



TO: P-12 Education Committee

FROM: Angelique Johnson-Dingle *Angelique Johnson-Dingle*

SUBJECT: Renewal Recommendation for a Charter School Authorized by the New York City Department of Education

DATE: April 6, 2023

AUTHORIZATION(S): *Bellamy*

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

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

The Equity Project Charter School (Five-year renewal).

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute.

Proposed Handling

This issue will come before the P-12 Education Committee and the Full Board for action at its April 2023 meeting.

Procedural History

The Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education made the renewal recommendation being presented to the Board of Regents for approval and issuance as required by Article 56 of the Education Law.

Background Information

The Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education is bound by Article 56 of the Education law regarding the criteria that can be considered in decision-making pertaining to charter school renewals and revisions.

Related Regents Items

The Equity Project Charter School

January 2008: [Initial Charter](http://www.regents.nysed.gov/Summaries/0108summary.htm)
(<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/Summaries/0108summary.htm>)

January 2013: [First Renewal](http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/213bra2_0.pdf)
(http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/213bra2_0.pdf)

March 2013: [Second Renewal](http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/413bra2.pdf)
(<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/413bra2.pdf>)

February 2016: [Expansion Revision](http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/316bra2_1.pdf)
(http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/316bra2_1.pdf)

March 2018: [Third Renewal](https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/418bra2_0.pdf)
(https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/418bra2_0.pdf)

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents take the following action(s):

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that **The Equity Project 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 Equity Project Charter School** as proposed by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, and that a renewal charter be issued, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including **June 30, 2028**.

Timetable for Implementation

The Regents action for the above-named charter school will become effective immediately.

The Equity Project Charter School

Table 1: Charter School Summary

Name of Charter School	The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School
Board Chair	Sean Juan
District of Location	NYC CSD 6 ¹
Initial Commencement of Instruction	Fall 2009
Charter Term(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Charter Term: 01/15/2008 – 01/14/2013 • First Renewal: 01/15/2013 – 06/30/2013 • Second Renewal: 07/01/2013 - 06/30/2018 • Third Renewal: 07/1/2018 – 06/30/2023
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades K-1: 4280 Broadway, Manhattan, NY 10033 - Private Space • Grades 2-4: 549 Audubon Avenue, Manhattan, NY 10040-District Space • Grades 5-8: 153 Sherman Avenue, Manhattan, NY 10034 – Private Space
Innovative and Noteworthy Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniquely focused on attracting and retaining master teachers with teacher quality as the focus for achieving educational reform. • Daily music and physical education instruction for students across Grades K-8. • Attention to social-emotional health through an assigned social worker for each cohort and partnership with the Jewish Board for Children’s Services to host on-site provision of mental health services.
Recommended Material Revisions	None.

Table 2: Current Grade Levels and Authorized Enrollment

	Year 1 2018 to 2019	Year 2 2019 to 2020	Year 3 2020 to 2021	Year 4 2021 to 2022	Year 5 2022 to 2023
Grade Configuration	K – Grade 2, 5 – 8	K – Grade 3, 5 – 8	K – Grade 8	K – Grade 8	K – Grade 8
Total Authorized Enrollment	960	1080	1080	1080	1080

¹ Eighteen percent of all students residing in this district attend charter schools.

Table 3: Recommended Renewal Term Grade Levels and Recommended Enrollment

	Year 1 2023 to 2024	Year 2 2024 to 2025	Year 3 2025 to 2026	Year 4 2026 to 2027	Year 5 2027 to 2028
Grade Configuration	K – Grade 8	K – Grade 8	K – Grade 8	K – Grade 8	K – Grade 8
Total Authorized Enrollment	1080	1080	1080	1080	1080

Rationale for Renewal Recommendation

In accordance with Education Law, Article 56, Sections 2851(4) and 2852(2), the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) recommends that the Board of Regents grant the renewal term described above in the **Issue for Decision** section, for the following reasons.

Renewal:

During the current charter term, the school has compiled a strong and compelling record of academic success, and at the time of the renewal analysis, has substantially met most other standards set forth in the NYCDOE Charter School Accountability Framework.

Because the total enrollment of resident students attending charter schools in the district is greater than 5 percent of the total public school enrollment, pursuant to Education Law Section 2852(2)(d), NYCDOE asserts that granting this renewal application provides a significant educational benefit to the students attending and expected to attend this charter school.

Monitoring and Oversight:

- During the school’s current charter term, the NYCDOE conducted the following site visits:
 - Year 4 (2021-2022): Annual Comprehensive Review (ACR) visit
 - Year 5 (2022-2023): Renewal Visit
- The school did not receive a Notice of Concern or Notice of Deficiency during the charter term.

Summary of Evidence for Renewal

The school’s proficiency rates (for both English language arts and math, in the aggregate as well as for special populations) have exceeded the district in every year of the current charter term overall, for students with disabilities (SWD), and for economically disadvantaged (ED) students. The school’s proficiency rates for English language learners (ELL) exceeded the district in every year of the charter term in math and in 2021-2022 in English language arts. The school’s proficiency rates in math exceeded the state in all years and for all special populations.

The school prioritizes attention to the arts and athletics through daily physical education and music instruction for all students across Grades K-8. TEP positively supported the academic and emotional well-being of students and families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Participation rates on NYC DOE surveys demonstrate the outstanding investment of TEP teachers, families, and students, in the school with results exceeding citywide averages for almost all questions. The school has maintained strong attendance rates throughout the charter term, including the pandemic, with attendance significantly surpassing rates for NYC.

Essential Question 1: Is the school an academic success?

Student Performance – Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

See Table 4 below regarding 3-8 math and English language arts (ELA) exam aggregate and subgroup student performance compared to the district and State averages, through the 2021-2022 school year.

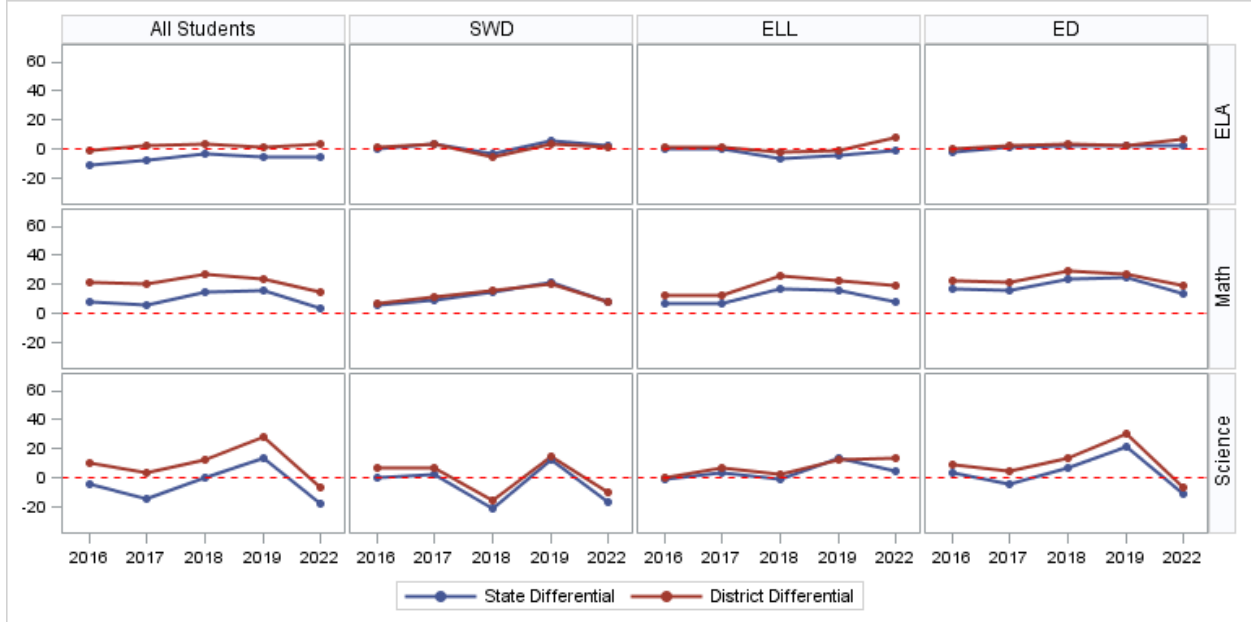
Academic Program: From Grades K through 4, learning focuses on developing core skills in literacy and math; there is also a special focus on music and physical education. In grades 5 through 8, students take ELA, social studies, math, and science. The special focus on music and physical education continues in middle school. Middle school students take each of these 6 subjects for one 45-minute period each day; they also take an additional period of literacy instruction and math instruction each day. The school offers Regents Exams in Algebra I, Living Environment, and U.S. History to select 8th-grade students.

Academic Program for students with disabilities and English language learners (ELL): TEP leverages an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) model to support students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP). Dedicated, explicit co-teaching planning structures are in place to ensure the maximization of both teachers to support all students, particularly those with IEP or other learning needs. TEP's educational program has been specially designed for a high ELL, predominantly Spanish-speaking population. Using Structured English Immersion, ELLs learn together with non-ELL students. TEP teachers design lessons that emphasize a variety of learning styles; lessons incorporate audio, visual, experiential, and written components to provide multiple access points. TEP teachers design assignments and assessments that provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate understanding at various levels. TEP believes in constant and close monitoring of the performance of all students, including ELL and SWD, using robust quantitative and qualitative measures. Grade-level teams of TEP teachers analyze student data and support students at risk of academic failure by creating individualized support plans. For at-risk students, the student's core teachers, the grade-level social worker, and the grade-level special education teachers (if applicable) develop individualized support plans that include in-school and out-of-school interventions

Figure 1: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency State and District Differentials Over Time Comparison to NYC CSD 6

		ELA					Math				
		Equity Project CS (The)	NYC CSD 6	District Differential	NYS	NYS Differential	Equity Project CS (The)	NYC CSD 6	District Differential	NYS	NYS Differential
All Students	2015-2016	25%	26%	-1	36%	-11	44%	22%	+22	36%	+8
	2016-2017	31%	29%	+2	39%	-8	43%	23%	+20	37%	+6
	2017-2018	40%	36%	+4	43%	-3	56%	29%	+27	41%	+15
	2018-2019	38%	37%	+1	43%	-5	60%	36%	+24	44%	+16
	2021-2022	42%	38%	+4	47%	-5	43%	28%	+15	39%	+4
SWD	2015-2016	8%	7%	1	8%	0	16%	9%	+7	10%	+6
	2016-2017	14%	10%	+4	10%	+4	20%	9%	+11	11%	+9
	2017-2018	11%	16%	-5	14%	-3	29%	13%	16	14%	+15
	2018-2019	19%	15%	+4	13%	+6	35%	15%	+20	14%	+21
	2021-2022	18%	17%	+1	16%	+2	22%	14%	+8	14%	+8
ELL	2015-2016	8%	7%	+1	8%	0	22%	9%	+13	15%	+7
	2016-2017	8%	7%	+1	8%	0	21%	8%	+13	14%	+7
	2017-2018	14%	16%	-2	20%	-6	40%	14%	+26	23%	+17
	2018-2019	15%	16%	-1	19%	-4	41%	18%	+23	25%	+16
	2021-2022	28%	20%	+8	29%	-1	33%	14%	+19	25%	+8
ED	2015-2016	24%	24%	0	26%	-2	43%	20%	+23	26%	+17
	2016-2017	30%	27%	+3	29%	+1	42%	21%	+21	26%	+16
	2017-2018	37%	33%	+4	34%	+3	55%	26%	+29	31%	+24
	2018-2019	36%	34%	+2	33%	+3	59%	32%	+27	34%	+25
	2021-2022	40%	33%	+7	37%	+3	42%	23%	+19	28%	+14

Table 4: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes



Essential Question 2: Is the school effective and well-run?

Use of Data/ Ability to Monitor Progress

TEP actively utilizes formative and summative assessment data to inform instruction. For students in kindergarten through grade 4, teachers leverage assessment trackers to formally evaluate literacy and math data on an ongoing basis, collecting and analyzing results to inform instructional responses to support student performance. For students in grades 5-8, student achievement reports are used by teachers to measure individual student progress toward the most important learning outcomes for each subject and grade level. Assessment data is updated regularly and analyzed six times per year in a formal analysis and reflection to drive instructional adjustments. Interim cycle assessments are also administered twice per year to students in grades 3-8 to benchmark progress relative to the NYS ELA and math exams.

Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention

The school is currently meeting the target (85%) for aggregate enrollment (see Table 5 below) and has met that target in all years of the current charter term.

Table 5: Aggregate Enrollment: Reported vs Contracted

Equity Project CS (The)	Contracted Enrollment	Reported Enrollment	Percent of Contracted Enrollment
2017-2018	1200	720	60%
2018-2019	960	884	92%
2019-2020	1080	958	89%
2020-2021	1080	1085	100%
2021-2022	1080	1089	101%
2022-2023	1080	1081	100%

The school is exceeding targets for enrollment of ED students and is within 3 percentage points of the district enrollment of SWD and ELL (see Table 6 below). The school has a student admissions preference for siblings of current students, ELL, SWD, and students and families residing within Community School District 6.

The school is exceeding all retention targets for aggregate retention (see Table 7 below).

Table 6: Subgroup Enrollment: Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, and Economically Disadvantaged

	SWD			ELL			ED		
	Equity Project CS (The)	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	Equity Project CS (The)	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	Equity Project CS (The)	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District
2017-2018	23%	23%	0	35%	37%	-2	91%	86%	+5
2018-2019	24%	22%	+2	36%	34%	+2	91%	84%	+7
2019-2020	22%	23%	-1	36%	34%	+2	92%	84%	+8
2020-2021	22%	24%	-2	31%	34%	-3	90%	84%	+6
2021-2022	23%	24%	-1	31%	34%	-3	91%	83%	+8

Table 7: Student Retention – Aggregate and Subgroup

	All Students			SWD			ELL			ED		
	Equity Project CS (The)	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	Equity Project CS (The)	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	Equity Project CS (The)	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District	Equity Project CS (The)	NYC CSD 6	Differential to District
2017-2018	94%	86%	+8	90%	86%	+4	96%	86%	+10	94%	87%	+7
2018-2019	94%	86%	+8	90%	85%	+5	92%	87%	+5	94%	86%	+8
2019-2020	90%	87%	+3	87%	89%	-2	92%	88%	+4	91%	87%	+4
2020-2021	95%	89%	+6	93%	88%	+5	95%	90%	+5	95%	90%	+5
2021-2022	87%	81%	+6	88%	78%	+10	86%	85%	+1	87%	84%	+3

Legal Compliance

TEP operates in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, rules and other policies, including the terms of its charter, its by-laws, and other school-specific policies. The board holds meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law.

Essential Question 3: Is the school financially viable?

Financial Condition

The school has demonstrated financial viability as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the school’s independently audited financial statements.

The NYCDOE 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. Current ratio has met the target in 2019–2020, 2020–2021, and 2021–2022. Though unrestricted days of cash have been below target in all years of the charter term, it has steadily increased over the term and is approaching target. 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; none of these long-term indicators were below target in the fiscal years considered.²

Financial Management

The NYCDOE reviewed TEP’s audited financial statements from 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022 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 in any of the aforementioned years.

Summary of Public Comment

The required public hearing was held by the New York City Department of Education on December 7, 2022. Two hundred and three people attended, and twenty spoke. Twenty were in favor of the renewal. No one was opposed. No one submitted written comment.

² These rigorous indicators of fiscal soundness are aligned with those recommended by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.