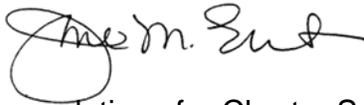




TO: P-12 Education Committee

FROM: Jhone M. Ebert 

SUBJECT: Renewal Recommendations for Charter Schools
Authorized by the Board of Regents

DATE: January 11, 2018

AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Board of Regents approve the proposed renewal charters for the following charter schools authorized by the Board of Regents pursuant to Article 56 of the Education Law (the New York Charter Schools Act):

1. **Charter School of Educational Excellence** (five-year renewal)
2. **Great Oaks Charter School** (four-year renewal)
3. **Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School** (four-year renewal and a grade-level and enrollment expansion)
4. **Utica Academy of Science Charter School** (five-year renewal and a grade-level and enrollment expansion)

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute.

Proposed Handling

This issue will be before the P-12 Education Committee and the Full Board for action at the January 2018 Regents meeting.

Procedural History

The New York State Education Department (“the Department”) is making the renewal recommendations to the Board of Regents for approval and issuance as required by Article 56 of the Education Law and 8 NYCRR 119.7 at the January 2018 meeting.

Background Information

Performance Framework

The Board of Regents Charter School Performance Framework (the “Framework”), which is part of the Board of Regents Charter School Renewal Policy and the Oversight Plan included in the Charter Agreement for each school, outlines three key areas of charter school performance: (1) Educational/Academic Success; (2) Organizational Soundness; and (3) Faithfulness to Charter and Law. The Framework sets forth ten performance benchmarks in these three areas. The Framework is designed to focus on performance outcomes, to preserve operational autonomy and to facilitate transparent feedback to schools. It aligns with the ongoing accountability and effectiveness work with traditional public schools and balances clear performance measures with Regents’ discretion.

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

Performance Benchmark	
Educational Success	Benchmark 1: Student Performance: The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward proficiency, proficiency and high school graduation. At all grade levels and all assessments, scoring proficiently means achieving a performance level of 3 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).
	Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning: School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that lead to students' well-being, improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the NYS 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.
	Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Family Engagement: The school has systems in place to support students' social and emotional health and to provide for a safe and respectful learning environment. Families, community members and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school's academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.
Organizational Soundness	Benchmark 4: Financial Condition: The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.
	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.
	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.
Faithfulness to Charter & Law	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.
	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.
	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.
	Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance: The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.

Charter School Renewal Applications

In Article 56 of the Education Law, Section 2852(2) requires the chartering entity (in this case the Board of Regents) to make the following findings when considering a charter renewal application:

- (a) The charter school described in the application meets the requirements set out in this article and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- (b) The applicant can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner;
- (c) 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-one of this article; and
- (d) In a school district where the total enrollment of resident students attending charter schools in the base year is greater than five percent of the total public school enrollment of the school district in the base year (i) granting the application would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school or (ii) the school district in which the charter school will be located consents to such application.

In addition, Renewal Guidelines contained in the Regulations of the Commissioner (8 NYCRR 119.7(d)) were adopted by the Board of Regents, and require that the Board further consider the following when evaluating a charter renewal application:

- (a) The information in the charter school's renewal application;
- (b) Any additional material or information submitted by the charter school;
- (c) Any public comments received;
- (d) Any information relating to the site visit and the site visit report;
- (e) The charter school's annual reporting results including, but not limited to, student academic achievement;
- (f) The Department's renewal recommendation and the charter school's written response, if any; and
- (g) Any other information that the board, in its discretion, may deem relevant to its determination whether the charter should be renewed.

Beyond the requirements to make the findings set forth in the Education Law and consider the factors set forth above, the Charter Schools Act leaves the decision of whether to renew a charter to the sound discretion of the Board of Regents.

Related Regents Items

2009 First renewal Initial Charter

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/documents/meetings/2009Meetings/January2009/0109emsca1.doc>

2013 Second renewal

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/213p12a1%5B1%5D.pdf>

Great Oaks Charter School

2012 Initial Charter

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/documents/meetings/2012Meetings/November2012/1112p12a3.pdf>

2014 Revision to add a management company

http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1014p12a1_0.pdf

2015 Revision to relocate and decrease enrollment

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/meetings/Apr%202015/415p12a6.pdf>

Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School

2012 Initial Charter

<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/documents/meetings/2012Meetings/June2012/612p12a2.pdf>

2015 Revision to add comprehensive management services

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1215p12a2.pdf>

Utica Academy of Science Charter School

2012 Initial Charter

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/documents/meetings/2012Meetings/November2012/1112p12a3.pdf>

2017 Merger

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/617p12a3.pdf>

Recommendations

The State Education Department Renewal Recommendations

The attached Renewal Recommendation Summary Reports provide summary information about the Renewal Applications before the Regents for action at the January 2018 meeting, as well as an analysis of the academic and fiscal performance of each of the schools over the charter term.

Pursuant to Education Law §2851(2)(p), charters may be renewed for a charter term of no more than five years. The Department typically makes renewal recommendations for a full term of five years, or a short term of three years. The Department may also make recommendations for non-renewal, and has additional

flexibilities to make renewal recommendations for other charter term lengths when deemed appropriate.

The Department considers evidence related to the ten performance benchmark areas of the Charter School Performance Framework when making recommendations to the Regents concerning charter renewal applications. However, student academic performance is of paramount importance when evaluating each school. The recommendations below were made after a full due-diligence process over the charter term, including review of the information presented by the schools in their Renewal Applications, specific fiscal reviews, a two-day renewal site visit conducted by a Department team for each school, comprehensive analysis of achievement data, and consideration of public comment. Over the course of the charter term, the Department will closely monitor all charter schools based on the Monitoring and Oversight Plan.

Renewal Recommendations

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that, the **Charter School of Educational Excellence**: (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 the **Charter School of Educational Excellence** and that a renewal charter be issued, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including **June 30, 2023**.

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that, the **Great Oaks Charter School**: (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 the **Great Oaks Charter School** and that a renewal charter be issued, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including **June 30, 2022**.

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that, the **Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School**: (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 the **Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School** and that a renewal charter be issued, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including **June 30, 2022**.

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that, the **Utica Academy of Science Charter School**: (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 the **Utica Academy of Science Charter School** and that a renewal charter be issued, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including **June 30, 2023**.

Timetable for Implementation

The Regents action for the above-named charter schools will become effective on July 1, 2018.

Charter School of Educational Excellence

In accordance with Education Law, Article 56, Sections 2851(4) and 2852(2), Commissioners Regulation 119.7, and the Board of Regents Charter School Performance Framework, the **New York State Education Department recommends a full-term renewal for a period of five years for Charter School of Educational Excellence. The charter term would begin on July 1, 2018 and expire on June 30, 2023.**

Charter School of Educational Excellence (CSEE) is meeting the academic performance benchmarks for all students, as well as at-risk populations which include students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students in both English language arts, and mathematics. Eighth grade students have taken two Regents subject exams and have proficiency rates significantly higher than the district of location, as well as the state average. Additionally, the school is meeting all benchmarks set forth in the Board of Regents Charter School Performance Framework.

CSEE is meeting enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the Board of Regents for economically disadvantaged students. The school is close to meeting the district of location targets for English Language learners and students with disabilities. To continue their goal to serve at-risk students, the school has implemented several strategies to recruit additional students in at-risk categories. The school is implementing the mission, key design elements, education program and organizational plan set forth in the charter.

Charter School Summary

Name of Charter School	Charter School of Educational Excellence
Board Chair	Eduardo LaGuerre
District of location	Yonkers City School District
Opening Date	September 2005
Charter Terms	Initial Charter Term: 07/01/2005 to 06/30/2010 First Renewal: Short Term 07/01/2010 to 06/30/2013 Second Renewal: Full Term 07/01/2013 to 06/30/2018
Current Term Authorized Grades/Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Grades K-8/690 students
Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/Proposed Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Grades K-8/729 students ¹
Comprehensive Management Service Provider	N/A
Facilities	260 Warburton Ave, Yonkers, NY 10701
Mission Statement	<i>"The Charter School of Educational Excellence's mission is to develop students who are critical thinkers, motivated leaders, and lifelong learners."</i>

¹ * Enrollment of 729 students is subject to approval by the Board of Regents in a separate Charter Revision Item being presented to the Board of Regents at their January 2018 meeting. The revision item recommends an enrollment increase from 669 students to 729 students effective January 23, 2018.

	<i>We are committed to a strong partnership with our teachers, parents, and community.”</i>
Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Extended Day of Eight Hours</i> • <i>Extended Blocks of Time for Basic Subjects</i> • <i>Using Teaching Assistants Throughout the Building</i> • <i>Standards-driven Curriculum and Instruction</i> • <i>Fostering Learning Experiences Through Meaningful Interactions with the Arts</i>
Requested Revisions	None

Current Grade Levels and Maximum Authorized Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Approved Enrollment	Actual Enrollment
2017-2018	K-8	669	699
2016-2017	K-8	669	699
2015-2016	K-8	669	691
2014-2015	K-8	669	660
2013-2014	K-8	669	658

Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Maximum Authorized Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Authorized Enrollment
2018-2019	K-8	729*
2019-2020	K-8	729*
2020-2021	K-8	729*
2021-2022	K-8	729*
2022-2023	K-8	729*

** Subject to approval by the Board of Regents in a separate Charter Revision Item being presented to the Board of Regents at their January 2018 meeting. The revision item recommends an enrollment increase from 669 students to 729 students effective January 23, 2018.*

Background

The Board of Regents granted an initial charter to CSEE on January 12, 2004. The school opened for instruction in September 2005, initially serving 250 students in grades K-4. This is the school’s third renewal.

Summary of Evidence for Renewal

Key Performance Area: Educational Success

Student Performance – Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

Over the five-year charter term, CSEE administered the NYS English language arts and mathematics assessments to students in Grades 3 through 8 as well as both the Regents Common Core Algebra I exam and Living Environment exam to 8th grade students. The outcomes from these assessments serve as the basis for determination of academic success in absolute proficiency outcomes and comparisons to the state and district of location.

The school continues to utilize the same New York State Learning Standard- aligned curricular materials as in its previous charter term as the foundation of the school's Board of Regents-approved academic program. The school uses Journeys and Go Math! texts and practice books for English language arts and math instruction, respectively, for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Teachers utilize Literature Common Core and Big Ideas Math in sixth grade and beyond. Since providing laptops for all students, CSEE staff has been incorporating some blended learning, digital lessons, and interim assessments from i-Ready across the school under the supervision of CSEE teaching staff.

The school implements a variety of teaching strategies across all grade levels to maintain high levels of student engagement while also leveraging frequent opportunities to customize learning for the differentiated learning needs of their students. These strategies include, but are not limited to, flexible small groupings in each classroom, differentiated online learning periods, and frequent hands-on activities.

CSEE employs an array of formative and summative assessments to measure student mastery of academic material; these include diagnostics, progress monitoring, benchmark and state exams. The school's full-time student information and data director collects, analyzes, and reports assessment data to teachers, families and, in aggregated form, the general school community to inform classroom instruction and programmatic decisions at both micro and macro levels.

CSEE dedicates significant resources to meet the needs of its at-risk students, particularly through its teaching and support staff. CSEE has a robust three-tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) system. The school employs a special education director, a special education teacher, a Title 1 director, six academic intervention teachers, an ELL services director, a school psychologist and a guidance counselor to meet the needs of diverse learners.

See tables 1 and 2 below regarding 3-8 ELA and mathematics exam aggregate and subgroup student performance compared to the district and state average.

Table 1: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes for All Students: School, District & State Level Aggregates

All Students	ELA					Math				
	Charter School of Educational Excellence	Yonkers School District	Variance to Yonkers School District	NYS	Variance to NYS	Charter School of Educational	Yonkers School District	Variance to Yonkers School District	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	42%	20%	+22	31%	+11	62%	24%	+38	38%	+24
2015-2016	55%	26%	+29	38%	+17	70%	26%	+44	39%	+31
2016-2017	53%	30%	+23	40%	+13	67%	31%	+36	40%	+27

Note: Data in Table 1 represents tested students in grades 3-8 at CSEE, the Yonkers City School District and the state average who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment. This table was created using grade level data to generate the comparative values, the percent difference between the school's performance and the district or state averages. All values were calculated to the nearest whole number; therefore, the percent differences may show a rounded value.

Table 2: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes for Special Populations

Subject	School Year	Students with Disabilities (Variance to the district of location)	English Language Learners (Variance to the district of location)	Economically Disadvantaged (Variance to the district of location)
ELA	2014-2015	24% (+20)	12% (+11)	42% (+27)
	2015-2016	37% (+32)	22% (+19)	56% (+35)
	2016-2017	26% (+18)	5% (+1)	54% (+29)
Mathematics	2014-2015	40% (+33)	31% (+26)	61% (+43)
	2015-2016	48% (+42)	26% (+21)	71% (+51)
	2016-2017	38% (+29)	22% (+15)	67% (+43)

See tables 3 and 3b below regarding Regents exam aggregate and subgroup student performance compared to the district average

Table 3—Regents Common Core Algebra I Proficiency SY 2016-2017

Number of Students Tested	Student Subgroup	CSEE Students Proficient	NYS Proficiency	Variance
53	All students	94%	74%	+20
6	Students with Disabilities	100%	45%	+55
41	Economically Disadvantaged	95%	67%	+28

Note: Some sub-group data may not be reported due to FERPA data suppression requirements.

Table 3b—Regents Living Environment SY 2016-2017

Number of students tested	Student Subgroup	CSEE Students Proficient	NYS Proficiency	Variance
19	All students	100%	74%	+26
15	Economically Disadvantaged	100%	64%	+36

Note: Some sub-group data may not be reported due to FERPA data suppression requirements.

According to the February 2017 ESEA accountability designations, CSEE continues to be a Reward school.

Key Performance Area: Organizational Viability

Financial Condition

CSEE appears to be in good financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the school's independently audited financial statements.

The Department's Charter School Office reviews the financial performance and management of charter schools using quantitative and qualitative methods. Near-term indicators, such as the current ratio and unrestricted days cash, are measures of liquidity and of the charter school's capacity to maintain operations. Long-term indicators, such as total margin and debt-to asset ratio, are measures of the charter school's capacity to remain viable and to meet financial obligations.

Overall Financial Outlook

A *composite score* is an overall measure of financial health calculated by the Department's Office of Audit Services. This score is based on a weighting of primary reserves, equity, and net income. A charter school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is considered to be in strong financial health. CSEE's composite score for 2015-2016 is 2.0. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2013-2014 to 2015-2016.

**Charter School of Educational Excellence’s Composite Scores
2013-2014 to 2015-2016**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2015-2016	2.0
2014-2015	1.6
2013-2014	1.2

Source: NYSED Office of Audit Services

Financial Management

The Charter School Office reviewed CSEE’s 2015-16 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that could be considered a material weakness.

Key Performance Area: Faithfulness to the Charter and Law

Enrollment, Recruitment and Retention

CSEE consistently meets the overall student enrollment projections outlined in the school’s charter. As demonstrated in table 4 below, CSEE has met and exceeded its enrollment targets for economically disadvantaged students in each year of the charter term. CSEE’s ELL student population has been close to, but slightly below, the district for the past two academic years. The school’s students with disabilities population continues to lag the district of location in 2016-17.

The school is making good faith efforts to recruit, serve, and retain all at-risk students². CSEE has placed a special emphasis on efforts to recruit and retain students with disabilities. These efforts include:

- Partnering with local organizations that serve at risk populations;
- Robust education plan with a Response to Intervention plan (RTI);
- Staffing plan to meet the needs of all learners; and
- Tutoring plan to meet the needs of all learners.

² Education Law §2854(2)(a) requires that schools demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities, FRPL eligible students and English Language Learners when compared to the enrollment figures for such students in the school district in which the charter is located. SUNY and the Regents were charged with setting specific enrollment and retention targets for each charter school, and have done so. Education Law §2852(9-a)(b)(i). All charter schools that were initially chartered after August 2010 or renewed after January 1, 2011, are expected to meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets set by the Regents and SUNY. When submitting an application for renewal of the charter, schools are required to provide information detailing the means by which they will meet the enrollment and retention targets (Education Law §2851(4)(e)), and this information is considered by the Regents in the review of the school’s performance over the charter term. A school’s plan to change its enrollment practices, whether by weighting the lottery or preferencing, may also be considered when determining whether the school will meet the targets in the upcoming charter term. A school’s repeated failure to meet or exceed its enrollment and retention targets, when combined with a failure to show that extensive efforts to meet the targets have been made, may be cause for termination or revocation of the charter pursuant to section Education Law §2855(1)(e).

Table 4: Student Demographics Charter School of Educational Excellence Compared to District of Location Yonkers City School District

	2015-2016 Percent of Enrollment			2016-2017 Percent of Enrollment			2017-2018 Percent of Enrollment ³
	School	District	Variance	School	District	Variance	School
Enrollment of Special Populations⁴							
Economically Disadvantaged	84%	76%	+8	83%	75%	+8	84%
English Language Learners	13%	15%	-2	12%	14%	-2	13%
Students with Disabilities	8%	17%	-9	8%	17%	-9	7%

The school has strong enrollment and backfills students from all grades utilizing its waitlist.

Student Retention

According to NYSED data, the overall student retention rate at CSEE is 75%. The district-wide retention rate in Yonkers City School District is roughly comparable at 78%. Retention rates for all students, students with disabilities, English-language learners, and economically disadvantaged students is roughly comparable to the district of location.

Legal Compliance

CSEE operates in accordance with applicable law, regulations, rules and other policies, including the terms of its charter, its by-laws and other school-specific policies. It is also in compliance with federally mandated disciplinary procedures for students with disabilities, and NYS DASA regulations. The board holds meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law.

Public Hearing Information

The required public hearing for the proposed CSEE charter renewal was held by the Yonkers City School District on September 13, 2017. Over three-hundred people attended. Eleven people spoke in favor and 29 speakers spoke against the school. Numerous emailed/hand-written comments were also received by the department. Most comments in opposition were not against the renewal but were, rather, against a grade level expansion that has subsequently been withdrawn.

³ Enrollment for the 2017-18 school year is preliminary and therefore cannot be compared to the district. The enrollment figures provided for the school year have been reported by the school.

⁴ Percentages of English language learners and students with disabilities include students who were exited from these services within the last three year of enrollment record.

Great Oaks Charter School

In accordance with Education Law, Article 56, Sections 2851(4) and 2852(2), Commissioners Regulation 119.7, and the Board of Regents Charter School Performance Framework, the **New York State Education Department recommends a full-term renewal for a period of four years for Great Oaks Charter School. The charter term would begin on July 1, 2018 and expire on June 30, 2022.**

Great Oaks Charter School (GOCS) is meeting the academic performance benchmarks for at-risk populations including students with disabilities and English language learners in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Economically disadvantaged students are meeting the academic outcome benchmark in mathematics and are approaching in ELA. Overall, GOCS is meeting most benchmarks set forth in the Board of Regents Performance Framework.

GOCS is meeting or exceeding enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the Board of Regents for students with disabilities, English Language learners, and economically disadvantaged students. The school is implementing the mission, key design elements, education program and organizational plan set forth in the charter.

Charter School Summary

Name of Charter School	Great Oaks Charter School
Board Chair	Susan Mustokoff Akselrad
District of location	NYC CSD 1
Opening Date	08/26/2013
Charter Terms	Initial Charter Term: 07/1/2013 to 06/30/2018
Current Term Authorized Grades/Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Grades 6-12/573 students
Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/ Proposed Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Grades 6-12/573 students
Comprehensive Management Service Provider	Great Oaks Foundation
Facilities	38 Delancey Street, New York, NY 10002
Mission Statement	<i>Great Oaks Charter School will prepare our students to succeed in college by obtaining a four-year degree. We will accomplish this by combining high academic and behavioral expectations for our students with an extraordinary level of individual attention to each student's needs through tutoring.</i>
Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School culture of high academic and behavioral expectations • Focus on building relationships with students and their families • Highly individualized academic program through daily tutoring delivered through the Tutor Corps • Small school environment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College-preparatory instruction • More time on task – longer school day/school year and Saturday programming • Data-driven instructional practices Focus on English language learners
Requested Revisions	None

Current Grade Levels and Maximum Authorized Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Approved Enrollment	Actual Enrollment
2017-2018	6-8*	423	231
2016-2017	6-8*	348	209
2015-2016	6-8	273	212
2014-2015	6-7	198	196
2013-2014	6	99	89

* Great Oaks Charter School is currently authorized to serve grades 6-12 but has not yet expanded to serve these grades.

Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Maximum Authorized Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Authorized Enrollment
2018-2019	6-9	300
2019-2020	6-10	399
2020-2021	6-11	498
2021-2022	6-12	573
2022-2023	6-12	573

Background

The Board of Regents granted an initial charter to Great Oaks Charter School in November 2012. The school opened for instruction in August 2013 initially serving 99 students in grade 6. This is the school's first renewal.

A key design element of the instructional program is one-to-one or small-group tutoring implemented by Tutor Corps members. The school has hired tutors, many of whom are bi-lingual, to work directly with all students and their families on a daily basis. They recruit tutors with the cultural/linguistic characteristics of their student population. They are a point of contact for families and have been instrumental in guiding English language learners, often providing translation support. Tutors engage in frequent contact with all families whether in person, by telephone, notes between home and school or text and email. Home visits are also conducted by the tutors, who are typically paired with families speaking the same language.

Summary of Evidence for Renewal

Key Performance Area: Educational Success

Student Performance – Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

Over the five-year charter term, GOCS administered the NYS English language arts and mathematics assessments to students in Grades 6 through 8 and the Regents Common Core Algebra I exam to 8th grade students. The outcomes from these assessments serve as the basis for determination of academic success in absolute proficiency outcomes and comparisons to the state and district of location.

Classroom instruction is delivered using an integrated co-teaching model with two teachers in core subject classrooms. All students receive one on one or small group tutoring sessions each day. In March 2017, the school leader indicated the school-wide theme is high accountability and support coupled with high expectations for all members of the school community.

In the 2016-2017 school year, Great Oaks began using Eureka Math for the math curriculum and Expeditionary Learning for the ELA curriculum, both of which are aligned to the New York State Learning Standards. For science and social studies, teachers create unit and lesson plans with scope and sequences, all aligned to New York State standards. The school reported that they align curriculum horizontally and vertically during content team meetings, through giving feedback on unit and lesson plans and identifying trends across grades. Instructional leaders review lesson plans and give feedback to content teachers, and with support from special education teachers to ensure differentiated lessons.

In reviewing aggregate data for all students (see Table 1 below), the school is below the state proficiency average in ELA but almost equal with the state average in mathematics. In ELA performance, GOCS has a general trend towards growth. It is important to note that only 41% of the students reside in the district of location, NYC CSD 1. This district, and charter school's former district of location, NYC CSD 1, are high performing, with test scores that exceed state averages. The remaining 59% of students reside across the city, representing many lower performing districts in each of the city's five boroughs. In addition, in the 2015-2016 school year, GOCS moved locations from NYC CSD 2 to NYC CSD 1. As such, the district of location for academic comparative purposes changes between these two school years.

The school has strong performance for their at-risk populations, particularly in mathematics (see Table 2 below). As can be seen, students with disabilities and English language learners in GOCS have higher rates of proficiency than those students in NYC CSD 1 for ELA. All subgroups at GOCS are outperforming NYC CSD 1 in mathematics. As GOCS was originally located in NYC CSD 2, a comparison of the school's sub-population academic outcomes to the school's former district of location is below in Table 2a. The outcomes for subgroups in the school's former district of location are similar to those in their current district of location.

Great Oaks reported its comparative performance to 72 similar schools, as determined by NYSED based on similar demographic and grade levels served. In the renewal application, the school reported that in 2016-2017, Great Oaks had higher proficiency in math than similar schools with 30% of GOCS students' proficient compared to 22% proficient for the similar schools group. Great Oaks was comparable to similar schools in ELA. In 2015-2016, Great Oaks outperformed similar schools by 8 percentage points in ELA and 17 percentage points in math.

Table 1: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes for All Students: School, District of Location & State Level Aggregates

All Students	ELA					Math				
	GO-NYC	NYC CSD	Variance to NYC CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS	GO-NYC	NYC CSD	Variance to NYC CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015 CSD 2	17%	59%	-42	31%	-14	46%	62%	-16	33%	+13
2015-2016 CSD 1	29%	41%	-12	37%	-8	30%	36%	-6	34%	-4
2016-2017 CSD 1	27%	46%	-19	40%	-13	30%	38%	-8	34%	-4

Note: Data in Table 1 represents tested students in grades 6-8 at Great Oaks Charter School, NYC CSD 1 and NYC CSD 2, and the state average who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment. This table was created using grade level data to generate the comparative values, the percent difference between the school's performance and the district or state averages. All values were calculated to the nearest whole number; therefore, the percent differences may show a rounded value. State and District data are grade specific. Grades 6-7 for 2014-2015 and Grades 6-8 for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.

Table 2: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes for Special Populations Compared to the District of Location

Subject	School Year	Students with Disabilities (Variance to the district of location)	English Language Learners (Variance to the district of location)	Economically Disadvantaged (Variance to the district of location)
ELA	2014-2015 CSD 2	2% (-20)	1% (-10)	14% (-5)
	2015-2016 CSD 1	7% (0)	0% (0)	30% (-3)
	2016-2017 CSD 1	11% (+1)	13% (+11)	28% (-7)
Mathematics	2014-2015 CSD 2	14% (-10)	53% (+10)	48% (+19)
	2015-2016 CSD 1	13% (+7)	43% (+34)	32% (+4)
	2016-2017 CSD 1	10% (+4)	25% (+12)	33% (+7)

Note: Data in Table 2 represents tested students in respective subgroups who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment.

Table 2a: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes for Special Populations Compared to NYC CSD 2 – Former District of Location

Subject	School Year	Students with Disabilities (Variance to the district of location)	English Language Learners (Variance to the district of location)	Economically Disadvantaged (Variance to the district of location)
ELA	2015-2016 CSD 2	7% (-16)	0% (-6)	30% (-12)
	2016-2017 CSD 2	11% (-7)	13 (+11)	28% (-11)
Mathematics	2015-2016 CSD 2	13% (+6)	43% (+34)	32% (+4)
	2016-2017 CSD 2	10% (+4)	25% (+12)	33% (+7)

Note: Data in Table 2 represents tested students in respective subgroups who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment.

During the 2016-17 school year, the school administered the Regents Common Core Algebra I exam to 28 students. At-risk students being served in GOCS far outperformed or matched the state average in terms of Regents exam pass rates. Additional data is included in Table 3. GOCS’s focus on English-language learner instruction had significant benefits for this at-risk group.

Table 3—Regents Common Core Algebra I Proficiency SY 2016-2017

Number of students tested	Student Subgroup	Percentage of students proficient	NYS Proficiency	Variance
28	All students	68%	74%	-6
3	Students with disabilities	67%	45%	+22
2	English Language Learners	100%	46%	+54
21	Economically disadvantaged	67%	67%	0

According to the February 2017 ESEA accountability designations, Great Oaks Charter School continues to be a school *In Good Standing*.

Key Performance Area: Organizational Viability

Financial Condition

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

The Charter School Office reviews the financial performance and management of charter schools using quantitative and qualitative methods. Near-term indicators, such as the current ratio and unrestricted days cash, are measures of liquidity and of the charter school's capacity to maintain operations. Long-term indicators, such as total margin and debt-to-asset ratio, are measures of the charter school's capacity to remain viable and to meet financial obligations.

A *composite score* is an overall measure of financial health calculated by the Department's Office of Audit Services. This score is based on a weighting of primary reserves, equity, and net income. A charter school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is considered to be in strong financial health. Great Oaks Charter School's composite score for 2015-2016 is 2.4. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2013-2014 to 2015-2016.

**Great Oaks Charter School's Composite Scores
2013-2014 to 2015-2016**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2015-2016	2.4
2014-2015	2.6
2013-2014	1.9

Source: NYSED Office of Audit Services

Financial Management

The Charter School Office reviewed Great Oaks Charter School's 2015-16 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that could be considered material weaknesses.

Key Performance Area: Faithfulness to the Charter and Law

Enrollment, Recruitment and Retention

Central to the mission of the school since its inception, is a commitment to serve at-risk student populations, particularly English language learners. Over the charter term, the school has served a significantly greater proportion of economically disadvantaged students and comparable numbers of students with disabilities and English language learners than either of the districts it has been located in. The school has strong enrollment and backfills students for all grades utilizing its waitlist.

The school is making good faith efforts to recruit, serve, and retain at-risk students⁵. Efforts to recruit and retain students in the economically disadvantage, English language learner and students with disabilities populations include:

- Partnering with local organizations that serve at-risk populations;
- Bi-lingual marketing based on community needs;
- Bilingual staff that represents the community;
- Staffing plan to meet the needs of all learners; and
- Tutoring plan to meet the needs of all learners and is reflective of the community.

Table 4: Student Demographics Great Oaks Charter School Compared to District of Location - CSD1

	2015-2016 Percent of Enrollment			2016-2017 Percent of Enrollment			2017-2018 Percent of Enrollment ⁶
	School	District	Variance	School	District	Variance	School
Enrollment of Special Populations⁷							
Economically Disadvantaged	81%	66%	+15	70%	65%	+5	78%
English Language Learners	9%	9%	0	9%	7%	+2	5%
Students with Disabilities	33%	28%	+5	32%	31%	+1	28%

Student Retention

According to NYSED data, the overall student retention rate at GOCS is 72%. The district-wide retention rate in NYC CSD 1 is 74%.

Legal Compliance

Great Oaks Charter School operates in accordance with applicable law, regulations, rules and other policies, including the terms of its charter, its by-laws and other school-specific policies. It is also in

⁵ Education Law §2854(2)(a) requires that schools demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities, FRPL eligible students and English Language Learners when compared to the enrollment figures for such students in the school district in which the charter is located. SUNY and the Regents were charged with setting specific enrollment and retention targets for each charter school, and have done so. Education Law §2852(9-a)(b)(i). All charter schools that were initially chartered after August 2010 or renewed after January 1, 2011, are expected to meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets set by the Regents and SUNY. When submitting an application for renewal of the charter, schools are required to provide information detailing the means by which they will meet the enrollment and retention targets (Education Law §2851(4)(e)), and this information is considered by the Regents in the review of the school's performance over the charter term. A school's plan to change its enrollment practices, whether by weighting the lottery or preferencing, may also be considered when determining whether the school will meet the targets in the upcoming charter term. A school's repeated failure to meet or exceed its enrollment and retention targets, when combined with a failure to show that extensive efforts to meet the targets have been made, may be cause for termination or revocation of the charter pursuant to section Education Law §2855(1)(e).

⁶ Enrollment for the 2017-18 school year is preliminary and therefore cannot be compared to the district. The enrollment figures provided for the school year have been reported by the school.

⁷ Percentages of English language learners and students with disabilities include students who were exited from these services within the last three year of enrollment record.

compliance with federally mandated disciplinary procedures for students with disabilities, and NYS Dignity for All Students Act regulations. The board holds meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law.

Public Hearing Information

The required public hearing was held by the New York City School District on September 12, 2017. Thirty-five people attended with eight speaking in favor of the school with no opposition. There were also four emailed/hand-written comments, all of which all were in favor of the renewal.

Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School

In accordance with Education Law, Article 56, Sections 2851(4) and 2852(2), Commissioners Regulation 119.7, and the Board of Regents Charter School Performance Framework, the **New York State Education Department recommends a full-term renewal for a period of four years for Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School (HHLACS). The charter term would begin on July 1, 2018 and expire on June 30, 2022.**

HHLACS is trending towards meeting the academic performance benchmarks for all students as well at-risk populations including students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students in ELA and mathematics in the district of location, NYC CSD 3. 40% of the students enrolled at HHLACS are residents of NYC CSD 3 with the remaining students living in low-performing districts across NYC. Almost half of the students enrolled at HHLACS reside in NYC CSDs 5 and 6.

HHLACS is meeting enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the Board of Regents for students who are students with disabilities, English Language learners, and economically disadvantaged students. The school is implementing the mission, key design elements, education program and organizational plan set forth in the charter.

Charter School Summary

Name of Charter School	Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School
Board Chair	Linda Aristondo
District of location	NYC CSD 3
Opening Date	August 26, 2013
Charter Terms	Initial Charter Term: 07/01/2013 to 06/30/2018
Current Term Authorized Grades/Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Grades K-5/468 students
Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/Proposed Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Grades K-8/783 students
Comprehensive Management Service Provider	Hebrew Public
Facilities	147 St. Nicholas Avenue, New York, NY 10026
Mission Statement	<i>Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School will provide its students with the academic and personal foundation necessary to successfully pursue advanced studies and achieve continued personal growth as ethical and informed global citizens. In order to accomplish this, HHLACS will offer an academically rigorous K-5 curriculum, which includes intensive instruction in the Hebrew language. Students in a diverse student body will also develop a strong sense of social and civic responsibility through the integration of service learning and community service across the curriculum.</i>

Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Phonemic Awareness, Engaged Readers, and Thoughtful Writers • Building Numeracy skills • Hebrew Language Instruction • Science Instruction • Social Studies Instruction • Service Learning • Instructional Supports for Students at Risk • Increased Time on Task • Professional Development • Charter Management Organization and Philanthropic Support:
Requested Revisions	<p>The school proposes to expand from serving grades K-5 to K-8 with a corresponding increase in their enrollment from 468 to 723 students. This revision would be phased in over the course of the proposed charter term. The school proposes to align its original charter goals with the Performance Framework and to adapt their organizational structure to accommodate the proposed increase in grade levels.</p>

Current Grade Levels and Maximum Authorized Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Approved Enrollment	Actual Enrollment
2017-2018	K-5	446	395
2016-2017	K-4	308	332
2015-2016	K-3	308	297
2014-2015	K-2	234	215
2013-2014	K-1	156	136

Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Maximum Authorized Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Authorized Enrollment
2018-2019	K-6	609
2019-2020	K-7	696
2020-2021	K-8	783
2021-2022	K-8	783
2022-2023	K-8	783

Background

The Board of Regents granted an initial charter to HHLACS in June 2012. The school opened for instruction in August 2013 serving 156 students in grades K-1. This is the school's first renewal.

Summary of Evidence for Renewal

Key Performance Area: Educational Success

Student Performance – Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

Over the five-year charter term, HHLACS administered the NYS English language arts and mathematics assessments to students in Grades 3 and 4. The outcomes from these assessments serve as the basis for determination of academic success in absolute proficiency outcomes and comparisons to the state and district of location.

The school has a comprehensive curriculum in place. Instructional leaders over the summer codified scope and sequences that include standards, objectives, and timelines, including common mid- and end-of-unit assessments. The school has also enhanced its literacy program. In addition to the Teachers College Reading and Writing Workshop model, the program now also includes close reading units, computer-based ThinkCERCA writing, Wilson Foundations, handwriting, and novel studies. The school has a systematic interim assessment program in place in order to provide the academic team, including classroom teachers, with data to inform instructional decision making.

The school has enhanced its special education program. In the past, the school relied on special education teachers provided by the NYC DOE. However, this academic year, HHLACS hired its own learning specialists who are more deeply integrated in the school's academic program and professional development activities. As part of their staffing model, the school benefits from multiple adults working within classrooms to provide integrated co-teaching (ICT) in grades K-5 and other interventions for at-risk students. The school has implemented a Response to Intervention program (RTI) where the lowest performing 10% of each grade is provided additional support by learning specialists. The school also has an English language learner instructional specialist who provides push-in and pull-out services based on level of need.

In reviewing aggregate data for all students (see Table 1 below), it is important to note that only 40% of the students reside in the district of location, CSD 3, which is high performing with test scores that exceed the state averages. The remaining 60% of students resides across the city representing many low-performing districts in each of the boroughs.

For all students in terms of both math and ELA proficiency rates, HHLACS has demonstrated strong growth from SY2015-2016, their first year of assessment, to this past academic year, SY2016-2017. Although HHLACS's proficiency rates are below their district of location, it is important to note that CSD 3 is a high performing CSD. Also noteworthy, is the fact that HHLACS proficiency rates for all students in both math and ELA have equaled the state average in the 2016-17 SY.

Students with disabilities and English language learners enrolled at HHLACS academically perform well (See Table 2 below). Proficiency rates for students with disabilities are roughly equal to the CSD average rate and 17 percentage points above the state average in ELA and 16 percentage points above the state

average in math. The performance of English language learners at HHLACS is also positive, out-performing the district of location, particularly in math.

Table 1: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes for All Students: School, District & State Level Aggregates

All Students	ELA					Math				
	Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School	NYC CSD 3	Variance to NYC CSD 3	NYS	Variance to NYS	Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School	NYC CSD 3	Variance to NYC CSD 3	NYS	Variance to NYS
2015-2016	29%	61%	-32	42%	-13	29%	57%	-28	44%	-15
2016-2017	41%	62%	-21	42%	-1	49%	63%	-14	46%	+3

Note: Data in Table 1 represents tested students in grades 3-4 at Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School and the NYC CSD 3 and the state average who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment. This table was created using grade level data to generate the comparative values, the percent difference between the school's performance and the district or state averages. All values were calculated to the nearest whole number; therefore, the percent differences may show a rounded value. State and District data are grade specific - Grade 3 for 2015-2016 and Grades 3- 4 for 2016-2017.

Table 2: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes for Special Populations in the district of location – NYC CSD 3

Subject	School Year	Students with Disabilities (Variance to the district of location)	English Language Learners (Variance to the district of location)	Economically Disadvantaged (Variance to the district of location)
ELA	2015-2016	14% (-12)	*	13% (-22)
	2016-2017	29% (-2)	20% (+8)	22% (-10)
Mathematics	2015-2016	29% (+4)	*	14% (-17)
	2016-2017	32% (-1)	40% (+17)	23% (-11)

* Note: Some sub-group data may not be reported due to FERPA data suppression requirements.

According to the February 2017 ESEA accountability designations, HHLACS continues to be a school *In Good Standing*.

Key Performance Area: Organizational Viability

Financial Condition

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

The Charter School Office reviews the financial performance and management of charter schools using quantitative and qualitative methods. Near-term indicators, such as the current ratio and unrestricted days cash, are measures of liquidity and of the charter school's capacity to maintain operations. Long-term indicators, such as total margin and debt-to-asset ratio, are measures of the charter school's capacity to remain viable and to meet financial obligations.

Overall Financial Outlook

A *composite score* is an overall measure of financial health calculated by the Department's Office of Audit Services. This score is based on a weighting of primary reserves, equity, and net income. A charter school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is considered to be in strong financial health. Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School's composite score for 2015-2016 is 1.7. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2013-2014 to 2015-2016.

**Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School's Composite Scores
2013-2014 to 2015-2016**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2015-2016	1.7
2014-2015	1.0
2013-2014	1.5

Source: NYSED Office of Audit Services

Financial Management

The Charter School Office reviewed Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School's 2016-17 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that could be considered material weaknesses.

Key Performance Area: Faithfulness to the Charter and Law

Enrollment, Recruitment and Retention

Central to the mission of the school, since its inception, is a commitment to serve at-risk student populations. Over the charter term, the school has served a comparable number of or greater proportion of students with disabilities, English language learners and economically disadvantaged students than the district of location. The school has strong enrollment and backfills students from all grades utilizing its waitlist.

The school is making good faith efforts to recruit, serve, and retain at-risk students⁸. Efforts to recruit and retain students in the economically disadvantaged, English language learner and students with disabilities populations include:

- Partnering with local organizations that serve at-risk populations;
- Bi-lingual marketing based on community needs;
- Bilingual staff that represents the community;
- Staffing plan to meet the needs of all learners; and
- Strong parent engagement and support.

Table 3: Student Demographics Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School Compared to District of Location CSD3

	2015-2016 Percent of Enrollment			2016-2017 Percent of Enrollment			2017-2018 Percent of Enrollment ⁹
	School	District	Variance	School	District	Variance	School
Enrollment of Special Populations¹⁰							
Economically Disadvantaged	41%	40%	+1	51%	48%	+3	56%
English Language Learners	8%	7%	+1	16%	5%	+11	11%
Students with Disabilities	27%	20%	+7	25%	17%	+8	21%

Student Retention

According to NYSED data, the overall student retention rate at HHLACS is 75%. The district-wide retention rate in is 78%. Although roughly equal to the district of location, the HHLACS board expects a higher rate in subsequent academic years due to an unforeseen delay in building construction resulting in the school having to move into temporary space in another area of the CSD with approval by NYSED.

⁸ Education Law §2854(2)(a) requires that schools demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities, FRPL eligible students and English Language Learners when compared to the enrollment figures for such students in the school district in which the charter is located. SUNY and the Regents were charged with setting specific enrollment and retention targets for each charter school, and have done so. Education Law §2852(9-a)(b)(i). All charter schools that were initially chartered after August 2010 or renewed after January 1, 2011, are expected to meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets set by the Regents and SUNY. When submitting an application for renewal of the charter, schools are required to provide information detailing the means by which they will meet the enrollment and retention targets (Education Law §2851(4)(e)), and this information is considered by the Regents in the review of the school's performance over the charter term. A school's plan to change its enrollment practices, whether by weighting the lottery or preferencing, may also be considered when determining whether the school will meet the targets in the upcoming charter term. A school's repeated failure to meet or exceed its enrollment and retention targets, when combined with a failure to show that extensive efforts to meet the targets have been made, may be cause for termination or revocation of the charter pursuant to section Education Law §2855(1)(e).

⁹ Enrollment for the 2017-18 school year is preliminary and therefore cannot be compared to the district. The enrollment figures provided for the school year have been reported by the school.

¹⁰ Percentages of English language learners and students with disabilities include students who were exited from these services within the last three year of enrollment record.

Legal Compliance

HHLACS operates in accordance with applicable law, regulations, rules and other policies, including the terms of its charter, its by-laws and other school-specific policies. It is also in compliance with federally mandated disciplinary procedures for students with disabilities, and NYS Dignity for All Students Act regulations. The board holds meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law.

Public Hearing Information

The required public hearing was held by the New York City School District on September 18, 2017. Forty-two people attended, and eleven spoke in favor of the school's renewal and expansion request with no opposition. The department received approximately twenty emailed/hand-written comments from various community leaders and members all of which all were in favor of the renewal and expansion.

Utica Academy of Science Charter School

In accordance with Education Law, Article 56, Sections 2851(4) and 2852(2), Commissioners Regulation 119.7, and the Board of Regents Charter School Performance Framework, the **New York State Education Department recommends a full-term renewal for a period of five years for Utica Academy of Science Charter School. The charter term would begin on July 1, 2018 and expire on June 30, 2023. The department also recommends approval of the requested revision, to add grades K-5 and increase the school’s authorized enrollment from 462 to 858 students over the term of the proposed charter.**

Utica Academy of Science Charter School (UASCS) is meeting the academic performance benchmarks and most benchmarks set forth in the Board of Regents Performance Framework. UASCS is meeting enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the Board of Regents for students who are economically disadvantaged and English language learners and is making good faith efforts to meet the enrollment target for students with disabilities. The school is implementing the mission, key design elements, education program and organizational plan set forth in the charter.

Charter School Summary

Name of Charter School	Utica Academy of Science Charter School
Board Chair	Dr. Fehmi Damkaci
District of location	Utica City School District
Opening Date	September 5, 2013
Charter Terms	Initial: July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2018
Current Term Authorized Grades/Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Grades 6-12/462 students
Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/Proposed Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Grades K-12/858 students
Comprehensive Management Service Provider	N/A
Facilities	1214 Lincoln Avenue, Utica, New York 13502 and 160 School Lane, Frankfurt, New York 13340
Mission Statement	Utica Academy of Science Charter School (UASCS) will provide support, challenges, and opportunities for its students, and it will instill the necessary skills and knowledge in math, science, and technology to empower students, through high intellectual standards, preparing them for college, career and citizenship. The school seeks to graduate students who can think critically and creatively, who are committed to a lifetime of learning and civic involvement, and who are conscious of local, global and environmental issues.
Requested Revisions	Expansion to add kindergarten through grade 5 from their existing grades 6 through 12 and increase their authorized enrollment from 462 students to 858 students .

Current Grade Levels and Maximum Authorized Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Approved Enrollment	Actual Enrollment
2017-2018	6-12	462	453
2016-2017	6-12	462	408
2015-2016	6-11	352	334
2014-2015	6-10	242	230
2013-2014	6-9	176	179

Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Maximum Authorized Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Authorized Enrollment
2018-2019	K-1, 6-12	594
2019-2020	K-2, 6-12	660
2020-2021	K-3, 6-12	726
2021-2022	K-4, 6-12	792
2022-2023	K-12	858

Background

The Board of Regents granted an initial charter to UASCS in November 2012. UASCS opened for instruction in September 2013, initially serving 179 students in Grades 6 through 9. The UASCS Education Corporation merged with the Syracuse Academy of Science Charter School and the Syracuse Academy of Science and Citizenship Charter School in June 2017.

Summary of Evidence for Renewal

Key Performance Area: Educational Success

Student Performance – Elementary/Middle School

Over the five-year charter term, UASCS administered the NYS English language arts and mathematics assessments to students in Grades 6 through 8. The outcomes from these assessments serve as the basis for determination of academic success in absolute proficiency outcomes and comparisons to the state and district of location.

The middle school academic program's curriculum is based on EngageNY modules, with teachers drawing on supporting materials, some created in-house, as needed. UASCS extensively uses data to drive instructional decision-making and to target academic intervention supports. The school incorporates cross-curricular standards into ELA and math lessons, which identify differentiation strategies for the many at-risk students served by the school. Grades six through eight have an aligned curriculum scope and sequence which is carefully monitored by instructional coaches and academic leadership. A literacy initiative is intentional in helping students make connections across content areas. The school provides

extensive common planning/preparation time for teachers as well as small classes with double periods in ELA and math to enhance interventions and supports.

UASCS students outperform the district of location in both ELA and math proficiency. See Tables 1 and 2 below regarding 3-8 math and ELA exam aggregates and subgroup student performance compared to the district of location and state average.

Table 1: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes for All Students: School, District & State Level Aggregates

All Students	ELA					Math				
	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS	Utica Academy of Science Charter School	Utica City School District	Variance to Utica City School District	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	14%	17%	-3%	31%	-17%	31%	16%	15%	33%	-2%
2015-2016	19%	21%	-2%	37%	-18%	24%	21%	3%	34%	-10%
2016-2017	24%	22%	2%	40%	-16%	28%	18%	10%	34%	-6%

Note: Data in Table 1 represents tested students in grades 6-8 at UASCS, the Utica City School District and the state average who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment. This table was created using grade level data to generate the comparative values, the percent difference between the school's performance and the district or state averages. All values were calculated to the nearest whole number; therefore, the percent differences may show a rounded value.

Table 2: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes for Special Populations

Subject	School Year	Students with Disabilities (Variance to the district of location)	English Language Learners (Variance to the district of location)	Economically Disadvantaged (Variance to the district of location)
ELA	2014-2015	0% (0)	0% (-2)	12% (-4)
	2015-2016	0% (-1)	0% (-1)	17% (-2)
	2016-2017	0% (-1)	0% (-1)	22% (+3)
Mathematics	2014-2015	0% (0)	6% (+6)	31% (+15)
	2015-2016	0% (-7)	4% (+1)	21% (+1)
	2016-2017	0% (-2)	5% (+3)	26% (+11)

Note: Data in Table 2 represents tested students in respective subgroups who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment. This table was created using grade level data to generate the comparative values, the percent difference between the school's performance and the district or state averages. All values were calculated to the nearest whole number; therefore, the percent differences may show a rounded value.

Student Performance – High School

The high school academic program is based on a curriculum created at the school level, drawing from many resources, such as EngageNY modules, Next Generation Science Standards, and Kahn Academy. School leaders and experienced instructional coaches provide support for teachers as they design and adapt units and lessons within the context of a highly supportive, small school environment. A strong professional development schedule promotes the implementation of school-wide core practices such as high expectations and a growth mindset to foster student engagement in learning. There is a clear purpose in practice to develop students who are committed to a lifetime of learning.

UASCS's four-year Regents exam 2013 cohort outcomes outperform the state average pass rate in Global History and U. S. History, but not in math. This represents the performance of the first graduating cohort; it is not yet possible to identify year to year trends in academic performance.

The cohort graduation rate at UASCS far exceeds the district of location. 100% of graduates in the 2013 received Regents diplomas, including students with disabilities.

Table 3a: High School Total 4-Year Regents Outcomes for All Students: School & State Level Aggregates

4-Yr Cohort: All Students	2013 Cohort		
	UASCS	State	Variance
Subject			
ELA	92%	85%	+7
Math	100%	85%	+15
Global History	92%	78%	+14
US History	100%	81%	+19
Science	96%	84%	+12
State Target Graduation Rate	98%	80%	+18

Table 3b: High School Diploma Types Awarded

4-Yr Cohort: All Students	2013 Cohort		
	UASCS	State	Variance
Diploma Type			
Local Diplomas	0	*	*
Regents Diplomas	100%	*	*
Advanced Regents Diplomas	0	*	*

**State level data not yet released*

According to the February 2017 ESEA accountability designations, UASCS is *In Good Standing*.

Key Performance Area: Organizational Viability

Financial Condition

Utica Academy of Science Charter School appears to be in good financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the school's independently audited financial statements.

The Charter School Office reviews the financial performance and management of charter schools using quantitative and qualitative methods. Near-term indicators, such as the current ratio and unrestricted days cash, are measures of liquidity and of the charter school's capacity to maintain operations. Long-term indicators, such as total margin and debt-to-asset ratio, are measures of the charter school's capacity to remain viable and to meet financial obligations.

A *composite score* is an overall measure of financial health calculated by the Department's Office of Audit Services. This score is based on a weighting of primary reserves, equity, and net income. A charter school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is considered to be in strong financial health. Utica Academy of Science Charter School's composite score for 2015-2016 is 1.7. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2013-2014 to 2015-2016.

Utica Academy of Science Charter School's Composite Scores 2013-2014 to 2015-2016

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2015-2016	1.7
2014-2015	2.4
2013-2014	2.1

Source: NYSED Office of Audit Services

Financial Management

The Charter School Office reviewed UASCS' 2015-2016 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that could be considered material weaknesses.

Key Performance Area: Faithfulness to the Charter and Law

Enrollment, Recruitment and Retention

UASCS has sufficient student enrollment applications to have a waiting list. Extensive outreach and communication with cultural and community groups have increased the enrollment of English language learners (ELLs). Expanded language skills resulting from ELL services have resulted in many of these students exiting the program. The school has been less successful with recruitment efforts focused on students with disabilities. Changes in staffing and enhancement of services are expected to counter this trend. UASCS has surpassed the district in serving students who are economically disadvantaged. All three subgroups are trending upward.

The school is making good faith efforts to recruit, serve, and retain at-risk students¹¹. Efforts to recruit and retain students in the ED, ELL, and SWD populations include:

- Individual visits to every community center and organization, including the Utica Refugee Center Administration, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Karen and Burmese community centers and churches;
- Direct mailing to targeted zip code areas; and
- Visits to families, door to door, in identified neighborhoods with interpreters and community members to distribute flyers and share information about the school.

Table 4: Student Demographics – Utica Academy Charter School Compared to District of Location (Utica City School District)

	2015-2016 Percent of Enrollment			2016-2017 Percent of Enrollment			2017-2018 Percent of Enrollment ¹²
	School	District	Variance	School	District	Variance	School
Enrollment of Special Populations¹³							
Economically Disadvantaged	75%	86%	-11	86%	83%	+3	82%
English Language Learners	16%	19%	-3	16%	19%	-3	13%
Students with Disabilities	8%	18%	-10	7%	16%	-9	9%

Student Retention

For the 2016 – 2017 school year, UASCS reports a retention rate of 83%.

Legal Compliance

UASCS operates in accordance with applicable law, regulations, rules and other policies, including the terms of its charter, its by-laws and other school-specific policies. It is also in compliance with federally

¹¹ Education Law §2854(2)(a) requires that schools demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities, FRPL eligible students and English Language Learners when compared to the enrollment figures for such students in the school district in which the charter is located. SUNY and the Regents were charged with setting specific enrollment and retention targets for each charter school, and have done so. Education Law §2852(9-a)(b)(i). All charter schools that were initially chartered after August 2010 or renewed after January 1, 2011, are expected to meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets set by the Regents and SUNY. When submitting an application for renewal of the charter, schools are required to provide information detailing the means by which they will meet the enrollment and retention targets (Education Law §2851(4)(e)), and this information is considered by the Regents in the review of the school’s performance over the charter term. A school’s plan to change its enrollment practices, whether by weighting the lottery or preferencing, may also be considered when determining whether the school will meet the targets in the upcoming charter term. A school’s repeated failure to meet or exceed its enrollment and retention targets, when combined with a failure to show that extensive efforts to meet the targets have been made, may be cause for termination or revocation of the charter pursuant to section Education Law §2855(1)(e).

¹² Enrollment for the 2017-18 school year is preliminary and therefore cannot be compared to the district. The enrollment figures provided for the school year have been reported by the school.

¹³ Percentages of English language learners and students with disabilities include students who were exited from these services within the last three year of enrollment record.

mandated disciplinary procedures for students with disabilities, and NYS Dignity for All Students Act regulations. The board holds meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law.

Request for Revision

UASCS has requested a material revision to add Grades K-5 and a corresponding enrollment increase over the term of the proposed charter, resulting in a K-12 school serving 858 students. The school provided a rationale based on parent demand, a means to close the gap that exists in current entering 6th and 7th graders, and relevant education research. In a recent school survey of parents, over 95% of respondents expressed overall satisfaction with the school, and 100% indicated a need for an elementary charter school in Utica. UASCS would like to provide support and interventions to elementary students similar to that currently provided for middle and high school students. The entering class in the 2016-2017 school year had a 10% proficiency rate in ELA and 14% in math. Intense interventions were required to remediate this over time. The school cites research that shows that having 3rd graders reading at proficiency is crucial to high school graduation. An increase in total income will allow teachers' salaries to reach a more competitive level, which will in turn improve teacher quality and retention and overall academic improvement.

The school has ample space in its existing private facilities to house students anticipated through the third year of the proposed renewal term. This allows sufficient time to identify an additional private building, thus separating the elementary, middle and high schools into discreet sites.

Public Hearing Information

The required public hearing was held by the Utica City School District on September 26, 2017. Nine people spoke, eight in favor of the renewal and expansion and one opposed. There were also thirty-five emailed/hand-written comments, a number from former students, all of which were in favor of the renewal and expansion.