



TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Ken Slentz 
SUBJECT: Charter Schools: Renewal of a Charter School Authorized by the Board of Education of the City School District of the City of Buffalo: Enterprise Charter School

DATE: March 6, 2014

AUTHORIZATION(S):


SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Regents approve the proposed renewal charter for Enterprise Charter School which is authorized by the Board of Education of the City School District of the City of Buffalo ("Buffalo BOE")?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State Statute.

Proposed Handling

This issue will be before the Regents P-12 Education Committee and the Full Board for action at the March 2014 Regents meeting.

Procedural History

The Buffalo BOE approved a two-year renewal for Enterprise Charter School and submitted that proposed renewal charter to the Regents for approval and issuance of the renewal charter as required by Article 56 of the Education Law, The New York State Charter School Statute. The Buffalo BOE did not approve the School's request for permission to expand maximum enrollment from 405 to 432 students.

Background Information

The chart below provides some information about Enterprise Charter School:

Name of Charter School	Enterprise Charter School
District of Location	Buffalo City School District
Facilities	275 Oak Street, Buffalo, NY
Terms and Date of Charter	Initial Term: March 2003 through March 2008 1 st Renewal: March 2008 through June 30, 2010 (2 years) 2 nd Renewal: July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2013 (3 years) 3 rd Renewal: July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014 (1 year)
Current Grade(s) and Approved Enrollment	2013 – 2014 Grades: K through 8; 405 students (Originally approved as a K through 12 school. As part of the School's first renewal in 2008, the District reduced the grades served to K through 8.)
Current Year of Operation	2013-2014: 11 th Year of Operation
Management Company	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A

In 2003, the Buffalo Board of Education, in its capacity as a charter school authorizer under Article 56 of the Education Law, approved the initial five-year charter for Enterprise Charter School as a K-12 school, and a charter was approved and issued by the Board of Regents.

In 2008, the Buffalo Board of Education approved and submitted to the Regents a five-year renewal for Enterprise, which would have allowed the School to serve grades K-12 until the end of the 2007-08 school year and then to serve grades K-8 for the remainder of the proposed charter renewal term. Citing weak academic results, especially at the secondary level and in ELA throughout, and an audit by the Comptroller that raised questions related to the school's financial and accounting practices, the Regents did not approve the proposed five-year renewal charter for Enterprise and instead returned the proposed renewal charter to the Buffalo BOE for reconsideration. The Regents recommended that the Buffalo BOE only approve a short-term renewal for Enterprise until the end of the 2009-2010 school year (June 30, 2010). The Buffalo BOE subsequently approved and submitted to the Regents, a short-term renewal for Enterprise, that allowed Enterprise to serve grades K-12 until the end of the 2007-2008 school year and then to serve grades K-8 until June 30, 2010 (a two-year renewal).

In 2010, the Buffalo BOE approved and submitted to the Regents, a second charter renewal for Enterprise to operate as a K-8 school until June 30, 2013 (a three-year renewal). The Regents approved and issued the second renewal charter as submitted by the Buffalo BOE.

In 2013, the Buffalo BOE approved and submitted to the Regents, a third renewal charter for Enterprise Charter School that would have expired on June 30, 2016. Citing weak academic results, the Board of Regents voted to return that renewal recommendation to the Buffalo Board of Education for reconsideration, pursuant to Education Law §2852(5-a). The Buffalo Board of Education subsequently approved a

one-year charter renewal for Enterprise. In July 2013, the Regents approved the one-year charter renewal for Enterprise which expires on June 30, 2014.

In January 2014, the Buffalo BOE approved a fourth renewal charter for Enterprise Charter School and submitted that proposed renewal charter to the Regents for approval and issuance of the renewal charter. The proposed renewal term is a two-year term expiring on June 30, 2016. The Buffalo BOE did not approve the School's request for permission to expand maximum enrollment from 405 to 432 students. The letter from the President of the Buffalo BOE submitting the proposed renewal charter to the Board of Regents and Buffalo BOE's Renew Report for Enterprise Charter School are attached to this item.

Recommendation

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that **Enterprise Charter School** authorized by the Board of Education of the City School District of the City of Buffalo: (1) meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) the applicant can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) granting the application is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty of this article; and (4) granting the application would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school, and the Board of Regents therefore approves the renewal application of Enterprise Charter School as proposed by the Board of Education of the City School District of Buffalo and that a renewal charter be issued, and that its provisional charter be extended for a two-year term up through and including June 30, 2016.

Timetable for Implementation

The Regents action for the Enterprise Charter School is effective immediately.

Attachment



DR. PAMELA C. BROWN
Superintendent

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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February 26, 2014

Bill Clarke
Director, Charter School Office and School Turnaround
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Ave.
SN EB Mezzanine
Albany, New York 12234

Mr. Clarke,

I am pleased to submit the following documents to the Regents in support of a two-year renewal for Enterprise Charter School:

- Renewal Application – submitted by Enterprise Charter School in August 2013
- Approved Board of Education Recommendation for Renewal
- Charter Agreement
- 2013 Renewal Report

A public hearing was held on January 15, 2013. There were over fifteen speakers who spoke on behalf of Enterprise Charter School and over 100 people in attendance. All speakers spoke in favor of renewal.

The District sees potential for academic growth based on the series of significant changes that have been implemented at Enterprise Charter School. We have seen positive changes in teacher supervision and increased focus on differentiation to meet the needs of the individual learner. Enterprise Charter School has used the current one-year charter term to implement many of the changes that they had “promised” during their previous charter term. We believe that over the next charter term, those changes will lead to positive student gains.

We look forward to hearing back from you following the March Board of Regents meeting.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barbara A. Nevergold

Board Meeting Of: January 22, 2014		Presented to Committee: January 15, 2014	
Prepared By:	Angela Cullen	Division:	Office of School Leadership
Title of Agenda Item: Enterprise Charter School Charter Renewal			
Type of Item:	<input type="checkbox"/> Services Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Materials/Commodities Purchase	<input type="checkbox"/> Construction Project <input type="checkbox"/> Lease	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (describe) Charter Renewal
Vendor:	NA		
Service Term:	NA		
Cost:	NA	Funding Source:	NA
If multi-year list, years and dollar amounts.			
Background Information, Description of the Need:	It is recommended that the Buffalo City School District Board of Education vote to approve a recommendation for a renewal for the Enterprise Charter School for a period of two years, expiring on June 30, 2016, at which time, the Buffalo City School District BOE as the chartering entity for Enterprise Charter School, will assess the School's progress at meeting performance benchmarks established for the school by the Buffalo City School District BOE and make a determination concerning renewal for the School's charter. The request to increase student enrollment is denied.		
Rationale/Benefit to the District:	As a Charter Authorizer, we are required to provide oversight and determination regarding renewal upon expiration of their current charter.		
Connection to Existing Goals:	As a Charter Authorizer, we are required to provide oversight and determination regarding renewal upon expiration of their current charter.		
Relevant Data and Expected Outcomes:	Data was provided in the full Renewal Report. It is expected that based on evidences outlined in the Renewal Report, student achievement will increase.		
RFP/Bid Date:	NA	Number of Proposals/Bids Received:	NA
Description of vendor evaluation:	NA		
Explanation if no RFP/Bid:	NA		

Approvals:

Name:	Signature:
Angela Cullen, Director, OSL	<i>Angela Cullen</i>
Dr. Yamilette Williams, CAO	<i>Yamilette Williams</i>
Keith Robertson (Grants Only)	<i>NA</i>
Barbara J. Smith, CFO/COO (Non Grants Only)	<i>NA</i>
Dr. Pamela C. Brown, Superintendent	<i>Pamela C. Brown</i>

BOARD of EDUCATION
APPROVED

JAN 22 2014
J. M. [Signature]
BOARD OFFICE

Buffalo Public School District ECS Renewal Report – 2013

School: Enterprise Charter School		
Dates of Site Visits:	July, 18, 2013	August 5, 2013
	November 6, 2013	November 7, 2013
	November 8, 2013	December 9, 2013
	December 12, 2013	

The primary purpose of this report, prepared by Angela Cullen, Director in the Office of School Leadership, for the Buffalo Public Schools, a charter school authorizer, is to provide evidence about Enterprise Charter School’s (ECS) performance, implementation of the educational and organizational program outlined in the charter, and compliance with laws and regulations over the course of the current renewal charter. On the dates listed above, central office administrators visited ECS, located at 275 Oak Street, Buffalo, New York. ECS currently serves 405 students in grades kindergarten through 8. The school is in its eleventh year of operation.

ECS was granted their initial charter in March of 2003. The school opened in August of 2003 with kindergarten through grade 8, with an enrollment of 426. In the 2004 – 2005 school year, grade 9 was added with an enrollment of 460; in the 2005 – 2006 school year, grade 10 was added with an enrollment of 505; and in the 2006-2007 school year, grades 11 and 12 were added with an enrollment of 555. Enrollment for 2007 – 2008 was 605 students in grades K – 12.

The first renewal charter was granted and a probation period was initiated in March of 2008. Probationary status stemmed from a lack of internal controls. At the completion of school year 2007 – 2008, the secondary program was dissolved and ECS returned to a kindergarten through grade 8 program, with an enrollment of 405. Enrollment was maintained at 405 during the first renewal from March 1, 2008 – June 30, 2010.

A second renewal charter was granted on January 4, 2010 and the school’s probation period ended. The school was granted a three year renewal charter, from July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2013. Enrollment has been maintained at 405 throughout the current charter. A third renewal charter was granted in June of 2013 for a period of one year, July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014.

In the current renewal charter application, ECS is requesting the ability to increase its maximum enrollment from 405 to 432.

During the renewal site visit on November 6, 7, and 8, 2013, the team reviewed documents on site, conducted classroom observations, and interviewed the Board of Trustees (BOT), school administrators, community partners, teachers, parents and students. Evidence collected during the three day visit is included in this report.

Three guiding questions serve as a lens to direct this report:

1. Is the school an academic success and able to operate in an educationally sound manner?
2. Is the school organizationally viable and able to operate in a fiscally sound manner?
3. Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter and has it adhered to applicable laws and regulations?

Buffalo Public School District ECS Renewal Report – 2013

1. IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND ABLE TO OPERATE IN AN EDUCATIONALLY SOUND MANNER?

Finding 1a: Based on changes in the 2013 state ELA and Mathematics assessments, it is not possible to determine whether ECS has met or has failed to meet all of its performance goals as outlined in the current one year renewal charter. However, Enterprise can demonstrate student growth.

Evidence: ECS current charter includes the following performance goals:

Goal 1: Annually increase the number of students at Level 3 by 10% on the required state assessments.

Goal 2: Increase its scores according to the Commissioner’s Performance Index for AYP each year.

Goal 3: By the end of the renewal term, students in grades 3-8 who have been continuously enrolled at Enterprise will perform on par with the state average for proficiency on the NYS ELA and math assessments.

Goal 4: 80% of the students in grades K-3 who are continuously enrolled will achieve benchmark status according to DIBELS by year-end test results.

Goal 5: 80% of the students in grades K-3 who are continuously enrolled will maintain a Level 3 or increase to a Level 4 on the NYS ELA and math assessments.

Goal 6: 75% of the continuously enrolled students in grades 1-8 will demonstrate a year’s growth on the Terra Nova reading and math assessments.

Evidence of meeting or making progress towards goals:

Goal 1: Annually increase the number of students at Level 3 by 10% on the required state assessments. It is not possible to say whether ECS has or has not met this goal. Comparison of student proficiency scores for the 2013 state ELA and Mathematics assessments is not possible due to the one year length of the current charter term. Furthermore, based on the fact that this was a new assessment and therefore provided a “baseline” with the shift to the Common Core-aligned assessments it is not possible to make a comparison to previous state assessments. Upon release of the scores on the 2013 state assessments, State Education Commissioner John B. King, Jr. stated “These proficiency scores do not reflect a drop in performance, but rather a raising of standards to reflect college and career readiness in the 21st century” and noted that the scores will not be used to negatively impact district, school, principal, or teacher accountability*. Therefore, it is recognized that student proficiency levels on the 2013 ELA and Mathematics assessments are a new “baseline” that cannot be directly compared to prior years.

*<http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/grades-3-8-assessment-results-2013.html>

While we are not able to review the state assessments to measure progress towards this goal, Enterprise provided the following data to demonstrate its progress towards increasing the proficiency levels of students by 10% annually across tested subjects.

Buffalo Public School District ECS Renewal Report – 2013

1. 2012-2013 Formative Assessment Data

Enterprise implemented AIMSWeb formative assessments and annual assessments based on the NYS-approved list of third-party assessments for use in Annual Professional Performance Reviews (APPR) aligned with the goals of Race to the Top (RttT). AIMSWeb is research-based and the Curriculum Based Measurements (CBM) psychometrics are sensitive to student growth over time. Key outcomes on AIMSWeb assessments include the following:

- For Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), Kindergarten ended the year with 88% of students at or above target (where “target” is aligned with proficiency goals).
- For Reading-Curriculum Based Measures (R-CBM), students increased proficiency in grades 2, 4, 5 and 6.
- For MAZE (assessment of comprehension skills), students in grades 4, 5 and 6 all increased the percentage of students at or above targets throughout the year, in one case by over 40% (5th grade).
- For M-COMP (mathematics computation), grades 2, 3, and 8 showed increases in the percentages of students at or above target while grades 1 and 5 remained relatively flat. Grade 6 had an overall decrease but still ended the year with 87% of students at or above target.

2. Comparison of Formative Assessment Data from 2011-2012 with 2012-2013

Below are three tables that show student gains in proficiency in Reading Comprehension (MAZE), Reading-Curriculum Based Measure (R-CBM) and Mathematics Comprehension. Of the 19 tested grades and subjects, 7 met the 10% annual increase goal and 9 showed positive gains approaching the 10% goal. Three grades/subjects showed losses from 2% to 8% while the most significant gains were made in grades 4, 5 and 6 in Reading Comprehension that registered 24-33% gains.

AIMSWeb MAZE (Reading Comprehension) Gains from 2011 to 2013			
GRADE LEVEL	2011-12 EOY % Proficient	2012-13 EOY % Proficient	2012-2013 EOY GAIN in % Proficient From Prior Grade
2-MAZE	NT	42%	NA
3-MAZE	23%	49%	NA
4-MAZE	47%	47%	+24%
5-MAZE	42%	80%	+33%
6-MAZE	22%	66%	+24%
7-MAZE	32%	26%	+4%
8-MAZE	20%	33%	+1%

AIMSWeb R-CBM (Reading-Curriculum Based Measure) Gains from 2011 to 2013

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GRADE LEVEL	2011-12 EOY % Proficient	2012-13 EOY % Proficient	2012-2013 EOY GAIN in % Proficient From Prior Grade
1-R-CBM	50%	36%	NA
2-R-CBM	47%	47%	-3%
3-R-CBM	32%	49%	+2%
4-R-CBM	53%	36%	+4%
5-R-CBM	65%	68%	+15%
6-R-CBM	46%	66%	+1%
7-R-CBM	45%	38%	-8%
8-R-CBM	48%	46%	+1%

AIMSWeb Mathematics Comprehension Gains from 2011 to 2013			
GRADE LEVEL	2011-12 EOY % Proficient	2012-13 EOY % Proficient	2012-2013 EOY GAIN in % Proficient From Prior Grade
1-MCOMP	47%	49%	NA
2-MCOMP	40%	64%	+17%
3-MCOMP	64%	46%	+6%
4-MCOMP	65%	62%	-2%
5-MCOMP	79%	68%	+3%
6-MCOMP	58%	87%	+8%
7-MCOMP	51%	75%	+17%
8-MCOMP	52%	66%	+15%

It is noted that Enterprise implemented AIMSWeb formative assessments and annual assessments based on the NYS-approved list of third-party assessments for use in Annual Professional Performance Reviews (APPR) aligned with the goals of Race to the Top (RttT). According to the school, the choice to implement AIMSWeb was made based on its strong predictive ability with the NYS Assessments and that AIMWeb is research-based and the Curriculum Based Measurements (CBM) psychometrics are sensitive to student growth over time. Though the decision was based on the need to ensure that they were measuring student learning throughout the school year aligned with the NYS assessments, it appears that the third-party assessments approved for use by NYSED in the APPR were not aligned with the 2013 summative NY CC-aligned State ELA and Math State Assessments as the outcomes between the sets of assessments show dramatic discrepancies.

Buffalo Public School District ECS Renewal Report – 2013

4. Student Performance on the NYS Science Assessment

A comparison of 2011-12 and 2012-13 science assessment results reveals that improvement in 8th grade student performance was very close to the 10% target—i.e. a nine-point increase (87% of students were proficient in 2012-13 and 78% in 2011-2012). Scores on the 4th grade science assessment, on the other hand, revealed a slight drop—i.e., 59% proficiency in 2012-13 and 66% proficiency in 2011-12.

Goal 2: Increase its scores according to the Commissioner’s Performance Index for AYP each year. It is not possible to say whether ECS has or has not met this goal. While data for the 2012-2013 AYP targets is not yet available, it is anticipated that this measure will no longer be an appropriate measure of school performance based on the modifications to the AYP and AMO indexes described by the NYSED in the summary of the ESEA Waiver* they received from the federal government. NYSED states that “AYP is now used in a more limited way (i.e., as part of the process of identifying Reward Schools and Schools requiring Local Assistance Plans) and no longer is the key determinant of a school or a district’s accountability status.”

*<http://usny.nysed.gov/docs/10-things-to-know-about-the-esea-waiver.pdf>

Goal 3: By the end of the renewal term, students in grades 3 – 8 who have been continuously enrolled at Enterprise will perform on par with the state average for proficiency on the NYS ELA and mathematics assessments. As shown in the chart below, ECS did not meet this goal. ECS scored lower than the state average in all grade levels on the CC-aligned ELA and Math NY State 2013 assessments.

Percent Proficient by Grade Level – NYS State ELA Assessment 2013							
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Overall Proficiency
ECS	0%	4.4%	9.1%	12.7%	8.9%	7.7%	7.25%
BPS	12.0%	10.7%	9.8%	12.3%	10.5%	13.5%	11.45%
State	31.1%	30.3%	30.2%	29.6%	31.4%	33.7%	31.38%

Percent Proficient by Grade Level – NYS State Math Assessment 2013							
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Overall Proficiency
ECS	0%	8.6%	11.4%	19.1%	2.2%	7.5%	8.34%
BPS	13.5%	10.2%	9.3%	10.7%	7.4%	6.8%	9.63%
State	34.2%	36.3%	29.9%	30.6%	27.7%	27.4%	31.06%

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/ela-math/2013/2013-08-06FINALELAandMathFULLDECK_rev.pdf

Goal 4: 80% of the students in K – 3 who are continuously enrolled will achieve benchmark status according to DIBELS by year-end test results. ECS has not met this goal, but has made progress towards meeting this goal. Beginning in August 2011, Enterprise replaced DIBELS with AIMSWeb to measure student progress in early grades. Based on the AIMSWeb assessment results, ECS is making progress towards meeting this goal.

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- For Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), 88% of Kindergarten students achieved at or above target by the end of year while 1st grade completed the year with 70% at or above target.
- Students in Grades 1 and 2 made double-digit gains in Reading-Curriculum Based Measures but did not meet the 80% target.
- Students in Grade 3 made gains in Reading Comprehension Measures but also did not meet the 80% target.

Enterprise 2012-2013 Reading Level Data (from Teacher's College Running Records) Grade Level	% at or above Grade Level BOY	% at or above Grade Level EOY	Increase from BOY to EOY
K	N/A	NA	NA
1	4%	66%	+62%
2	49%	69%	+20%
3	30%	38%	+8%
4	0%	34%	+34%
5	31%	73%	+42%
6	2%	64%	+62%
7	5%	19%	+14%
8	5%	29%	+24%
K-8	16%	52%	+36%

Goal 5: 80% of the students in K – 3 who are continuously enrolled will maintain a Level 3 or increase to a Level 4 on the NYS ELA and mathematics assessments. ECS has not met this goal.

Goal 6: 75% of the continuously enrolled students in grades 1 – 8 will demonstrate a year's growth on the Terra Nova reading and mathematics assessments. ECS has not met this goal, but has made progress towards meeting this goal. ECS has replaced the Terra Nova assessment with AIMSWeb. Data from the initial year of using AIMSWeb demonstrate that ECS is making progress towards achieving this goal. In ELA, there were double-digit increases in the percentages of students who were at or above grade level from the beginning of the year to the end in five of the six tested years, with a 62% increase in grades 2 and 6. In mathematics, there were double-digit increases in the percentages of students who were at or above grade level from the beginning of the year to the end in 2nd and 8th grades, and there were positive gains in 3rd and 4th grades as well.

We cannot definitively say that the school has or has not met *Performance Framework Benchmark 1: Student Performance*, but the evidence above shows that the students are showing academic progress.

Finding 1c: In most classes observed, students were exposed to the main instructional practices of the school, as identified by the school leaders.

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Evidence: The school identified specific instructional characteristics that should be present in all classrooms. These instructional characteristics were as follows: learning targets will be posted the standards (CCLS for ELA and mathematics and NYS for other content areas) that are linked to those targets will be posted, and depending on the duration of the observation, differentiation, anecdotal records, student independence, and/or close reading will be observed. While it would not be appropriate to see all five identified instructional strategies in any given lesson, at least one of the identified instructional characteristics was evident in each classroom observed during the site visit.

Learning targets – partial evidence or clear and consistent evidence in 19/20 classrooms observed

Differentiation – partial evidence or clear and consistent evidence in 14/20 classrooms observed

Anecdotal records – partial evidence or clear and consistent evidence in 5/20 classrooms observed

Student independence – partial evidence or clear and consistent evidence in 10/20 classrooms observed

Close Reading – partial evidence or clear and consistent evidence in 8/20 classrooms observed

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Framework Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning*.

Finding: The school's curriculum is based on rigorous standards.

Evidence: The school is using GoMath in grades K – 6, a program which is aligned to the CCLS. For 7 -8 mathematics, ECS is using a hybrid model, including the engageNY modules along with curriculum mapping and professional development done in collaboration with BOCES and the network support team. ECS has adopted Readers and Writers workshop with the Lucy Calkins units of study. Through a Tower foundation grant, ECS took the units of study and created a CCLS based scope and sequence. Additionally, they supplement with guided reading in RtI Blocks as well as shared reading, exposing students to grade level text. ECS also changed the RtI block in kindergarten through grade 2 to a shortened block for interventions (research shows 50 minutes is too long for this age group) and are allowing for 20 minutes of group activity eg. read alouds and word work, and then 30 minutes of intervention. Additionally, all teachers have also received training in close reading, which was observed in 8/20 classroom observations.

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Framework Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning*.

Finding 1d: Data from assessments are used by teachers to inform, guide and improve instructional practice.

Evidence: Teachers have been trained in the Four Phase Data Dialogue Protocol and have specific time built into their weekly schedule to practice the four phases during their daily morning professional learning communities. Data from common and formative assessments are used to inform RtI groupings as well as daily instruction. The school has added a fifth phase, implications for instruction, to bridge the work of data analysis to classroom instruction. This phase also reinforces the collection of data used in the conferencing portion of the Workshop model. During classroom observations, observers witnessed several teacher to student conferences in which students were participating in one-on-one feedback sessions. In one instance, this observer sat down with a kindergarten student during an observation of Writers Workshop and the student asked, "Can you conference with me?" It was evident from the

Buffalo Public School District ECS Renewal Report – 2013

schedule and teacher focus groups, which allows all teachers, including special education, art, computer technology, Spanish, music, physical education, reading specialists and ESL teachers to participate in morning common planning time, that this a collaborative process. According to the art teacher, “We have the opportunity to attend conferences and attend morning common planning time – as an art teacher, it has helped me to write my SLOs, I am being able to determine how to authentically assess my students in my field.”

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Framework Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning*.

Finding 1e: The school has developed school-wide goals, has a plan for measuring progress towards those goals, and responding to progress.

Evidence: The school has developed in goals in the areas of communication, reading, mathematics, and behavior. These goals were developed during the 2012-2013 school year using the four phase data dialogue by the Level Leaders (school based management team). The goals are as follows:

- Communication – all parents will be individually contacted at least once per month by their child’s homeroom teacher and support services provider (if applicable). This communication will be documented in a Parent Communication Log and charted by the CAO before monthly staff meetings; the data is then analyzed using the four phase model and identify trends and targets.
- Reading – by June 2014, 80 percent or more of our students in K-8 independent reading levels will be at or above grade level (as measured by Fountas and Pinnell running records).
- Mathematics – By June 2014, 90 percent or more of students in K-8 will be able to achieve their grade level Mathematics Fact goals.
- By June 2014, 80 percent or more of students in K-8 will achieve proficiency or higher proficiency on the final Interim Mathematics Assessments.
- Behavior – all students who are sent to the office for disciplinary reasons will either (a) have an Office Referral or (b) receive an Office Referral within ten minutes of being sent. At every All Staff Meeting, the monthly data for Office Referrals will be presented and a monthly Office Referral goal will be set that aims to rigorously reduce the number of Office Referrals.

Staff submits their progress on a Goal Tracking Card to the CAO monthly, who then reports out progress towards the School-Wide Goals. Committees that deal with each goal meet monthly to review data, develop action plans, and determine whether goals need to be updated or refined.

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Framework Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning and Performance Framework Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate and Family Engagement*.

Finding 1f: Teachers plan to deliver high-quality, rigorous instruction and receive timely feedback from administration to improve instructional practice.

Evidence: Teachers submit lesson plans to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) or the Student and Service Support Director (SSSD) for “feedback of strengths” and “needs and suggestions”, aligned to the Charlotte Danielson lesson plan rubric, Domain 1 and Domain 4. Teachers participate in one-on-one

Buffalo Public School District ECS Renewal Report – 2013

feedback sessions with either the CAO of the SSSD and also collaboratively review lesson plans during common planning time. During the teacher focus group interview, teachers indicated that the rubric for lesson plans is very clear and that they receive valuable feedback from the CAO and the SSSD regarding objectives, standards, procedures, integration, and differentiation. Teachers also have multiple opportunities built into their daily schedule for collaborating with colleagues and development of lesson plans, including 55 minutes each morning before the instructional day begins and common planning time and a common lunch period is shared with Level teachers.

Through PICCS, both the CAO and the SSSD are receiving on-going professional development in on the Danielson Framework. From the partnership focus group, a consultant was quoted as saying, “ECS is very effective at using their time in the PLC and have set protocols, they do the work horizontally and vertically – we meet with all of the teachers – we are in year 4 of the 5 year plan. We offer Danielson training and several have already gone through and are currently involved. This year, the PLCs are more defined, they know how it operates, they are doing a much better job than they have in the past. They also have a better understanding of protocols and their data training is being implemented and embracing the use of data. Training is in place and teachers are held accountable to demonstrate their learning.”

Lesson plans were viewed in every classroom observed. All lesson plans were aligned to Danielson and identified the goal of the lesson, how they are going assess the goal and how they are going to teach to attain the goal.

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Framework Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning*.

Finding 1g: In order to more effectively monitor student progress during the school year, the school utilizes a Student Readiness Index (SRI).

Evidence: The Student Readiness Index (SRI) is a tool developed by the ECS leadership team that gathers information from several sources to identify student performance trends. This information is used to help quantify where students are in their development and identify students who are in need of additional targeted instructional supports. Teachers receive an updated SRI for each of their students at the end of marking period and the information from this tool is used to direct conversations with administrators, specialists, students and parents. Teachers use the SRI document to design appropriate intervention based strategies to improve student performance.

The ECS leadership team revised the SRI early in the 2012-2013 school year, modifying the weighting of the various sources (AIMSweb data, attendance data, and report card data) to better align and provide a more accurate picture of student readiness.

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Framework Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning*.

Finding 1h: Climate is characterized by high, clear expectations for student behavior and routines and students are actively engaged in learning.

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Evidence: Classroom climate is characterized by high, clear expectations for student behaviors and routines. There was clear and consistent evidence in 18/20 classrooms observed and partial evidence in 1/20 classrooms observed. Students participate and are engaged in learning.

The school has developed a tool for supporting their PBIS implementation. SCORE 5 is a universal Tier 1 behavior management system. According to a parent, "SCORE helps my child focus and keeps him motivated." Teachers have explicitly taught students the expectations and there is a common language evident at ECS as teachers and students were regularly heard referring to "expectations", such as "Thank you for meeting learning expectations today," and "You are not demonstrating hallway expectations."

ECS has also adopted *The Leader in Me* framework and are in year one of implementation. *Leader in Me* is a process based on the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, and the effect on culture and climate. It is about finding ones unique voice and talent and understanding that leadership is a choice, not a position. It gives students opportunities to be leaders in their school, so that can translate into the in their family and personal life. Common outcomes include increased attendance, increased academics, reduced behavior issues, and increased parent satisfaction. All ECS staff, including teachers, administrators, clerical and maintenance, received four full days of training on understanding the elements of the 7 habits and creating a plan for implementation for the school year.

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Framework Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning* and *Performance Framework Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate and Family Engagement*.

Finding 1i: The school establishes and maintains an environment for students, staff, and other stakeholders that is physically safe and free from harassment and discrimination.

Evidence: Relationships among stakeholder groups appear to be positive and productive with cordial and respectful relationships between teachers and students, as evidenced by classroom observation evidence gathered during the current renewal charter. The school practices lockdown and fire drills as required. ECS works in collaboration with emergency personnel to prepare and facilitate drills.

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Framework Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate and Family Engagement*.

Finding 1j: The school effectively addresses the social, emotional, and health needs of its students and the key components of the school's climate and culture reflect the school mission and design.

Evidence: The key design element of non-violence education and conflict resolution is effectively implemented as evidenced by the student behaviors observed during site visits and parent, teacher, and student focus group interviews. The aforementioned work of the *Leader in Me* is also supporting evidence for this finding.

A student advisory group was established in 2013 and currently includes 12 students from grade 7 – 8. Students were selected based on their potential to be peer leaders, not based on academics. During the student focus group interview, members of the student advisory group shared an informational video they had produced about ECS. A student indicated that they, "feel like I am part of the leadership team at ECS, we get to influence decisions." One positive outcome noted was that discipline issues have

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decreased for students in the group and also for their peers as they provide positive peer pressure to, “do the right thing.”

ECS has a Student Advocacy Team which consists of the Dean of Students, school nurse, school psychologist, social worker, and guidance counselor, led by the SSSD. This team meets weekly and the purpose is to identify students in needs and communicate the need to the school community so they are working in concert to support each student. Case managers are assigned to each student to act as the conduit between classroom academics and social emotional needs.

Another key design element of ECS involves partnerships. During the Partnership Focus Group Interview, all partners resoundingly agreed that ECS is very accommodating and they feel they have built strong partnership together. Several of the after school partners also participate in the monthly Family Fun Nights showcasing afterschool activities. ECS has partnerships including, but not limited to the following:

- **Gateway Longview** - currently working with about 60 caseloads, ECS completed an internal needs assessment and sought us out to serve their students
- **D’Youville School of Nursing** - nursing students work in the clinical setting
- **Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center** - service 50 students and also have a program, Language to Literacy, where therapists infuse literacy into speech therapy
- **Big Brother/Big Sister of WNY** - facilitate an after school site based program with a variety of activities focused heavily on academics; have a folder program that the site coordinator can communicate with the teacher, currently working with 30 students, but have the capacity to work with up to 100
- **Willie Hutch Jones Junior Achievement** – after school program with 47 students participating, offer a variety of activities including science activities, steel drumming, chess, creative dance and a communication program for radio and TV editing
- **Franklin Covey** – facilitates implementation of *the Leader in Me*, a process based on the 7 habits of highly effective people, implemented for the staff and students; common outcomes, increased attendance, increased academics, reduced behavior, and increased parent satisfaction
- **Buffalo State College** – Buffalo State students in the literacy program are on site Mondays and Wednesdays and work with benchmark and above students in grades 1 – 6 in small group instruction focused on guided reading during the RtI block while classroom teachers are providing instructional interventions intensive and strategic students
- **Junior Achievement** - Deliver financial literacy and work ready program to connect the business world with the academic world traditionally in class and after school, serving 373 in grades K– 7
- **Teacher Incentive Program – PICCs** - ECS is one of 5 charters in Buffalo who received this grant; PICCS work primarily with the teachers and administrators to develop the teacher performance plan and bring in experts in the field, using data, professional learning committees, and peer review to enhance the other professional development that is provided
- **AmeriCorps** - AmeriCorps builds lives through education and the goal is to increase academic goals in the educational setting; schools submit an RFP to receive members and they must demonstrate that they have a well thought out plan of how to utilize members; ECS has 4 members who provide instruction during the 50 minute RtI block, push in on student independent work, work with small groups in kindergarten, and tutor individual students; all members have set schedules and are certified teachers who receive a stipend from AmeriCorps;

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in addition to their daily work schedule, they must complete a service project – past projects include organizing and leveling the ECS library

- **Friends of Hispanic Arts** - after school program which meets once weekly where local artists donate their time to developing the talents of students, ultimately creating an annual performance to showcase their work, 60 students are involved

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Framework Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning, Performance Framework Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate and Family Engagement, and Performance Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements.*

Finding 1k: School leaders effectively communicate with all members of the school community, including parents/families, students, and other stakeholders.

Evidence: ECS communicates with parents/families and students via phone calls, progress reports, parent-teacher conferences, and the parent portal (internet) and communications are sent in English and Spanish. Evidence of school to home communications was provided during the document review and during the parent focus group, when discussing school to home communications with parents, parents indicated that, “it feels like we have a parent teacher conference every day, before tests, they talk to us about the test and what you need to know, but they contact you all the time, whenever there is something to discuss.” All nine parents interviewed agreed that they receive weekly communications from their child’s teacher(s).

Parents indicated that communications regarding the renewal process were sent home in the monthly newsletter and in a separate letter; these communications were also evidenced during the document review.

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Framework Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Family Engagement.*

2. IS THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONALLY VIABLE AND ABLE TO OPERATE IN A FISCALLY SOUND MANNER?

Finding 2a: The school is fiscally healthy.

Evidence: The BOT provides financial oversight as evidenced by the BOT and committee minutes provided. Assessing the “soundness” of decisions is difficult beyond the fact that they are able to develop a balanced budget and maintain more than adequate liquidity to support operations. ECS contracts with a firm of Certified Public Accountants (CPA) who assists with managing the fiscal operations of the school. The CPAs prepare financial documents, budgets, and perform analyses and report to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Board. Additionally, one of the CPAs dedicated to the operation of the school meets monthly with the Board’s Finance Committee to review budgets and the school’s financial status. The Board approves the annual operating budget, reviews monthly budget reports, reviews quarterly cash flow and fund balances, and requires an annual independent financial audit. Monthly submissions of documents requested by the Buffalo Board of Education are timely and complete. ECS adheres to a balanced budget, follows generally accepted accounting practices, is

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operating pursuant to long range financial planning, tracks grant funds, and follows appropriate accounting procedures for managing payroll.

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Framework Benchmark 4: Financial Condition, Performance Framework Benchmark 5: Financial Management, and Performance Framework Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance.*

Finding 2b: The BOT have undergone significant changes in the past year. BOT members provide competent stewardship and oversight of the school and are developing/updating policies, have established performance goals, and are implementing systems to ensure academic success, organizational viability, board effectiveness and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.

Evidence: The BOT has transitioned in terms of composition, bringing on five new members since August 2012. Recruitment of BOT members was purposeful in that they sought to bring on members with board experience, financial experience, community involvement experience, and educational experience. Currently, they are seeking to fill two vacant positions and are looking for individuals with legal experience, an individual with ties to the community, and an additional individual with financial experience.

This past summer, the BOT began board training through a consultant that began with a needs assessment. It was determined that the BOT needed training on the roles and responsibilities of BOT members, as well as a session on Federal and State Charter Law. Additionally, the BOT developed their own set of goals and will assess themselves on their progress towards those goals. BOT goals are set to be shared with the school and the public within one to two months. These goals were developed along with the consultant during a BOT retreat on October 28, 2013. The consultant assisted the BOT in identifying goals and articulating them so that it is clear to the BOT what they need to do and how they will assess whether they have met the goal. The BOT continues to use the High Bar as an organizational tool for management of documents.

The BOT then set out to restructure their meetings and developed the Committee as a Whole. This model brings all BOT members together for all committee meetings, with the main focus being academic achievement, but allowing for other committee work to be presented as needed. With a brand new board, this allows all members to be part of all committee discussions and keep everyone on the same page. The BOT also created a consent agenda in order to be more efficient with their time. Board minutes, reviewed monthly, provide evidence that the BOT provide appropriate oversight to school operations.

A BOT member stated, “previously, it was evident the BOT was reliant on the CEO, but we are taking purposeful steps with the CEO so that she understands that we are the leadership body, we are not serving at her pleasure, it is the other way around.” The BOT are working towards the development of a comprehensive policy manual as well as a New Board member information packet.

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Framework Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance and Performance Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity.*

Finding 2c: The BOT are developing a system for assessing performance of the CEO against clearly defined goals in order to make effective and timely use of the evaluations.

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Evidence: In discussion with the BOT, it was acknowledged that the previous BOT did not evaluate the prior CEO in a way that was meaningful. Therefore, the BOT are developing a system for assessing the CEO's performance which includes an evaluation of her 90 day entry plan, an evaluation in February to refine goals, and also a summative evaluation in June of annual goals. While the ISSC standards will be the basis for her evaluation, a tool has not yet been identified. Previously, the Val-Ed evaluation tool was used, but while appropriate for an evaluation of a school "principal", it is not appropriate for a school "superintendent". The BOT are working with Dr. Tim O'Neill and will have a tool identified with the next month.

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Framework Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance* and *Performance Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity*.

Finding 2d: The board has avoided creating conflicts of interest where possible and, where not possible, has managed those conflicts of interest in a clear and transparent manner.

Evidence: All BOT members have a signed conflict of interest form on file. In keeping with the Operations Agreement with Buffalo Public School District (the authorizer), ECS notifies the district whenever there is a change to in the Board roster and forwards all signed conflict of interest forms prior to appointment.

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Framework Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance*.

3. IS THE SCHOOL FAITHFUL TO THE TERMS OF ITS CHARTER AND HAS IT ADHERED TO APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS?

Finding: The school demonstrates faithfulness to the mission, vision, and educational philosophy defined in the current charter and the school provided evidence that each of the key elements are being addressed to some extent.

Evidence 3a: The school's mission statement is, "engaging young minds through projects and partnerships". The key elements of the current charter are:

Project Based Learning (PBL): PBL is implemented with varying degrees of fidelity, as evidenced by classroom observations and review of lesson plans. In some classrooms, PBL appears to be implemented as activities around a topic, as opposed to implementation through the 3 phases of PBL.

Extended School Year/Day: ECS offers an extended day and extended school year, when compared to the District of location. School instructional hours are 9:25 am – 3:47 pm with before and after school hours from 7:00 am – 5:00 pm. ECS currently has a 195 day academic calendar. A variety of after school programming is available to students.

Departmentalization: ECS is departmentalized from grades 5 – 8 as evidenced by site visit and review of teacher schedules.

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Differentiation/Individualized Instruction: Differentiation was evidenced were applicable, in 11/15 classrooms observed. Learning centers were evident in all classrooms where appropriate.

Non-Violence Education and Conflict Resolution: The school has implemented PBIS.

Constructivism: Constructivism allows for students to have input on the delivery and content of instruction. The art department has adopted the Teaching for Artist Behavior (TAB) model of instruction, which is supported by the constructivist model of instruction. Additionally, constructivism was evident during the feedback stage of Readers and Writers workshop and during project based learning instruction.

Looping: ECS utilizes looping in grades 1 – 8 as evidenced by the site visit and review of teacher schedules.

Academic offerings include specials at every level: Art, music, physical education, computers/technology, guidance, and foreign language is offered full year at every grade level as evidenced by site visit and review of teacher schedules.

Enrichment and Academic Intervention Services: A Response to Intervention (RtI) block is offered daily during the instructional school day to provide students extra time in reading and mathematics. Groupings are based on student performance and the classroom teacher’s recommendation. All students who scored a Level 1 or 2 are required to participate in AIS. The RtI block has been scheduled as a tumbling period to maximize staff contact with students. Groupings are fluid and adjustments are made every trimester.

Commitment to Staff Development: Evidence of a thorough professional development plan was presented along with artifacts that correlate to what was presented in focus groups, in the renewal application, and the document review.

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements*.

Finding 3b: The school is meeting annual targets for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program.

Evidence: ECS has 18% students with disabilities, 11% English Language Learners, and 95% students who are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program. Enterprise is within or exceeds the required range for each target.

Population	Enrollment			Retention		
	FRPL	LEP	SWD	FRPL	LEP	SWD
Target	88.9%	10.9%	21%	84.6%	82.4%	81.6%
Actual	95%	11%	21%	100%	91%	91%

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention*.

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Finding 3c: The school adheres to the New York State Charter School Act and Federal Charter Law.

Evidence: There are no instances noted where the school failed to adhere to the New York State School Act or Federal Charter Law.

This provides evidence towards meeting the standard for *Performance Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance*.

RECOMMENDATION FOR RENEWAL

It is recommended that ECS be renewed for a term of two years, from July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2016, with the data from the 2012 – 2013 CC-aligned ELA and Math NY State Assessments providing the baseline data from which academic growth will be measured. Subsequent renewals will be based upon the schools ability to provide families of the Buffalo Public Schools with a high quality school (as evidenced by the academic success, faithfulness to their charter, organizational and fiscal viability, and adherence to applicable federal and state charter laws) where student achievement improves through the use of innovative teaching techniques. Therefore, the following conditions are recommended, to be determined following approval of a three year renewal term:

- In the case where the school is faithful to their charter, organizationally and fiscally viable, and adhering to applicable federal and state charter laws, academics will be the determining factor for subsequent renewals
 - Academic performance goals will be included in the operating agreement
 - The 2013 New York State CC-aligned ELA and Mathematics Assessment data for ECS grades 3 – 8 will serve as the baseline from which growth will be measured
- Oversight to be aligned to the New York State Education Department's *Charter School Performance Framework and Renewal Protocol* to monitor progress toward any compliance issues identified, with site visits, at minimum, but not limited to, four times annually
 - The *Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness* will be used a review tool; means such as interviews, classroom observations and surveys will be utilized to gather evidence of effectiveness
- Request to increase enrollment is not approved.