



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

**TO:** P-12 Education Committee

**FROM:** Ken Slentz 

**SUBJECT:** Charter Schools: Charter Renewal Recommendation for the Hebrew Language Academy Charter School, Authorized by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE)

**DATE:** January 8, 2014

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**   
SUMMARY

**Issue for Decision**

Should the Regents approve the proposed renewal charter for the Hebrew Language Academy Charter School which is authorized by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE)?

**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 January 2014 Regents meeting.

**Procedural History**

The Chancellor of the NYCDOE approved this renewal charter and submitted it 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.

**Background Information**

I recommend that the Board of Regents approve the proposed one and ½ year renewal charter for the Hebrew Language Academy Charter School as proposed by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) as a charter school

authorizer under Article 56 of the Education Law, and that the charter be extended for the term indicated below. The Summary of the NYCDOE's Renewal Recommendation Report for the School is attached to this item. The full Renewal Report can be viewed on the NYCDOE Web site at the following link:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/0360D5E3-594E-4E41-A70A-23070D17831B/0/HLARenewalReportFinal.pdf?>

### **Recommendation**

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that the proposed charter school: (1) meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) will operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) 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 Article 56 of the Education Law; and (4) will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school, and the Board of Regents therefore approves and issues the renewal charter of the **Hebrew Language Academy Charter School** as proposed by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including June 30, 2015.

### **Timetable for Implementation**

The Regents action for the Hebrew Language Academy Charter School will become effective immediately.

Attachment

## Part 1: Summary of Renewal Recommendation

### I. Charter School Overview:

Name of Charter School	Hebrew Language Academy Charter School
Current Board Chair(s)	Sara Berman
School Leader	Laura Silver
Management Company (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 22
Physical Address	1340 East 29 <sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn, 11210
Facility	Private
School Opened For Instruction	2009
Current Charter Term Expiry Date	1/12/2014
Maximum Grade Levels/Enrollment at Expiry Date	K-5 / 450
Proposed Charter Term	1.5 years
Proposed Maximum Grade Levels / Authorized Enrollment at New Expiry Date	K-5/ 450

### II. Overview of School-Specific Data:

#### Performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade	-	-	C	F
Student Progress	-	-	F	F
Student Performance	-	-	C	C
School Environment	-	-	F	B
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	-	-	1.6	0.6

#### Students scoring at or above Level 3, compared to CSD, NYC, and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Hebrew Language Academy Charter School	-	-	59.2%	29.0%
CSD 22	-	-	55.5%	32.9%
Difference from CSD 22	-	-	3.7	-3.9
NYC	-	-	49.0%	27.7%
Difference from NYC	-	-	10.2	1.3
New York State	-	-	55.2%	31.2%
Difference from New York State	-	-	4.0	-2.2

% Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Hebrew Language Academy Charter School	-	-	66.2%	35.9%
CSD 22	-	-	61.3%	39.3%
Difference from CSD 22	-	-	4.9	-3.4
NYC	-	-	57.0%	34.2%
Difference from NYC	-	-	9.2	1.7
New York State	-	-	65.7%	28.9%
Difference from New York State	-	-	0.5	7.0

All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

Academic Goal Analysis (based on School's submission)					
	1st Year 2009-2010	2nd Year 2010-2011	3rd year 2011-2012	4th Year 2012-2013	Cumulative 4-Year Total
<b>Total Achievable Academic Goals</b>	4	6	25	27	62
# Met	2	1	13	10	26
# Partially Met	1	0	1	3	5
# Not Met	1	5	11	14	31
% Met	50%	17%	52%	37%	42%
% Partially Met	25%	0%	4%	11%	8%
% Not Met	25%	83%	44%	52%	50%

### **III. Rationale for Recommendation**

#### **A. Academic Performance**

At the time of this school's renewal, Hebrew Language Academy Charter School (HLA) has partially demonstrated academic success. While HLA received an overall F grade this year on the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Progress Report, the school has, in both years of operation, performed in the top 50% of all elementary schools citywide, based on ELA and Math proficiency.

The New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 establishes a system of charter schools throughout New York State, with objectives that include, "(a) Improve student learning and achievement;" and "(b) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure."

The Hebrew Language Academy Charter School's mission is to be a nurturing yet rigorous elementary dual language school committed to academic excellence as well as to fostering a high degree of Hebrew language proficiency. HLA strives for students to achieve a sophisticated knowledge of English Language Arts, mathematics, the sciences, and social studies. HLA will enhance the curriculum through art, music, technology, and physical education, all of which will incorporate Hebrew language instruction, using a partial immersion proficiency model. HLA seeks to develop a strong sense of social and civic responsibility through the integration of community service and service learning into their classroom studies. The school seeks to graduate students with a solid foundation for further academic learning and continuous personal development as ethical citizens in an increasingly global community.

The school entered its fifth year of operation with the start of the 2013-2014 academic year. Therefore, the New York City Department of Education has two NYC DOE Progress Reports and has two years of NYS assessment data to evaluate the academic achievement and progress of the students at HLA. NYC DOE Progress Reports grade each school with an A, B, C, D, or F and are based on the school's performance in each of these categories: student progress, student performance, school environment, with additional points for closing the achievement gap contributing to the overall grade. Scores are based on comparing results from one school to a peer group of up to 40 schools with the most similar student population and to all schools citywide.

Over the time that NYS assessment data has been captured for HLA, it has performed better than schools citywide, been on par with district schools, but not demonstrated progress at the same rate as peer schools. In 2011-2012, the first year the school was eligible for a NYC DOE Progress Report, the school received an overall grade of C. On its 2012-2013 NYC DOE Progress Report, HLA received an overall grade of F. Despite the overall F grade, HLA's proficiency has ranked the school in the top 50% of elementary schools citywide. In both years of testing, HLA outperformed the city in both ELA and math. This year, HLA ranked in the top 40% of elementary schools citywide based on the school's ELA and math proficiency. Last year, HLA ranked in the top 35% in ELA and the top 43% in math of all elementary schools citywide. Furthermore, the school's average math proficiency rating in 2012-2013 was 2.79, which puts it in the top third of the city<sup>1</sup>. HLA has also outperformed both Community School District (CSD) 22 and the city in ELA and math in 2011-2012. District 22 is one of New York City's higher performing districts, performing in the top third of the city.

Despite performing above the citywide average in both years of operation, HLA students experienced relatively little performance growth. For this reason, the school received an F grade on Progress. The Student Progress subsection of the Progress Report is mostly based on Median Adjusted Growth Percentiles. The school's Median Adjusted Growth Percentiles in 2012-2013

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<sup>1</sup> The average proficiency rate is a measure that represents the mean proficiency rating for all students attributed to the school.

placed the school in the bottom 1% of elementary schools for English and the bottom 3% of elementary schools for math. citywide.<sup>2</sup>

Over the course of the charter term, the school has met or partially met thirty-two of sixty-two (52%) of its academic charter goals<sup>3</sup>. In addition, the school has consistently met its charter goal of remaining in good standing with state and federal accountability.

HLA has a developed responsive education program and supportive learning environment. The school provides a partial language immersion model, which employs a co-teaching instructional approach with two teachers providing instruction in both Hebrew and English. HLA utilizes a Response to Intervention (RTI) and Child Study Team (CST) approach to provide learning supports for at-risk students and students with disabilities. The school consistently collects, analyses, and utilizes data to inform student outcomes. The school is supported by a community based organization that provides many ways for teachers to receive professional development.

During its current charter term, the school received annual site visits from the NYC DOE in the spring of 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. The reviewers cited the school's range of assessments to monitor student progress. The school has been improving upon the types of assessments they collect year over year and their methods of using the data. Reviewers also cited the school's consistent approach to providing professional development through regular observations, curriculum studies, and conference attendance. HLA was also recognized for establishing a student-centered environment that promotes student progress and provides multiple opportunities for struggling students to receive academic assistance.<sup>4</sup>

## **B. Governance, Operations & Finances**

Hebrew Language Academy is a fiscally sound and viable organization.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has maintained a developed governance structure and organizational design. The Board currently has ten members, which is more than the minimum number of five members delineated in the school's bylaws. The Board has demonstrated effective oversight of the school as evidenced by regular school leadership updates on academic progress to the Board, well established lines of accountability, and established committees.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has partially developed a stable school culture. The school has had mixed results on its Learning Environment Surveys for parent and teacher satisfaction of the school. The school has met its authorized enrollment each year of its charter.

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<sup>2</sup> This measure calculates the median (middle) adjusted growth percentile of a school's eligible students. A student's growth percentile compares his or her growth to the growth of all students in the City who started at the same level of proficiency the year before. A student's growth percentile is a number between 0 and 100, which represents the percentage of students with the same score on last year's test who scored the same or lower than the student on this year's test. To evaluate a school on its students' growth percentile, the Progress Report uses an adjusted growth percentile. Growth percentile adjustments are based on students' demographic characteristics and reflect average differences in growth compared to students with the same starting proficiency level. The Progress Report evaluates a school based on its median adjusted growth percentile, the adjusted growth percentile of the middle student when all students adjusted growth percentiles are listed from lowest to highest.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% absolute proficiency or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and Math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals. Goals that compared the school to the Community School District performance were included in the analysis.

<sup>4</sup> Hebrew Language Academy Charter School Annual Site Visit Reports, 2011, 2012.

Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices. There was no material weakness noted in the 2009-2010, 2010-2011 or 2011-2012 independent annual financial audits.

**C. Compliance with Charter, Applicable Law and Regulations**

Over the charter term, Hebrew Language Academy and the Board of Trustees has been compliant with all applicable laws and regulations.

**D. Plans for Next Charter Term**

After the 2013-2014 school year, HLA proposes to expand to serve grades 6-8. HLA proposes to take a pause in its planned expansion in order to focus more intensively on the successful implementation of additional capacity-building initiatives. The delay in expansion would allow the school to strengthen instruction as well as targeted interventions to address areas of student need and to demonstrate improvement in student progress.

For the aforementioned reasons, the NYC DOE recommends a short term renewal.

During the next charter term, the NYC DOE will continue to monitor HLA's academic performance in regards to student progress. If the school is interested in applying for a grade expansion during the next charter term, the school should submit that request to the NYC DOE for future consideration.