for the upcoming 23-24 school year.
- **Indicator d:** The school leader's monthly report to the board of trustees is grounded in the school's performance benchmarks and updates the board on key data and actions, including those reflected in the action plan.

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

- **Indicator a:** The school has developed written job descriptions, with specified roles and responsibilities for all personnel. The school's organizational chart demonstrates clearly defined reporting structures and oversight functions. Focus groups with the school leadership team, instructional staff, and board of trustees demonstrated clear schoolwide understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- **Indicator b:** The school's calendar includes significant professional development time, including eight days prior to the school year's start, three full days during the school year, as well as weekly early-release days. Professional development is provided both on topics specific to the school's mission and key design elements as well as topics identified for prioritization through staff surveys and informal feedback.
- **Indicator c:** The school presently has two staff vacancies, including one of two Academic coach positions, and has active plans to fill these positions by elevating in-house candidates at the end of the school year to not disrupt instruction. As a result, the principal has taken on a more direct role in Academic coaching. The school leadership team acknowledged some difficulty in recruiting quality candidates, and over the current charter term the school has contracted with its external HR provider to additionally support candidate recruitment.
- **Indicator d:** The school's calendar includes ample individual and collaborative planning time for all staff. The Academic coaching model additionally enables collaboration among teaching staff.
- **Indicator e:** The school uses formal and informal staff oversight and evaluation systems, including an in-house developed data dashboard that tracks staff outcomes on identified priority metrics

(including family communication, staff professional development, and quarterly SEL, rigor and engagement priorities), and the SchoolWorks MORE observation and evaluation framework. The school is in the process of integrating its observation framework with its SEL tracking platform, which will help the school identify and provide targeted professional development to staff.

- **Indicator f:** The school administers a bi-annual staff survey in addition to the CSO staff survey. Feedback from these surveys has been important in shaping the professional development offered to staff.

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

- **Indicator a:** n/a
- **Indicator b:** In prior site visit reports, the 2022-2023 Action Plan, and the renewal application, the school mentioned partnerships under development with community agencies. At the time of the renewal site visit, school leaders and interventionists were able to describe how the school has established effective working relationships and implemented some of these initiatives. Some were focused on recruitment, such as local early childhood organizations and college partnerships; others provided professional development services such as trauma informed training from Buffalo State University, ICT strategies from BOCES, and STEM experts. Still others provided opportunities for children, such as field trips to the Rochester Museum and Science Center and the Bergmann Engineering Aqueduct. Catholic Family Services, Therapy Dogs International (particularly in the area of literacy), and the Rochester Institute of Technology facilitated learning opportunities for children.

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

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Mission and Key Design Elements</i>	<p>a. School stakeholders share a common and consistent understanding of the school's mission and key design elements outlined in the charter, including in public-facing materials.</p> <p>b. The school has fully implemented the key design elements in the approved charter and in any subsequently approved revisions.</p>

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 8:

Over the term of this charter, the trajectory for this benchmark has remained a Meets.

1. Element: ***Mission and Key Design Elements:***

- **Indicator a:** The school communicates its mission and key design elements (KDEs) to all staff through onboarding, ongoing professional development, and during daily and weekly all-school events and meetings. Over the current charter term, the school has emphasized its external communication of its mission and key design elements: for example, the school has significantly added parent and family engagement opportunities directly aligned with its KDEs through curriculum nights and events with community partners.
- **Indicator b:** The school's stakeholders, in the various focus groups, provided information about the implementation of the mission and key design elements over the current charter term.
 - *Cross-cutting Curricular, Scientific Inquiry, and Lab-Based Learning Opportunities:* The school utilized Core Knowledge Language Arts 2.0 to integrate STEM concepts throughout the curriculum, in addition to at least 120 minutes of STEM instruction weekly within the science lab, maker space, or computer science room. The school has increased the number of STEM-focused community partnerships, including with the Rochester Museum and Science Center and Bergmann Engineering, as well as the number of STEM-focused events and special programming.
 - *Balanced and Differentiated Instruction and Rigorous Standards:* The school has reinforced its Academic coaching model through adopting and implementing the MORE system of classroom observation and feedback, review and feedback on lesson plans, and data tracking and interpretation. The school has begun transitioning to a newer, more rigorous math curriculum, beginning in 2022-2023 with kindergarten classes.
 - *Ongoing Professional Development and Learning:* The school's calendar includes ample professional development time, both prior to the start of the school year and throughout the school year. Professional development is tailored to meet both the mission and KDEs of the school, as well as targeted priorities identified by staff and leadership.
 - *Data-Driven Instruction and Accountability Aligned to Rigorous Academic Standards:* Academic coaching and collaborative planning time have prioritized data tracking and analysis over the current charter term, both on academic and non-academic metrics. The

school has contracted with Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES to provide targeted professional development on ICT models and data usage.

- *Community Connections and Partnerships*: The school has developed and strengthened relationships with community partnerships in furtherance of its mission and KDEs, including the Rochester Museum and Science Center and Bergmann Engineering. The board has also prioritized strengthening existing relationships and identifying new partners and has successfully added new members to support this priority.
- *Serving the Diverse Needs of All Students*: The school's intervention and support systems provide individualized support to all students, including through universal intervention blocks, a multi-tiered support system, and a tiered response to intervention system. The school's support systems and discipline structures are built to prioritize intervention and prevention and identify students for needed support early.

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. High schools are meeting persistence rates commensurate with the NYSED target.

Finding: Approaches

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Targets are met</i>	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. <i>Targets are not met</i>	<p>a. The school is making regular and significant annual progress toward meeting the targets.</p> <p>b. The school has implemented extensive recruitment strategies and program services to attract and retain students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible for free and reduced priced lunch. Strategies include, but are not limited to: outreach to parents and families in the surrounding communities, widely publicizing the lottery for such school, efforts to academically support these students, and enrollment policy revisions, such as employing a weighted lottery or enrollment preference, to increase the proportion of enrolled students from the three priority populations.</p> <p>c. The school has implemented a systematic process for evaluating recruitment and outreach strategies and program services for each of the three categories of students, and makes strategic improvements as needed.</p>

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

Over the term of this charter, the trajectory for this benchmark has been consistent as an Approaches due to a lack of sufficient increase in the proportion of SWD and ELL students enrolled at the school. The overall enrollment has been a concern, at the time of the site visit 82.5%.

1. Element: **Target are met:**

- **Indicator a:** The school consistently enrolls economically disadvantaged (ED) students at a rate closely approaching the district of location (DOL) and is currently, 2022-2023, -1 percentage point below the DOL.

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

- **Indicator a:** The school's aggregate enrollment falls just below the required 85 percent of maximum authorized enrollment, at 84 percent for 2022-2023. The school's enrollment of SWD and ELL students consistently lags below that of the DOL, and the school is currently -9 percentage points below for SWD and -17 points below for ELL students. The school's retention rates for all students and all subgroups are also below the DOL.

- **Indicator b:** The school has prioritized leveraging community partnerships and relationships with local early childhood providers to improve student recruitment, particularly for eligible subgroups. Focus group members noted a specific policy hurdle (restrictions on access to district-provided transportation for families that live within 1.5 miles of the school) that impacts its recruitment efforts with nearby eligible subgroup students; however, it has not identified a workable solution. The school uses a weighted lottery to support targeted enrollment and has set achievable milestones to measure progress. The school has also tasked several operational staff members, including its finance and operations manager and family liaison, with implementing recruitment strategies.
- **Indicator c:** The school uses SchoolTool data to evaluate the effectiveness of its recruitment and retention strategies. The school's 2022-2023 Action Plan includes achievable goals and specific tracking mechanisms to continue making enrollment improvements.

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

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Legal Compliance</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">The school has compiled a record of substantial compliance with applicable State and federal laws and regulations 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; addressing complaints; financial management and oversight; governance and reporting; and health, safety, civil rights, and student assessment requirements.The school has undertaken appropriate corrective action when required, and/or as requested by the Board of Regents and/or the NYSED Charter School Office and has implemented necessary safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements.The school has a plan to ensure that teachers are certified in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.The school has sought Board of Regents and/or the NYSED Charter School Office approval for material and non-material revisions.The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet the expectations detailed in the enrollment plan outlined in the charter and within the parameters set forth in the charter agreement.The school seeks guidance from its legal counsel when updating documents and handling issues that arise.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 10:

Over the term of this charter, the trajectory for this benchmark has remained a Meets.

1. Element: **Legal Compliance:**

- **Indicator a:** Over the current charter term the school has improved its policies and procedures regarding legal compliance. In accordance with its 2022-2023 Action Plan, the school has adopted new policies regarding policy review and improved its communication with the CSO.
- **Indicator b:** Over the current charter term the school has worked closely with the CSO to ensure all policies have been reviewed and revised and are in compliance. However, analysis of the faculty staff roster submitted with the 2022-2023 annual report showed that of the 22 staff hired during the 2022-2023 school year, 18 began working prior to receiving fingerprint clearance.
- **Indicator c:** The school has no outstanding certification concerns and has a clear plan for monitoring all teacher certifications.
- **Indicator d:** Over the course of the current charter term, the school has taken corrective action regarding policy changes and other revisions.

- **Indicator e:** The school's aggregate enrollment is currently at 84 percent of its maximum authorized enrollment. The school has improved aggregate enrollment over the course of the current charter term; however, it must continue to make improvements.
- **Indicator f:** The school retains legal counsel and seeks guidance as appropriate.

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Overview

Charter School Selection

EXPLORATION ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

BEDS Code

261600861102

2022-2023 Enrollment

401

ESEA Accountability Designation (2023-2024):

This school is designated as a school in need of **Local Support and Improvement** under current New York State criteria as defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Charter School Information

School District of Location:	ROCHESTER CSD
Total Public School Enrollment of Resident Students attending Charter Schools:	25%
Additional School District: (if applicable)*	-
Total Public School Enrollment of Resident Students attending Charter Schools:	-
Grades Served:	K-5
Address:	1001 LAKE AVE, ROCHESTER, NY, 14613
Website:	www.explorationrochester.org
RIC:	MONROE/M.A.A.R.S.
Regents Region:	CENTRAL
Regent:	Adrian I. Hale
Active Date:	7/1/2017
Authorizer:	REGENTS
CEO:	MS. RACHELLE SIMMONS
CEO Phone:	585-498-4701
CEO Email:	rsimmons@exporochester.org
BOT President:	MRS. MAYA CRANE
BOT President Phone:	585-797-5130
BOT President Email:	mayalcrane@gmail.com
Institution ID:	800000086905

*An additional district may be used for comparison if a school is chartered to serve a school district other than the one in which they are located or if 40% of their students are residents of a district other than the district in which they are located.

BoR Charter School Office Information

Regional Liaison:	Susan Gibbons
Performance Framework:	2019
Current Term:	07/01/22 - 06/30/24
2019-2020	Midterm
2020-2021	Check-in
2021-2022	Renewal
2022-2023	Midterm
2023-2024	Renewal

Benchmark Rating	Year of Rating
BM1	
BM2	
BM3	
BM4	
BM5	
BM6	
BM7	
BM8	
BM9	
BM10	

CSO Survey Results	Confidence Interval	Response Rate	Survey Population	Total Responses
Parent Survey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Student Survey (Grades 9-12)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Teacher Survey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Benchmark 1 - Indicator 1: Similar Schools Comparison

Charter School

EXPLORATION ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

2023 3-8 Assessments; 2022 4 Year Graduations

Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology			ELA Differential	Math Differential	Science Differential	Graduation Rate Differential
Elementary	+/- 5	Dr Martin Luther King School Jr ES	+15	+12	-1	.
		East Flatbush Ascend CS (Efacs)	-33	-49	+32	.
		Milton J Fletcher ES	+14	-1	-33	.
		Pleasant Valley ES	+14	+9	-4	.
		Mean	+3	-7	-2	.
	+/- 7.5	Bronx Stem and Arts Academy (The)	+11	+9	-15	.
		Calvin Coolidge School	+6	0	-15	.
		Carlyle C Ring ES	-3	-14	-27	.
		Dolgeville ES	+19	-7	-53	.
		Flatbush Ascend CS	-22	-50	+32	.
		Lincoln ES	+27	+14	+5	.
		Matilda Avenue School (The)	0	-5	-52	.
		PS 14	+2	-20	-56	.
		PS 155	-33	-42	-49	.
		PS 241 Emma L Johnston	-18	-24	-57	.
		PS 287 Bailey K Ashford	+9	+7	-60	.
		PS 87	+11	0	-31	.
		PS 93 Albert G Oliver	+19	-3	-18	.
		PS 938	+30	+17	+32	.
		Raphael J McNulty Academy for Intern Studies & Litera	+17	+5	-18	.
		Success Academy CS-Bronx 1	-23	-63	+32	.
		Van Corlaer ES	+18	+10	-4	.
		Yates ES	+7	+4	-27	.
		Yonkers Early Childhood Academy	+30	+17	+32	.
		Mean	+6	-8	-18	.
	+/- 10	Amber CS East Harlem	-14	-7	-59	.
		Arbor Hill ES	+28	+8	-2	.
		Benjamin Franklin ES	+20	+9	-18	.
		Brighter Choice CS for Boys	-5	-8	-50	.
		Bronx Arts and Science CS	+17	+10	-19	.
		Bronx CS for Better Learning	-15	-31	-55	.
		Bronx CS for Better Learning II	-8	-22	-54	.
		Bronx CS for Excellence 4	-22	-40	-53	.
		Charles F Johnson Jr ES	+4	-1	-34	.
		Clinton V Bush ES	+10	-13	-16	.
		Cornerstone Academy for Social Action	+12	-4	-34	.
		Cynthia Jenkins School	+8	+1	-43	.
		Fe Smith Intermediate School	+8	-16	-36	.
		Hamilton ES	+21	+12	-12	.
		Harlem Village Academy West 2 CS	-29	-46	+32	.
		Henry Johnson CS	-22	-27	-58	.
		Kingsborough School	+30	+17	+32	.
		Marie Curie Institute of Engineering and Communicati	+6	-5	-35	.
		New American Academy CS (The)	-7	-6	-44	.
		Our World Neighborhood CS 2	+4	-7	-26	.
		PS 108 Captain Vincent G Fowler	-26	-36	-62	.
		PS 108 Philip J Abinanti	-18	-40	-63	.
		PS 118 Lorraine Hansberry	-1	-6	-48	.
		PS 123	-11	-27	-46	.
		PS 132 Ralph Bunche	-17	-30	-56	.
		PS 140 Edward K Ellington	-21	-56	-68	.
		PS 158 Warwick	+8	-5	-33	.
		PS 190 Sheffield	-14	-16	-37	.
		PS 262 El Hajj Malik El Shabazz ES	-5	+3	-51	.
		PS 268 Emma Lazarus	-9	-22	-59	.
		PS 279 Herman Schreiber	-17	-39	-56	.
		PS 3 Bedford Village (The)	+8	0	-14	.

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Benchmark 1 - Indicator 1: Similar Schools Comparison

	PS 61 Arthur O Eve School of Distinction	+7	0	-35	.
	PS 78 Anne Hutchinson	+5	0	-26	.
	Queens Explorers ES	-19	-30	-58	.
	Reach Academy CS	+7	-15	-35	.
	Rochester Prep CS 3	-2	-15	-38	.
	Sisulu-Walker CS of Harlem	-34	-47	-68	.
	Success Academy CS - Bronx 4	-39	-69	+32	.
	Success Academy CS-Bed Stuy 2	-23	-57	+32	.
	Truman ES	+30	+17	+32	.
	Zeta CS -South Bronx	-29	-42	-65	.
	Mean	-4	-17	-33	.
	Mean	-1	-14	-27	.

*See NOTES (1) and (11).

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Benchmark 1 - Indicator 2: Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

Charter School

EXPLORATION ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Elementary/Middle School Trending Toward Proficiency - Minimum Expectation = 80%

Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	ELA				Math			
	All Students	SWD	ELL	ED	All Students	SWD	ELL	ED
2022-2023	25%	0%	0%	25%	26%	0%	20%	26%

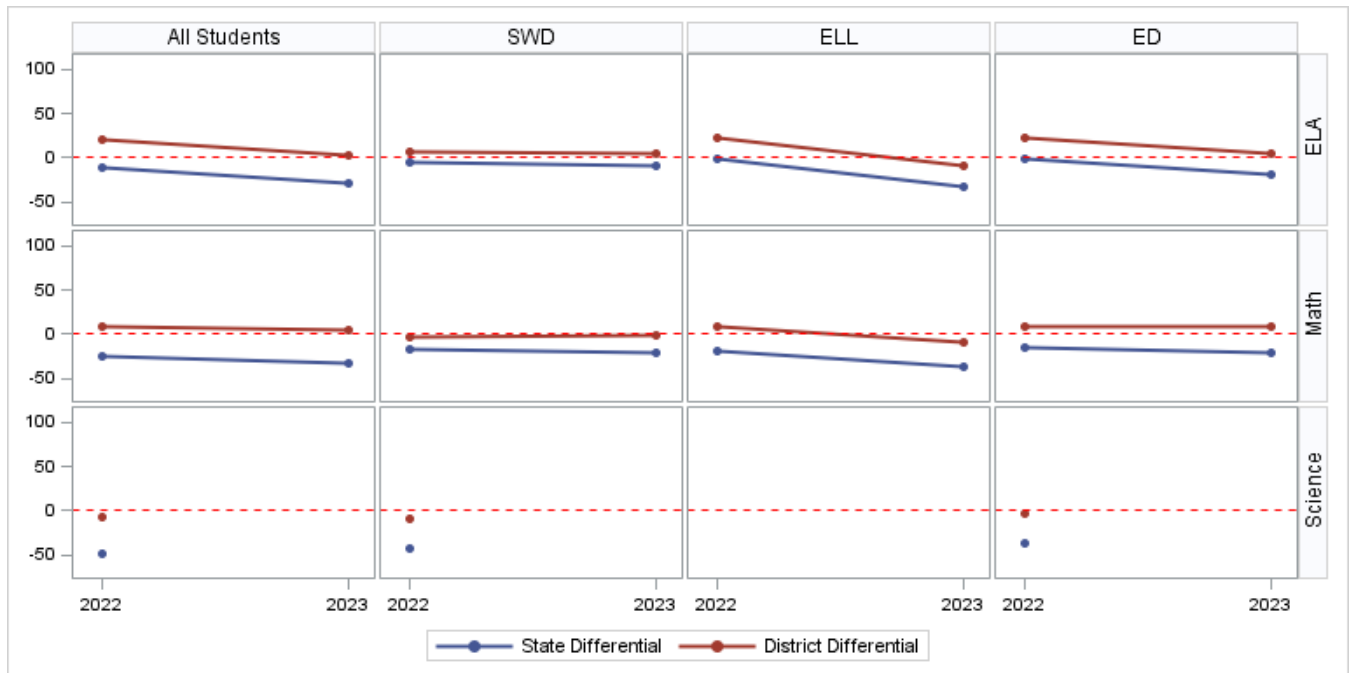
*See NOTES (2), (3), (7), and (8).

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Benchmark 1 - Indicator 2: Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

2.b.i. and 2.b.ii Proficiency - Aggregate and Subgroup School Level Proficiency:

Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency State and District Differentials Over Time
Comparison of Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology and Rochester CSD



*See NOTES (1), (2), (3), and (6).

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Benchmark 1 - Indicator 2: Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

2.b.i. and 2.b.ii Proficiency - Aggregate and Subgroup School Level Proficiency:

Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes: Charter School, District, and NYS

		ELA					Math					Science				
		Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	District Differential	NYS	NYS Differential	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	District Differential	NYS	NYS Differential	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	District Differential	NYS	NYS Differential
All Students	2021-2022	30%	9%	+21	42%	-12	17%	9%	+8	43%	-26	32%	40%	-8	80%	-48
	2022-2023	17%	14%	+3	46%	-29	19%	14%	+5	53%	-34	.	.	.	.	.
SWD	2021-2022	9%	2%	+7	15%	-6	0%	4%	-4	18%	-18	17%	27%	-10	60%	-43
	2022-2023	10%	6%	+4	19%	-9	5%	6%	-1	26%	-21	.	.	.	.	.
ELL	2021-2022	29%	7%	+22	31%	-2	14%	6%	+8	34%	-20	.	.	.	.	.
	2022-2023	0%	10%	-10	33%	-33	0%	10%	-10	37%	-37	.	.	.	.	.
ED	2021-2022	29%	7%	+22	31%	-2	16%	7%	+9	31%	-15	34%	37%	-3	72%	-38
	2022-2023	17%	12%	+5	36%	-19	20%	11%	+9	41%	-21	.	.	.	.	.

*See NOTES (1), (2), (3), (6), and (7).

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Benchmark 1 - Indicator 2: Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

2.b.iii. Aggregate Grade-Level Proficiency:

All Students Grade-Level Proficiency

All Students		ELA					Mathematics					Science				
		Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS
Grade 3	2022	33%	11%	+22	46%	-13	27%	14%	+13	48%	-21	.	.	.	.	.
	2023	11%	15%	-4	45%	-34	19%	17%	+2	54%	-35	.	.	.	.	.
Grade 4	2022	30%	8%	+22	42%	-12	17%	6%	+11	43%	-26	32%	40%	-8	80%	-48
	2023	21%	14%	+7	49%	-28	23%	13%	+10	54%	-31	.	.	.	.	.
Grade 5	2022	19%	8%	+11	38%	-19	.	6%	-6	37%	-37	.	.	.	.	.
	2023	21%	13%	+8	45%	-24	16%	11%	+5	50%	-34	.	.	.	.	.

*See NOTES (1), (3), (6), and (7).

2.b.iv. Subgroup Grade-Level Proficiency:

Students with Disabilities Grade-Level Proficiency

Students with Disabilities		ELA					Mathematics					Science				
		Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS
Grade 3	2023	15%	7%	+8	19%	-4	8%	9%	-1	29%	-21	.	.	.	.	.
Grade 4	2022	17%	2%	+15	14%	+3	.	3%	-3	18%	-18	17%	27%	-10	60%	-43
Grade 5	2023	.	.	.	.	.	.	3%	-3	22%	-22	.	.	.	.	.

*See NOTES (1), (2), (3), (6), and (7).

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Benchmark 1 - Indicator 2: Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

2.b.iv. Subgroup Grade-Level Proficiency:

English Language Learners Grade-Level Proficiency

English Language Learners		ELA					Mathematics				
		Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS
Grade 4	2022	40%	6%	+34	29%	+11	20%	3%	+17	31%	-11

*See NOTES (1), (2), (3), (6), and (7).

2.b.iv. Subgroup Grade-Level Proficiency:

Economically Disadvantaged Grade-Level Proficiency

Economically Disadvantaged		ELA					Mathematics				Science					
		Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	NYS	Differential to NYS
Grade 3	2022	29%	9%	+20	35%	-6	23%	11%	+12	36%	-13	.	.	.	.	.
	2023	8%	13%	-5	34%	-26	19%	14%	+5	42%	-23	.	.	.	.	.
Grade 4	2022	32%	6%	+26	30%	+2	17%	5%	+12	31%	-14	34%	37%	-3	72%	-38
	2023	19%	12%	+7	38%	-19	23%	11%	+12	42%	-19	.	.	.	.	.
Grade 5	2022	21%	6%	+15	27%	-6	.	4%	-4	26%	-26	.	.	.	.	.
	2023	23%	11%	+12	36%	-13	17%	10%	+7	38%	-21	.	.	.	.	.

*See NOTES (1), (3), (6), and (7).

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Benchmark 9 - Indicator 1: Enrollment and Retention

Charter School

EXPLORATION ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1.a.i. Aggregate Enrollment:

Aggregate Enrollment: Reported vs Contracted - Target = 100%

Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Contracted Enrollment	Reported Enrollment	Percent of Contracted Enrollment
2018-2019	246	207	84%
2019-2020	325	292	90%
2020-2021	400	339	85%
2021-2022	475	395	83%
2022-2023	475	401	84%

1.a.ii. Subgroup Enrollment:

Subgroup Enrollment: Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, and Economically Disadvantaged

	SWD			ELL			ED		
	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District
2018-2019	12%	20%	-8	4%	16%	-12	88%	91%	-3
2019-2020	10%	20%	-10	2%	17%	-15	55%	91%	-36
2020-2021	11%	20%	-9	2%	18%	-16	86%	90%	-4
2021-2022	11%	19%	-8	3%	18%	-15	87%	90%	-3
2022-2023	11%	20%	-9	2%	19%	-17	90%	91%	-1

*See NOTES (2) and (6).

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Benchmark 9 - Indicator 1: Enrollment and Retention

1.b.i. and 1.b.ii. Retention:

Retention - Aggregate and Subgroups

	All Students			SWD			ELL			ED		
	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	Exploration Elementary CS for Science and Technology	Rochester CSD	Differential to District
2018-2019	54%	86%	-32	33%	90%	-57	67%	84%	-17	56%	87%	-31
2019-2020	77%	87%	-10	68%	90%	-22	75%	85%	-10	77%	87%	-10
2020-2021	80%	88%	-8	86%	90%	-4	86%	89%	-3	84%	89%	-5
2021-2022	88%	86%	+2	95%	88%	+7	100%	85%	+15	89%	86%	+3
2022-2023	77%	85%	-8	63%	88%	-25	77%	87%	-10	75%	85%	-10

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

1.c.i. and 1.c.ii. High School Persistence:

Not applicable to this charter school

Aggregate and Subgroup 4-, 5-, and 6-year Cohort Persistence Rates – Target = 85%

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

2024 NYSED Charter School Information Dashboard

Notes

- (1) Data in the table above represents tested students who scored proficiently on the NYSTP ELA, math, or science assessments or on the Regents math or science exams.
- (2) For the students with disabilities and the English language learners 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).
- (11) Data in the table above is a comparison of the differentials of the 3-8 assessments and the 4-year graduation rate for the school and other schools with the same grade structure and similar subgroup enrollment pattern. The notation +/- 5, indicates the highest level of similarity.
- (12) Data in the table above represents students who passed their Regents ELA exam with a score equal to or higher than 75 and also passed at least one of their Regents math exams with a score equal to or higher than 80.
- (13) Schools are considered 'similar' for the purpose of this comparison when they serve the same grade band as the school in question. The degree of similarity is determined by comparison of the percentage of each subgroup's enrollment (students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students). An assignment of +/- 5 (7.5, or 10) indicates that the schools' subgroup enrollments are within 5 (7.5, or 10) percentage points for each subgroup.

Charter School Fiscal Accountability Summary

EXPLORATION ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Grades Served
Maximum Chartered Grades Served
Chartered Enrollment
Maximum Chartered Enrollment
Actual Enrollment

2018 19	2019 20	2020 21	2021 22	2022 23
K-2	K-3	K-4	K-5	K-5
K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5
246	325	400	475	475
475	475	475	475	475
207	292	339	395	401

ASSETS

Current Assets

9,352	535,988	1,878,295	1,096,315	2,578,274
144,188	-	142,068	1,407,450	835,400
687	210	55,692	34,718	3,832
-	146,985	-	-	733,414
154,227	683,183	2,076,055	2,538,483	4,150,920

Total Current Assets

Non-Current Assets

Property, Building and Equipment, net
Restricted Cash
Security Deposits
Other Non-Current Assets

121,920	289,850	345,621	522,104	553,441
-	75,000	75,000	100,000	-
26,555	26,555	26,555	26,555	29,555
50,000	-	-	-	621,464
198,475	391,405	447,176	648,659	1,204,460
352,702	1,074,588	2,523,231	3,187,142	5,355,380

LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses
Accrued Payroll and Payroll Taxes
Due to Related Parties
Refundable Advances
Other Current Liabilities

37,630	41,671	261,841	122,136	287,813
159,543	187,856	415,157	340,495	323,021
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
145,000	279,688	-	-	544,804
342,173	509,215	676,998	462,631	1,155,638

Total Current Liabilities

Long-Term Liabilities

140,999	-	38,808	-	-
-	303,268	-	-	-
140,999	303,268	38,808	-	-
483,172	812,483	715,806	462,631	1,155,638

NET ASSETS

(130,470)	237,986	1,785,856	2,702,942	4,199,742
-	24,119	21,569	21,569	-
(130,470)	262,105	1,807,425	2,724,511	4,199,742

Total Net Assets

Total Liabilities and Net Assets

352,702	1,074,588	2,523,231	3,187,142	5,355,380
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OPERATING REVENUE

State and Local Per Pupil Revenue - Reg. Ed
State and Local Per Pupil Revenue - SPED
State and Local Per Pupil Facilities Revenue
Federal Grants
State and City Grants
Other Operating Income

2,678,724	3,936,821	4,699,312	5,455,412	5,713,087
20,900	52,891	56,314	147,742	260,127
-	-	-	-	-
132,564	145,676	362,844	1,485,521	853,637
4,795	-	-	500	-
184,046	-	672,728	2,314	14,762
3,021,029	4,135,388	5,791,198	7,091,489	6,841,613

EXPENSES

Program Services

2,125,924	2,836,615	3,010,891	4,295,875	4,463,238
393,272	507,424	573,965	677,318	722,693
-	-	-	-	-
2,519,196	3,344,039	3,584,856	4,973,193	5,185,931

Total Program Services

Supporting Services

499,976	610,531	661,022	1,201,210	1,231,133
-	-	-	-	-
499,976	610,531	661,022	1,201,210	1,231,133
3,019,172	3,954,570	4,245,878	6,174,403	6,417,064
1,857	180,818	1,545,320	917,086	424,549

SUPPORT AND OTHER REVENUE

-	243	-	-	7,274
-	34,544	-	-	2,220
-	-	-	-	-
-	176,970	-	-	1,041,188
-	211,757	-	-	1,050,682
1,857	392,575	1,545,320	917,086	1,475,231
(132,327)	(130,470)	262,105	-	-
(130,470)	262,105	1,807,425	917,086	1,475,231

REVENUE & EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

Revenue - Per Pupil

14,594	14,162	17,083	17,953	17,061
-	725	-	-	2,620
14,594	14,887	17,083	17,953	19,682

Total Revenue

Expenses - Per Pupil

Program Services
Management and General, Fundraising

12,170	11,452	10,575	12,590	12,932
2,415	2,091	1,950	3,041	3,070
14,585	13,543	12,525	15,631	16,003
83.4%	84.6%	84.4%	80.5%	80.8%
16.6%	15.4%	15.6%	19.5%	19.2%
0.1%	9.9%	36.4%	14.9%	23.0%

FINANCIAL COMPOSITE SCORE

(0.37)	1.45	3.00	3.00	3.00
Needs Monitoring	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong

(187,946)	173,968	1,399,057	2,075,852	2,995,282
0.5	1.3	3.1	5.5	3.6
Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard

BENCHMARK and FINDING:
Ratio should be equal to or less than 1.0

1.4	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.2
Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard

1.1	49.5	161.5	64.8	146.7
Does Not Meet Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard

BENCHMARK and FINDING:
Ratio should be equal to or greater than 0.0

0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2
Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard

