


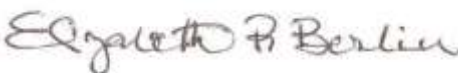


**TO:** P-12 Education Committee

**FROM:** Cosimo Tangorra, Jr. 

**SUBJECT:** Renewal Decision for a Charter School Authorized by the Board of Regents

**DATE:** May 11, 2015

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** 

## **SUMMARY**

### **Issue for Decision**

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

- Genesee Community Charter School

### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

Required by New York State law.

### **Proposed Handling**

This issue will be before the Board of Regents P-12 Education Committee and the Full Board for action at the May 2015 Regents meeting.

### **Background – Performance Framework**

In June of 2010, the New York State Board of Regents (the “Regents”), and the New York State Education Department (the “Department”) embarked on a new approach to charter school authorizing, aligning the Regents’ and Department’s work with the best practices of the highest quality authorizers nationally. A key component of this approach is the Performance Framework (the “Framework”) for charter schools

authorized by the Regents, which outlines quality benchmarks for charter schools that represent the high-levels of performance necessary to earn charter renewal.

The Framework, which is part of 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 also contains ten (10) performance benchmarks in each area, as follows:

### Performance Area 1 - Educational Success

Benchmark 1: Student Performance: The school has met or come close to meeting student achievement goals for academic growth, proficiency, and college and career readiness on state standards and achievement goals outlined in the school's charter.

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 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) 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.

### Performance Area 2 - 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.

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.

### Performance Area 3 - Faithfulness to Charter & Law

Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements: The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.

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.

The Performance Framework applies only to Regents-authorized charter schools opened in 2012 and thereafter, and schools with Renewal Charter Agreements signed in 2012 and thereafter. However, schools authorized or renewed before the development of the Framework were evaluated using similar performance standards.

Additional information regarding the Performance Framework is available on the New York State Education Department's Charter School Office website:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/SectionIIIPerformanceFramework.html>

### **Charter School Renewal Applications**

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 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 renewal application submitted pursuant to paragraph (b)(1) of this section (the charter school's renewal application);
- (b) Any additional material or information submitted by the charter school pursuant to paragraph (b)(2) of this section (additional information requested by the State Education Department);
- (c) Comments received pursuant to Education Law section 2857(1), as provided for in paragraph (c)(1) of this section;
- (d) Any information relating to the site visit and the site visit report, if any, pursuant to paragraph (c)(2) of this section;
- (e) The charter school's annual reporting results including, but not limited to, student academic achievement;
- (f) The Department's renewal recommendation pursuant to paragraph (c)(3) of this section and the charter school's written response, if any, pursuant to subparagraph (c)(3)(ii) of this section; and
- (g) Any other information that the board, in its discretion, may deem relevant to its determination whether the charter should be renewed, including, but not limited to, information related to whether renewal should be denied to protect the interests of students, families and the public including, but not limited to, instances involving criminal violations, fraud, unsafe environment, organizational stability or other serious or egregious violations of law or of the school's charter.

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.

## **The Importance of Enrollment and Retention Targets**

As enacted, section 2854(2)(a) of the Education Law required that schools demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities (“SWD”) and limited English proficient students when compared to the enrollment figures for such students in the school district in which the charter is located.

In 2010, the legislature amended the law to provide more stringent requirements regarding enrollment and retention targets. In addition to requiring a demonstration of efforts, the Charter Schools Act now requires that public charter schools enroll and retain students with disabilities, English language learners (“ELL”), and students eligible for the federal free and reduced price lunch program (“FRPL”), and charged the Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (“SUNY”) to set specific numeric enrollment and retention targets tailored to each individual charter school.

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 Section 2851(4)(e), and this information is considered by the Regents in the review of the school’s performance over the charter term. Schools are also required to submit information regarding the targets in their annual reports 2857(2)(d)). A school’s repeated failure to comply with the requirement to meet or exceed their enrollment and retention targets is cause for termination or revocation of the charter pursuant to section 2855(1)(e) of the Education Law.

## **State Education Department Renewal Recommendations**

The Department considers evidence related to all of the Performance Benchmark areas, for the applicable schools, when making recommendations to the Regents concerning charter renewal applications. However, student academic performance is of paramount importance when evaluating each school. Each of the recommendations below was made after a full due-diligence process over the charter term, including review of the information presented by each school in its Renewal Application, a specific fiscal review, a two-day renewal site visit conducted by a Department team during the fall of 2014, comprehensive analysis of achievement data and consideration of public comment. The attached Renewal Recommendation Reports provide summary information about each of the Renewal Applications that are before the Regents for action today as well as an analysis of the academic and fiscal performance of each school over the charter term.

The fiscal impact on a school that receives a short-term renewal can vary greatly from school-to-school and, depending on their particular situation, may not impact their

fiscal outlook at all. A few variables include – whether or not a school owns or leases their buildings, a school’s fiscal standing over the charter term, a community’s general perception of/confidence in the school’s stability and whether a school can maintain enrollment or recruit new students – to name a few.

It should be clearly noted, therefore, that the analysis of the potential fiscal impact of a short-term renewal is prospective and largely based on speculation rather than clear quality/quantitative metrics our office can apply to our performance oversight. Additionally, as an authorizer, we are held to considerations under law. To that point, the term for renewal must follow Education Law Section 2851(4) and 8 NYCRR 119.7, which do not include a consideration of the impact of the renewal decision on the school.

The renewal term is our primary carrot to ensure that schools meet student performance/financial metrics. If an authorizer gives poorly performing schools five year terms to assuage potential fiscal impact on a school, we lose a major lever/ incentive for improvement, and devalue full term renewals given to high-performing schools.

**May 2015 Charter School Renewal Overview**

**Genesee Community Charter School – 5 years**

<b>Board Chair</b>	Bridget Shumway
<b>District of location</b>	Rochester City School District
<b>Opening Date</b>	August 2001
<b>Charter Terms</b>	Initial Charter Term: November 10, 2000–November 9, 2005 First Renewal Term: November 10, 2005 –January 10, 2010 Second Renewal Term: July 1,2010–June 30, 2015
<b>Management Company</b>	None
<b>Partners</b>	Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound
<b>Facilities</b>	657 East Ave., Rochester NY 14607
<b>Grades / Maximum Enrollment</b>	K-6 / 225 students
<b>Mission Statement</b>	The Genesee Community Charter School provides a rich educational experience that values intellectual rigor, respect for diversity, and community responsibility. Our local history-based and globally-connected program immerses our diverse population of children in investigation and discovery, extensively

	using the cultural and natural resources of our community. Using the Expeditionary Learning Design, we nurture children's natural abilities to be reflective questioners, articulate communicators, critical thinkers, and skilled problem solvers.
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**Renewal Recommendations**

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that, the **Genesee Community 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 Genesee Community 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, 2020.

**Timetable for Implementation**

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

Attachments



New York State Education Department

***Charter School Renewal Recommendation Report  
Application for Third Charter Renewal***

**Genesee Community Charter School**

**May 2015**



## Introduction

In accordance with Education Law, Article 56, Sections 2851(4) and 2852(2), Commissioners Regulation 119.7 and the Board of Regents Charter School Renewal Policy (November, 2012), **the New York State Education Department (NYSED) recommends a second renewal term for a period of five years for Genesee Community Charter School (GCCS). The school has demonstrated strong academic performance and faithful implementation of the mission, key design elements, education program and organizational design set forth in the charter. GCCS has demonstrated efforts toward meeting enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the Board of Regents for students with disabilities, English language learners and students who are economically disadvantaged. In addition, the school has formally committed to additional measures that appear likely to accelerate progress toward meeting the targets in the upcoming charter term.** The charter term would begin on July 1, 2015 and expire on June 30, 2020.

This report is the primary means by which NYSED summarizes for the New York State Board of Regents its findings and recommendations regarding a charter school's Renewal Application.

## Charter School Summary<sup>1</sup>

<b>Name of Charter School</b>	Genesee Community Charter School
<b>Board Chair</b>	Bridget Shumway
<b>District of Location</b>	Rochester City School District
<b>Opening Date</b>	August 2001
<b>Charter Terms</b>	Initial Charter Term: November 10, 2000–November 9, 2005 First Renewal Term: November 10, 2005 –January 10, 2010 Second Renewal Term: July 1,2010–June 30, 2015
<b>Management Company</b>	None
<b>Partners</b>	Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound
<b>Facility</b>	657 East Ave., Rochester NY 14607
<b>Mission Statement</b>	<i>The Genesee Community Charter School provides a rich educational experience that values intellectual rigor, respect for diversity, and community responsibility. Our local history-based and globally-connected program immerses our diverse population of children in investigation and discovery, extensively using the cultural and natural resources of our community. Using the Expeditionary Learning Design, we nurture children's natural abilities to be reflective questioners, articulate communicators, critical thinkers, and skilled problem solvers.</i>

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

### Enrollment

School Year	Chartered Enrollment	Grades Served
2014 - 2015	224	K-6
2013 - 2014	224	K-6
2012 - 2013	224	K-6
2011 - 2012	224	K-6
2010 - 2011	224	K-6
Maximum enrollment: 224		

### Student Demographics: GCCS Compared to District of Location<sup>2</sup>

	2012-2013			2013-2014			2014-15 <sup>3</sup>		
	School Enrollment	Rochester CSD Enrollment	Variance <sup>4</sup>	School Enrollment	Rochester CSD Enrollment	Variance	School Enrollment	Rochester CSD Enrollment	Variance
<b>Special Populations</b>									
Students with Disabilities	11%	16%	-5	10%	16%	-6	10%	N/A	N/A
English language learners	0%	11%	-11	0%	12%	-12	0%	N/A	N/A
Economically Disadvantaged	27%	89%	-62	25%	92%	-67	30%	N/A	N/A

<sup>2</sup> As enacted, section 2854(2)(a) of the Education Law required that schools demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities (SWD) and limited English proficient students when compared to the enrollment figures for such students in the school district in which the charter is located. 2010 amendments to the law require a demonstration of good faith efforts to enroll and retain SWD, English language learners (ELL), and students eligible for the Federal free and reduced price lunch program (FRPL), and charged the Board of Regents (Regents) and the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (SUNY) to set specific enrollment and retention targets for each charter school (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 (2851(4)(e)), and this information is considered by the Regents in the review of the school's performance over the charter term. Schools are also required to submit information regarding the targets in their annual reports 2857(2)(d)). A school's repeated failure to comply with the requirement to meet or exceed their enrollment and retention targets is cause for termination or revocation of the charter pursuant to section 2855(1)(e) of the Education Law.

<sup>3</sup> 2014-15 enrollment data reported by the school and current as of January 29, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Variance is defined as the percent difference of subgroup enrollment between the charter school and district of location.

### Student Retention (Self-Reported by School)

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of students enrolled	203	215	216	216
Number of students who left during the school year	0	7	4	1
Number of students who did not re-enroll the next school year and had not completed the highest grade at the school	11	10	7	11
Retention rate	95%	92%	95%	94%

### Current Board of Trustees

Board Member Name	Term	Position/Committees
Bridget Shumway	7/1/2012 -6/30/2015	Community Rep, Board President, Personnel Committee, Executive Committee
Kathleen DaBoll-Lavoie	7/1/2012 - 6/30/2015	Community Rep, Board Vice President, Nominating Committee (Chair)
Lisa Wing	8/7/00 - present	Chief Executive Officer( <i>Permanent Board Member</i> ), Nominating Committee, Personnel Committee, Renovation Committee, Executive Committee
Mark Schiesser	7/1/2013 -6/30/2016	Community Rep, Board Treasurer, Finance Committee (Chair), Renovation Committee, Executive Committee
Tracy Walker	7/1/2013 - 6/30/2016	Community Rep, Board Secretary, Discipline Committee
Alexis Stubbe	7/1/2014 - 6/30/2017	Staff Rep
Harry Pierre-Philippe	7/1/2014 - 6/30/2017	Community Rep, Nominating Committee, Discipline Committee (Chair)
Marcia Joy	7/1/2014 - 6/30/2017	Community Rep, Nominating Committee, Personnel Committee (Chair)
Michelle Hannagan	7/1/2014 -6/30/2017	Parent Rep
Ann Marie Spinney	3/14/2012 - present	RMSC Rep, Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, Renovation Committee
Martin Presberg	7/1/2013 - 6/30/2016	Parent Rep, Nominating Committee, Finance Committee
Stacey Cicero	7/1/2013 - 6/30/2016	Teacher Rep, Discipline Committee
William Gargan	7/1/2012 - 6/30/2015	Parent Rep, Discipline Committee, Renovation Committee
Michelle Erklenz-Watts	9/4/2013 - 6/30/2016	Community Rep, Personnel Committee

### **School Leader(s)**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>School Leader(s) Name and Title</b>
2000 – present	Dr. Lisa Wing, School Leader

### **School Visit History**

A two-day renewal visit was completed at Genesee Community Charter School on October 15-14, 2014. The NYSED team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership team, director of operations, teachers, parents and students. Prior to that, a full site visit was conducted on May 15-16, 2013, and a check-in visit on April 30, 2010.

### **Background**

In November 2000, the Regents granted the initial charter to Genesee Community Charter School. The school opened in August 2001 in a facility located within the Rochester Museum and Science Center. The GCCS charter was renewed by the Board of Regents for a five year term extending from 2005 -2010. In December 2006, the charter was revised and the school was authorized to serve up to 216 students. In 2010, GCCS was approved for a second renewal term and a maximum enrollment of 224, ending June 30, 2015. In 2014, GCCS received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award for overall academic excellence.

### **Summary of Evidence**

#### **Educational Soundness**

#### **Student Performance**

Academic performance at Genesee Community Charter School continues to be strong and meets student achievement indicators for academic growth and proficiency on state standards in ELA and math.

### Growth – 3-8 Outcomes

In a comparative analysis of Genesee Community Charter School’s 3-6 ELA and math growth outcomes, the school showed growth that was below the state mean in both ELA and math in the 2011-12 testing year (based on growth from the 2010-11 school year). In the first year of Common Core testing, 2012-13, the school showed slight growth in ELA yet remained stagnant in mathematics. In the second year of Common Core testing, 2013-14, Genesee showed growth in both ELA and math.

Chart 1: Three-year 3-8<sup>th</sup> grade growth

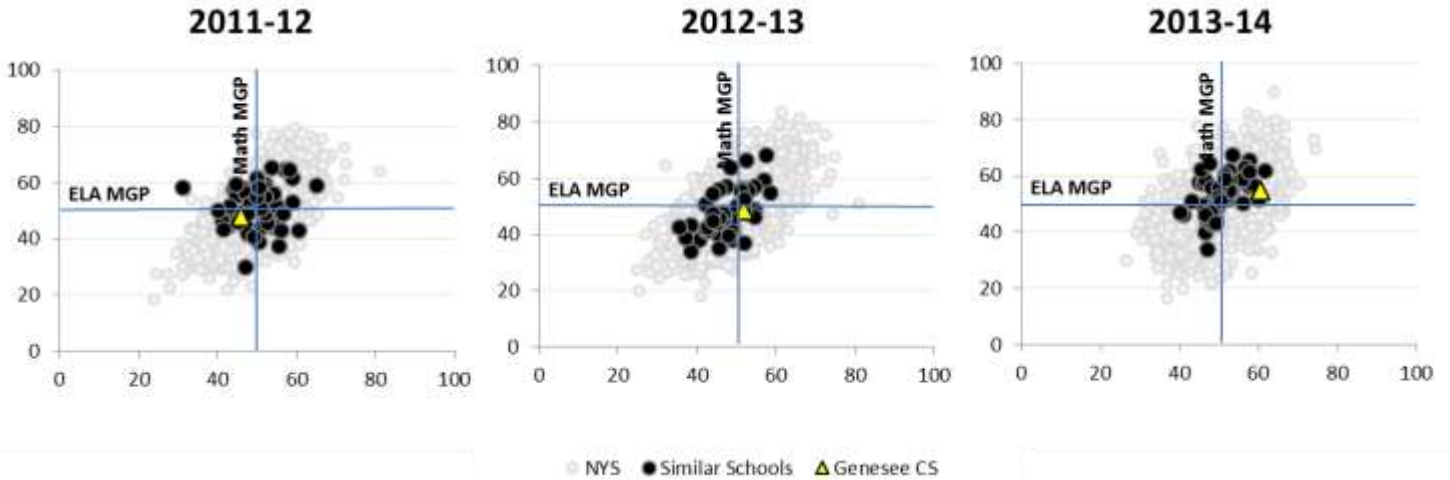


Chart 1: The scatterplots above show the adjusted mean growth percentile of schools with similar grade configuration and demographics to Genesee Community Charter School’s 3-6<sup>th</sup> grade continuum. The model requires at least one base year of testing and calculates growth from the base year to the testing year on a per pupil basis. As a result, the growth scores displayed here show growth only from 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Genesee, using the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade results as a base year. The model also controls for student characteristics, including students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students in poverty. This allows for all students in all schools to be compared fairly. Each mark represents a school’s adjusted mean growth percentile in ELA and math. The crosshairs on the plot represents the state average for growth in ELA and math in that testing year.

Proficiency – 3-6 Outcomes

Despite growth hovering around the state mean in early testing years of this analysis, students in grades 3-6 at Genesee Community showed progress in ELA and math, exceeding the Rochester CSD and NYS proficiency rates from 2011-2014.

Chart 2: Four-year Gr 3-6 Genesee Community proficiency outcomes compared to Rochester CSD and NYS Mean; Compares district to NYS mean

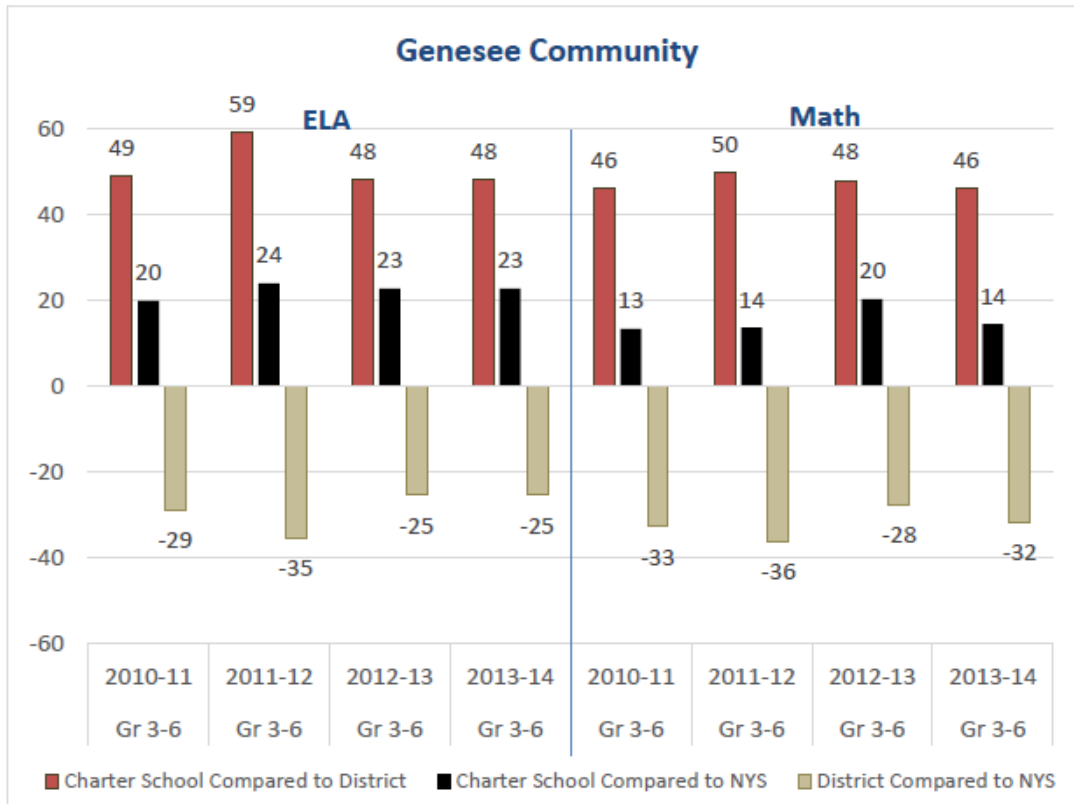


Chart 2: The above histogram compares the school’s 3-6 grade proficiency outcomes with that of the district of location and the NYS mean in comparable grades tested. The district’s proficiency outcomes are also compared to the NYS mean to gauge whether or not a school’s comparison to the state mean mirrors trends seen in the district or if the school is able to overcome the district’s academic and socioeconomic challenges. Where (x=0), this line serves as the mean for the school’s comparison to the district mean, state mean, or the district’s comparison to the state mean. Marks above or below this line indicate how far each comparison has been calculated from the associated mean.

According to the Department’s accountability designations for 2014-15<sup>5</sup>, Genesee Community Charter School is *In Good Standing*.

**Teaching and Learning**

Monitoring visits have consistently recorded evidence of a sound educational program that is aligned to state standards and based on the practices of Expeditionary Learning (EL). The EL focus on field studies, an integrated curriculum, and authentic assessment help GCCS foster both academic and character

<sup>5</sup> 2014-15 accountability designations are based on 2012-2013 NYS testing data.

development. Students spend most of each school day embarking on purposeful, rigorous “learning expeditions” that involve intellectual, service and kinesthetic dimensions. Learning expeditions are in-depth studies of a single theme or topic, generally lasting twelve weeks, and are the core of the curriculum. Expeditions incorporate social studies, science and the arts as well as ELA. Through classroom lessons, research, simulations and experiments, fieldwork to local or distant destinations, and work with guest experts and community members, students develop the knowledge and skills required to produce a final product for each expedition. For example, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade expedition focused on a proposal to re-water the downtown section of the Erie Canal.

Formative and summative assessments are administered and data from assessments are used by teachers and school leaders to inform instructional practice and make school-wide decisions. GCCS uses NWEA MAPS, DRA and DIBELS as well as teacher-designed assessments and culminating projects for each expedition. Their renewal application further elaborates that since each classroom at GCCS has two classroom teachers and a teaching assistant, small group interventions and flexible groupings that can be homogeneous or heterogeneous are provided to students based on the classroom’s tiered intervention plan. The school states this structure allows for careful monitoring of student and program progress. GCCS also reports team meetings are held at least once per month to discuss progress and program effectiveness. According to classroom teachers and special education providers, meeting regularly allows for collaborative development and modification of instructional goals along with specific instructional strategies to help meet those goals. During the renewal visit, site visit team members observed several data meetings in which assessment data and student work was used to determine effectiveness of instructional strategies and next steps for individual students.

GCCS works with districts of residence to develop IEP’s and secure services that meet the needs of special education students and allow them to remain at GCCS. GCCS employs a part-time Special Education Coordinator whose responsibilities include coordinating the special service schedule, ensuring all teachers are providing services necessary for students, and providing reading intervention through the Wilson Language Program to students who do not qualify for special education services.

### **Culture, Climate and Family Engagement**

The school climate and culture directly supports student learning, development and achievement. This is evidenced through the use of Responsive Classroom and Character Traits, reflecting the school’s mission and Expeditionary Learning design. Teachers and leaders consistently stated that Responsive Classroom is explicitly and purposefully integrated into the curriculum to foster student social and emotional health development. Throughout the charter term, site visit team members observed that routines and rituals were internalized by most students.

## **Organizational Viability**

### **Financial Condition**

Genesee Community Charter School is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the schools independently audited financial statements.

The Department reviews the financial performance and management of charter schools using quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative reporting is done through the fiscal dashboard (See Appendix A).

The dashboard presents several near-term and long-term financial performance indicators.<sup>6</sup> 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 Health

A *composite score* is an overall measure of financial health calculated by the NYSED 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 in strong financial health. GCCS's composite score for 2013-14 is 2.80. The table below shows the school's composite scores from 2010-11 through 2013-14.

**Genesee Community Charter School Composite Scores  
2010-2011 to 2013-2014**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2013-2014	2.80
2012-2013	2.80
2011-2012	2.60
2010-2011	2.70

Source: NYSED Office of Audit Services

Near Term Indicators

Near term indicators of financial health are used to understand the current financial performance and viability of the school. The Department uses three measures:

The *current ratio* is a financial ratio that measures whether or not a school has enough resources to pay its debts over the next 12 months. The ratio is mainly used to give an idea of the school's ability to pay back its short-term liabilities (debt and payables) with its short-term assets (cash, inventory, receivables). The higher the current ratio, the more capable the school is of paying its obligations, with a ratio under 1.0 indicating concern. For 2013-2014, GCCS had a current ratio of 2.5x and therefore the school should be able to pay obligations as they come due.

*Unrestricted cash* measures in days whether the school can meet operating expenses without receiving new income. Schools typically strive to maintain at least 90 days cash on hand. For 2013-2014, GCCS operated with 48.5 days unrestricted cash, a decrease from 141.3 days in 2012-13.

*Enrollment stability* measures whether or not a school is meeting its enrollment projections, thereby generating sufficient revenue to fund ongoing operations. Schools typically strive to have low variability in enrollment over time. Actual enrollment that is over 85 percent of the projected total is considered reasonable. For 2013-2014 and 2012-2013, GCCS enrollment stability was at 96%.

Long Term Indicators

A school's *debt to asset ratio* measures the extent to which the school relies on borrowed funds to finance its operations. It is calculated as total liabilities divided by total assets. A ratio of 0.9 or less meets a standard of low risk. For 2013-2014, GCCS's debt to asset ratio was 0.17x.

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<sup>6</sup> These rigorous indicators of fiscal soundness are aligned with those recommended by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, and are also used by the Trustees at the State University of New York (SUNY) in their capacity as a charter school authorizer (SUNY-CSI) in New York State.



*Total margin* measures the deficit or surplus a school yields out of its total revenues; in other words, whether or not the school is living within its available resources. Total margin is calculated as net income divided by total revenue. A total margin that is positive indicates low risk. For 2013-2014, the GCCS total margin was 6.6 percent.

For additional information regarding these metrics and figures, the CSO staff has prepared a series of graphs to illustrate the long-term (three-year trend analysis) performance of the school (See Appendix A).

### **Financial Management**

Genesee Community Charter School had two recent audits, the annual financial audit and an audit by the NYS Office of State Comptroller. The Genesee Community Charter School's 2013-2014 Independent Financial Audit had no material findings.

The NYS Office of State Comptroller conducted an audit of the school's Revenue Billing and Collection (2013M-61). Revenues from resident school districts, school meals and field studies are properly billed, collected, recorded, and reported. However, the school has not developed procedures to segregate the collecting, recording, and reconciling of school meal and field study revenues.

Monies received are held by the Coordinator of School Operations who also prepares the deposits and reconciles the bank statements without independent review of the deposits or reconciliations. It is recommended that the board require that bank and cash receipts reconciliations for school meal and field study collections be performed by someone independent of the cash receipts process. School officials agreed with the recommendations.

Note: Field studies are field trips with a purpose of providing research that students will later use in their studies throughout the remainder of the school year.

### **Board Oversight and Governance**

Board membership and active member recruitment ensures that the board composition includes a wide range of expertise, such as education/pedagogy, technology, business/marketing and law. GCCS has a large board, currently 14 members. The board engages in strategic planning aligned with its commitment to providing a rich educational experience. For example, completed building additions to GCCS that include a music room and a dance studio demonstrate the board's commitment to ensure that GCCS is able to fully implement its art programs.

The school leader is a voting member of the board and has been so since the inception of the school. The board also includes teacher representatives and employees from the Rochester Museum and Science Center, in which they are located. The Department has notified the school of its obligation to consider Sections 800-806 of the General Municipal Law, which prohibits the participation of teachers, and school leaders on charter school boards, with limited exception. The school has not yet come into compliance with these requirements.

## **Organizational Capacity**

Stable leadership, high teacher retention and a clear organizational structure have resulted in the school functioning smoothly. GCCS has had the same school leader since its inception. The hiring process for teachers is rigorous and screens for teachers who work well with the mission and design of the school.

## **Faithfulness to the Charter and Law**

### **Mission and Key Design Elements**

The GCCS mission and key elements were clearly evident throughout the classroom observations during monitoring visits and in samples of student work throughout the charter term. GCCS staff maintains fidelity to the key elements of the Expeditionary Learning design, along with full implementation of the Responsive Classroom approach and character traits embedded into daily instruction, to promote a school culture that fosters trust, respect, compassion, collaboration and student engagement.

## **Legal Compliance**

### **Enrollment, Recruitment and Retention**

According to Department records, GCCS is not meeting Board of Regents-prescribed enrollment and retention targets for any of the three subgroups, students with disabilities, English language learners or economically disadvantaged students. The school has provided a detailed policy statement setting forth the outreach and retention strategies for each of these groups of students for the upcoming charter term. Additionally, in April 2015, the GCCS board developed and approved a resolution to update the admissions policy so as to intensify recruitment efforts for the three target population groups.

A detailed description of these efforts is attached in Appendix B.

### **Applicable Laws and Charter Provisions**

The board is comprised of employees of the school, including the school leader and teacher representatives. Although the Department has notified the school of its obligation to consider Sections 800-806 of the General Municipal Law, which prohibits the participation school employees, with limited exception, the school has not yet come into compliance with these requirements.

The board otherwise acts in accordance with law, regulations, rules and other policies, including its by-laws and other school-specific policies, including disciplinary procedures for students with disabilities to address section 300.519-300.529 of the Code of Federal Regulations and NYS DASA regulations. The board holds meetings in accordance with Open Meetings Law and posts meeting minutes on the GCCS webpage.

## **Proposals for Revision**

The school has not submitted any revisions for the renewal term.

## **Public Hearing Information**

A public hearing on the prospective renewal of Genesee Community Charter School was held on October 9, 2014. No speakers were present.

<b>Charter School:</b>	<b>Genesee Community Charter School</b>
<b>Report as of:</b>	<b>2014</b>



General Information:			
<b>School District:</b>	<b>Rochester CSD</b>	<b>Years in Operation:</b>	13
		<b>Grade(s) Served:</b>	K-6
		<b>Actual Enrollment:</b>	216
		<b>Budgeted Enrollment:</b>	224

Income Statement:	
<b>Total Revenues:</b>	<b>\$ 3,015,559</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>	<b>Enrollment Stability</b>
Total Program Services	\$ 2,399,751
Management and General	\$ 417,906
Development	\$ -
Fundraising	\$ -
Disposal Losses	\$ -
Other	\$ -
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$ 2,817,657</b>
<b>Operating Surplus</b>	<b>\$197,902</b>
<b>% Management &amp; General</b>	<b>14.83%</b>
<b>Statewide Average</b>	<b>15.24%</b>
<b>% Programmatic Services</b>	<b>85.17%</b>
<b>Statewide Average</b>	<b>84.12%</b>

Balance Sheet & Cash Flow:	
<b>Assets:</b>	
Cash - Unrestricted	\$374,583
Cash in Escrow	\$0
Other Current Assets	\$807,177
Investments & PP&E	\$1,475,022
Other Long Term Assets	\$0
<b>Total Assets:</b>	<b>\$ 2,656,782</b>
<b>Liabilities:</b>	
Current Liabilities	\$463,561
Long Term Liabilities	\$0
<b>Total Liabilities:</b>	<b>\$463,561</b>
<b>Net Assets:</b>	<b>\$2,193,221</b>
<b>Total Liab. &amp; Net Assets:</b>	<b>\$2,656,782</b>
<b>Change in Cash</b>	<b>(\$691,265)</b>

Key Performance Metrics:	
<b>Near-Term Metrics:</b>	
Current Ratio	2.5x
Unrestricted Days Cash	48.5
Enrollment Stability	96.4%
Total Revenue Per Student:	\$13,961
Total Expenses Per Student:	\$13,045
<b>Sustainable Metrics:</b>	
Total Margin	6.6%
Debt to Asset Ratio	0.17x
Debt Service Coverage Ratio	N/A
Composite Score	2.80

**Performance Evaluation Master**

**Symbol Legend:**

	<b>Meets Standard (Low Risk)</b>
	<b>Adequate (Moderate Risk)</b>
	<b>Requires Review (High Risk)</b>

**Financial Indicator:**

**Near-Term Indicators:**

1a.	Current Ratio
1b.	Unrestricted Days Cash
1c.	Enrollment Stability

**Financial Composite Score:**

1d.	Composite Score
-----	-----------------




**Long-Term Indicators:**


2a.	Total Margin
2b.	Debt to Asset Ratio
2c.	Debt Service Coverage Ratio




**2014 Key Inputs:**

<b>Target School:</b>	Genesee Community Charter School
<b>Time Period:</b>	2014

**Target: Genesee Community Charter School**

Current Metric:	Performance:		
2.5			
48.5			
96.4%			

Current Metric:	Performance:		
2.8x			

Current Metric:	Performance:		
6.6%			
0.17x			
N/A			

### Near-Term Performance Evaluation: Genesee Community Charter School

	2014	2013	2012	Average
<b>1a. Current Ratio</b>	2.55x	5.21x	5.00x	4.25x
Explanation: Current Ratio (CR) is a measure of operational efficiency and short-term financial health. CR is calculated as current assets divided by current liabilities.				

**Meets Standard - Low Risk** (if satisfies any of the following two):

<b>X</b>	CR is greater than or equal to 1.1
	CR is between 1.0 and 1.1 and one-year trend is positive (current year ratio is higher than last year's)

**Adequate - Moderate Risk** (if satisfies any of the following two):

	Current Ratio is between 0.9 and 1.0 or equal to 1.0
	CR is between 1.0 and 1.1 and one-year trend is negative

**Requires Review - High Risk:**

	Current ratio is less than or equal to 0.9
--	--

	2014	2013	2012	Average
<b>1b. Unrestricted Days Cash</b>	48.5	141.3	151.2	113.7
2c.				

**Meets Standard - Low Risk** (if satisfies any of the following two):

<b>X</b>	30 days or more of cash
----------	-------------------------

**Adequate - Moderate Risk** (if satisfies any of the following two):

	Days Cash is between 15 and 30 days
--	-------------------------------------

**Requires Review - High Risk:**

	Less than 15 Days Cash
--	------------------------

	2014	2013	2012	Average
<b>1c. Enrollment Stability</b>	96.4%	96.4%	95.1%	96.0%
Explanation: Enrollment stability tells authorizers whether or not the school is meeting its enrollment projections, thereby generating sufficient revenue to fund ongoing operations. Actual Enrollment divided by Enrollment Projection in Charter School Budget.				

**Meets Standard - Low Risk:**

<b>X</b>	Enrollment Variance equals or exceeds 95% in most recent year
----------	---

**Adequate - Moderate Risk** (if satisfies any of the following two):

	Enrollment Variance is between 85% and 95% in the most recent year
--	--

**Requires Review - High Risk:**

	Enrollment Variance is equal to or less than 85% in most recent year
--	--

2c.

### Financial Composite Score: Genesee Community Charter School

Financial Composite Score	Current
	2.80
Explanation: Accounting for an Institution's Total Financial Condition. We evaluate the financial health of schools using a blended score that measures institutions' performances on key financial indicators. The blended score allows an institution's sources of financial strength to offset areas of financial weakness. To calculate: Step 1: Calculate Three Financial Ratios from Financial Statements (Primary Reserve Ratio, Equity Ratio, and Net Income Ratio). Step 2: Convert Ratio Results to Strength Factor Scores. Step 3: Multiply the Strength Factor Scores by a Weighting Factor. Step 4: Add the Weighted Strength Factor Scores to Obtain the Composite Score.	

**Meets Standard: Fiscally Strong**

<b>X</b>	Composite Score Range of 1.5-3.0.
----------	-----------------------------------

**Fiscally Adequate**

	Composite Score Range of 1.0-1.4.
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**Requires Review: Fiscally Needs Monitoring**

	Composite Score Range of -1.0-0.9.
--	------------------------------------

## Long-Term Performance Evaluation: Genesee Community Charter School

	2014	2013	2012	Average
<b>2a. Total Margin</b>	6.6%	2.0%	0.2%	2.9%

Explanation: Total margin measures the deficit or surplus a school yields out of its total revenues; in other words, whether or not the school is living within its available resources. Calculated as Net Income divided by Total Revenue.



**Meets Standard - Low Risk** (if satisfies any of the following two):



Most recent year Total Margin is positive



**Adequate - Moderate Risk:**

Most recent Total Margin is less than 0 but greater than -10%



**Requires Review - High Risk** (if satisfies any of the following two):

Current year Total Margin is less than -10%

	2014	2013	2012	Average
<b>2b. Debt to Asset Ratio</b>	0.17x	0.17x	0.17x	0.17x

Explanation: Measures the extent to which the school relies on borrowed funds to finance its operations. Calculated as Total Liabilities divided by Total Assets.



**Meets Standard - Low Risk:**



Debt to Asset Ratio is less than 0.90

**Adequate - Moderate Risk:**

Debt to Asset Ratio is between 0.90 and 1.0



**Requires Review - High Risk:**

Debt to Asset Ratio is greater than 1.0

	2014	2013	2012	Average
<b>2c. Debt Service Coverage Ratio</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Explanation: Debt service coverage ratio indicates a school's ability to cover its debt obligations in the current year. Calculated as: (Net Income + Depreciation + Interest Expense)/(Principal and Interest Payments).



**Meets Standard - Low Risk:**



Debt Service Coverage Ratio is equal to or exceeds 1.10



**Adequate - Moderate Risk:**

Debt Service Coverage Ratio is less than 1.10

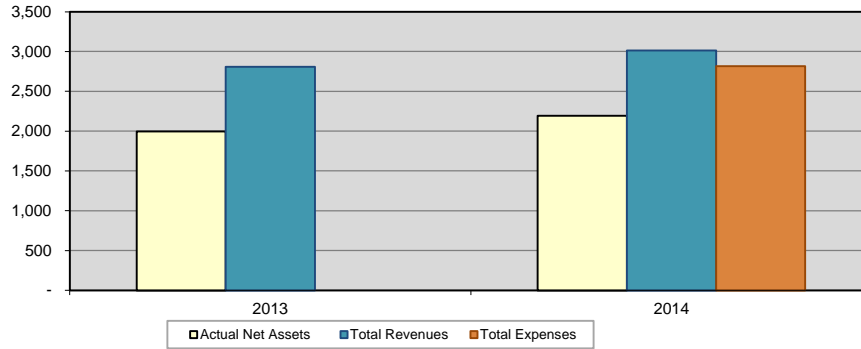


**Requires Review - High Risk:**

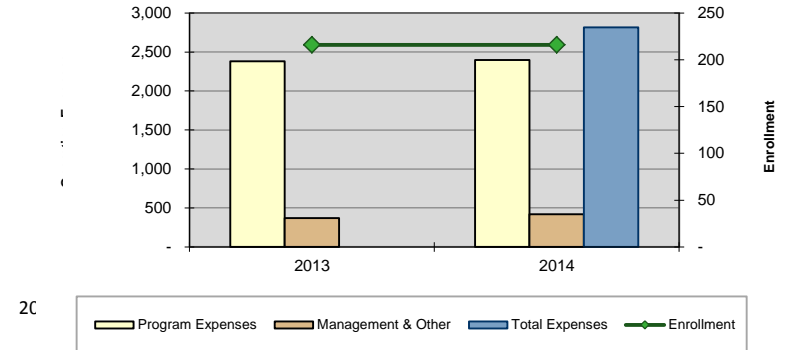
Debt Service Coverage Ratio is less than 0.90

(\$'s in thousands)

### Revenues, Expenses & Change in Net Assets



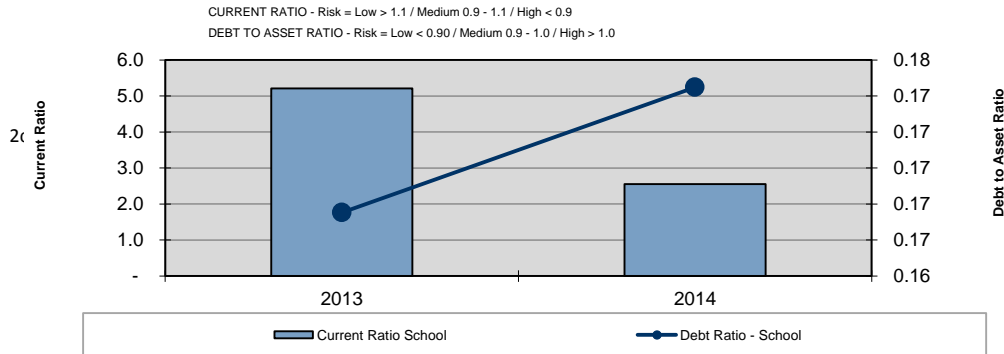
### Enrollment vs. Operating Expenses



**Enrollment Stability**  
 This chart illustrates total revenue and expenses each year and the relationship those subsets have on the increase/decrease of net assets on a year-over-year basis.

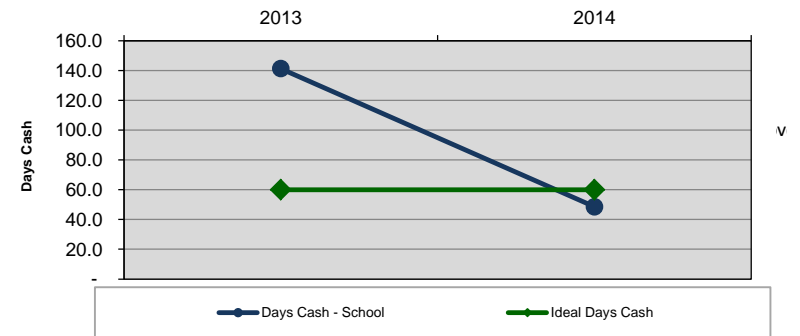
This chart illustrates to what extent the school's operating expenses have followed its student enrollment pattern.

### Current Ratio / Debt to Asset Ratio



Current Ratio is a measure of operational efficiency and short-term financial health. Debt to Asset indicates what proportion of debt a school has relative to its assets.

### Days Cash



Unrestricted days cash on hand indicates how many days a school can pay its expenses without another inflow of cash.

School		Genesee Community Charter School	
<b>COMPOSITE SCORE:</b>		<b>2.8</b>	
PRIMARY RESERVE RATIO	Unrestricted Net Assets	\$	2,193,221.00
	ADD: Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$	-
	LESS: Annuities, term endowments & life income funds that are temporarily restricted	\$	-
	LESS: Intangible Assets	\$	-
	Less: Net Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)	\$	(1,475,022.00)
	ADD: Post Employment Benefits	\$	-
	ADD: All debt obtained for long term purposes (up to net PPE)	\$	-
	EXPENDABLE NET ASSETS	\$	718,199.00
	DIVIDE BY: TOTAL EXPENSES	\$	2,817,657.00
	<b>PRIMARY RESERVE RATIO:</b>		<b>0.255x</b>
EQUITY RATIO	Unrestricted Net Assets	\$	2,193,221.00
	ADD: Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$	-
	ADD: Permanently Restricted Net Assets	\$	-
		\$	-
	LESS: Deferred Financing Costs	\$	-
	LESS: Note Receivable from Related Party	\$	-
	MODIFIED NET ASSETS	\$	2,193,221.00
	DIVIDE BY: MODIFIED ASSETS	\$	2,656,782.00
<b>EQUITY RATIO:</b>		<b>0.826x</b>	
NET INCOME RATIO:	CHANGE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	\$	197,902.00
	DIVIDE BY: TOTAL UNRESTRICTED REVENUE	\$	3,015,559.00
	<b>NET INCOME RATIO:</b>		<b>0.066x</b>
STRENGTH FACTOR SCORE (cannot be <-1 or >3)	PRIMARY RESERVE strength factor score = 10 x Primary Reserve ratio result	<b>10</b>	<b>2.550</b>
	EQUITY strength factor score = 6 x Equity ratio result	<b>6</b>	<b>3.000</b>
	Net Income strength factor score = 1 + (25 x Net Income Ratio Result) IF Negative Net Inc.	<b>25</b>	<b>0.000</b>
	Net Income strength factor score = 1 + (50 x Net Income Ratio Result) IF Positive Net Inc.	<b>50</b>	<b>3.000</b>
	<b>NET INCOME Strength Factor:</b>		<b>3.000</b>
WEIGHTED AND COMPOSITE SCORE	Primary Reserve Weighted Score = 40% x Primary Reserve Strength Factor Ccore:	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>1.020</b>
	Equity Weighted Score = 40% x Equity Strength Factor Score:	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>1.200</b>
	Net Income Weighted Score = 20% x Net Income Strength Factor:	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>0.600</b>
	Composite Score = Sum of ALL Weighted Scores		<b>2.820</b>
	<b>Round to one digit after the decimal to determine the final score:</b>		<b>2.8</b>



**COMPOSITE SCORE EXPLANATION:**

➔	2014
➔	<b>How the Rule Works.</b> Charter schools are measured on three financial ratios that are blended to produce a single composite score. The ratios and composite scores address and adjust for differences across business sectors. The model used by NYSED is weighted for "private, non-profit" institutions. The formula may be modified to analyze schools using different financial models.
➔	Institutions earning a high composite score are considered financially responsible and may continue to operate without additional monitoring from CSO.
➔	Institutions with low composite scores are not financially responsible and may be subjected to additional monitoring and oversight from CSO.
➔	Schools between high and low scores are considered to be "in the zone" of uncertain financial responsibility. They are financially responsible but are subject to additional monitoring and closer scrutiny to protect the interests of students and taxpayers. The zone alternative may only be used for three consecutive years.
➔	The ratio methodology combines elements from the audited financial statement into a single blended composite score. The regulatory result depends on the composite score, as illustrated in the following table.

**Understanding COMPOSITE SCORES**

Regulatory Result	Composite Score Range	Interpretation of Score Range
Financially Responsible	1.5 to 3.0	School is financially healthy enough to operate without additional monitoring
	1.0 to 1.4	In the zone, additional monitoring needed by CSO
Not Financially Responsible	-1.0 to 0.9	School is not financially healthy enough to be considered financially responsible

Debt Service Coverage Ratio

**4 Steps to Calc. COMPOSITE SCORES**

**Step 1: Calculate Three Financial Ratios from Financial Statements**

<b>Primary Reserve Ratio</b>	<b>Equity Ratio</b>	<b>Net Income Ratio</b>
Expendable Net Assets / Total Expenses	Modified Net Assets / Modified Assets	Change in Unrestricted Net Assets / Total Unrestricted Revenue

**Step 2: Convert Ratio Results to Strength Factor Scores**

Strength Factor Score	Interpretation of Score	Primary Reserve Ratio		Equity Ratio		Net Income Ratio	
		Private Non-profit	Pro- pri- tary	Private Non-profit	Pro- pri- tary	Private Non-profit	Pro- pri- tary
-1	Liabilities exceed resources	(0.10)	(0.05)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.08)	(0.06)
0	No demonstrable net resources	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(0.04)	(0.03)
1	Minimal resources, but not enough for clear financial health	0.10	0.05	0.17	0.17	0.00	0.00
1.5	Minimal level of resources to indicate financial health	0.15	0.08	0.25	0.25	0.01	0.02
3	Clearly financially healthy on that resource	0.30	0.15	0.50	0.50	0.04	0.06

**Step 3: Multiply the Strength Factor Scores by a Weighting Factor**

Charter School Educational Sector	Primary Reserve Strength Factor	Equity Strength Factor	Net Income Strength Factor
Private Non-profit	40%	40%	20%
Proprietary	30%	40%	30%

**Step 4: Add the Weighted Strength Factor Scores to Obtain the Composite Score**



**Genesee Community Charter School  
at the Rochester Museum & Science Center**

657 East Avenue · Rochester, NY 14607 · (585) 271-4552 x 460 · [www.GCCSchool.org](http://www.GCCSchool.org)

ADMISSIONS POLICY RESOLUTION  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF  
THE GENESEE COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

April 8, 2015

WHEREAS, since its inception in 2000 as a small elementary urban charter school, the Genesee Community Charter School, a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School, has deeply valued the diversity of its school community and has been committed to providing high quality education for all children, while remaining in full compliance with the laws of NYS;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School has fulfilled its charter as approved by the New York State Board of Regents in 2000 and renewed in 2005 and 2010, which states that it will serve a diverse population representative of the demographics of Monroe County;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School's economically disadvantaged students achieved a 38% passing rate on the NYS ELA exam and a 27% passing rate on the NYS Math exam where the comparable cohort in the school district of location has achieved a 4% passing rate in ELA and a 6% passing rate in math;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School recognizes and believes that high quality education is vital to all children;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School recognizes that subsequent changes to the New York State Charter Schools Act now require charter schools to make extensive efforts to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for specified at-risk categories of students in percentages that are comparable to those of the school district of location;

WHEREAS, the New York State Education Department (hereinafter "NYSED") now states that "all charter schools... are expected to meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets set by the Regents or, if not, to show that the School has made good faith efforts to attract and retain students in certain academically at risk categories, including those in poverty" ("economically disadvantaged students");

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School has made extensive efforts to attract, enroll and retain at-risk students;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School recognizes that the classification of economically disadvantaged students is not static or fixed and that the corresponding variations in

percentages and the timing of reporting cloud the accuracy of such data, complicate its tracking and distort analysis of overall recruitment and compliance outcomes;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School has consistently had high levels of parent satisfaction and an almost 100% student retention rate in all categories, including economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and ELL students, resulting in limited open seats each year, with said openings primarily being in Kindergarten;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School's open enrollment lottery (as outlined in NYS charter school law) ensures that everyone has the same inherently fair chance to any seat in the school;

WHEREAS, the Genesee Community Charter School Board of Trustees is mindful of its responsibilities not to discriminate against any at-risk category such as students with disabilities or English Language Learners (ELL) whether or not from economically disadvantaged families,

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED,

Genesee Community Charter School maintains that it is in compliance with all applicable enrollment and retention requirements under NYS law.

Nevertheless, Genesee Community Charter School will implement additional policies and procedures, including, but not limited to:

- Amending the 2016 application to include optional economic information sections for applying families. This information will be used to track applicants to determine the makeup of the lottery pool and to further focus and adjust future recruiting efforts.
- Developing data tracking techniques to determine and track origination point of application and inform future recruiting efforts.
- Further developing and/or creating relationships with relevant community partners, including but not limited to non-profit, religious and other community associations that serve refugee and economically disadvantaged populations.
- Increasing budget allocation for recruitment targeting under-served subgroups and additional marketing efforts such as radio, print, billboard, social media, etc., especially promoting the date of the Genesee Community Charter School admissions lottery, the school's acknowledged leadership as an Expeditionary Learning School, its designation as a National Blue Ribbon School, and its high quality special education, services for English Language Learners (ELL), and academic intervention supports.
- Hiring a marketing consultant to assist with targeted marketing of the school.

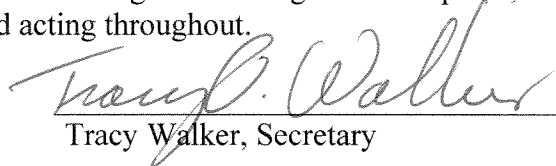
- Forming a task force of Board members, parents, and teachers to market the school at off-site events and information sessions.
- Amending current procedures for identifying economically disadvantaged students and currently enrolled students. Per SED's definition of economically disadvantaged, Genesee Community Charter School will, in addition to identifying students by enrollment in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch program, ask families to report participation in other economic assistance programs, such as Social Security Insurance (SSI), Food Stamps, Foster Care, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Safety Net Assistance (SNA), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) or Family Assistance; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Genesee Community Charter School is strongly committed to carrying out said additional measures in continuation of its good faith enrollment efforts. In doing so, Genesee Community Charter School expects to experience an increase in the lottery pool of economically disadvantaged applicants, which will presumably result in an enrollment of target populations continuing the pattern of increases realized over the past charter term, while maintaining fairness for all.

Genesee Community Charter School Board of Trustees remains committed to adhering to and being compliant with all laws applicable to the school.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Genesee Community Charter School adopted at a regular meeting held on April 8, 2015, upon due notice, at which a quorum was present and acting throughout.

Dated: 5-1-15

  
Tracy Walker, Secretary

**The Genesee Community Charter School  
Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, April 8, 2015**

**Members Present:** Kathleen DaBoll-Lavoie, Michelle Erklenz-Watts, William Gargan, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Harry Pierre-Philippe, Martin Presberg, Mark Schiesser, Bridget Shumway, Ann Marie Spinney, Alexis Stubbe, Tracy Walker, Lisa Wing

**Members Absent:** Stacey Cicero-Ryan

**Legal Counsel:** George DesMarteau

**Invited Guests:** Maureen Milke, Robin Blew

Bridget Shumway called the meeting to order at 5:40 PM

**Teacher Presentation**

2nd Grade teachers Jean Hurst and Adam Groom shared what the 2nd grade has been doing this year. Their current focus has been on Rochester history from the early settlements through the coming of the Erie Canal – a time when Rochester was a boom town (“The Lion of the West”). Students learned how and why this happened and showed what they learned by presenting a play. Copies of the script from the play, as well as an ELA writing piece were shared. It was noted that there is almost always 100% attendance by families (often multiple members of extended families) at plays and other appropriate events.

**Minutes**

**Motion 150408.1**

Upon motion of Martin Presberg, and duly seconded by, Kathleen DaBoll-Lavoie  
RESOLVED, that the minutes of the March 11, 2015 meeting of the Board of Trustees be and the same hereby are approved as presented.

**Voting in the Affirmative:** Kathleen DaBoll-Lavoie, Michelle Erklenz-Watts, William Gargan, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Harry Pierre-Philippe, Martin Presberg, Mark Schiesser, Bridget Shumway, Ann Marie Spinney, Alexis Stubbe, Tracy Walker, Lisa Wing

**Voting in the Negative:** None

**Members Absent:** Stacey Cicero-Ryan

Motion 150408.1 passed 13 to 0

**Financial**

The budget and balance sheets, as of February 28, 2015, were reviewed and discussed. All discrepancies between the anticipated budget and the actual budget were discussed. The only issue raised was food services. There was a misunderstanding between the provider and the school that led to the school being billed for more meals that we were being reimbursed for. This has now been corrected, but this will lead to a negative balance for this line for this school year.

**Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee is still reviewing the reserve fund balances and will report changes at the May meeting.

### **School Leader Report**

Lottery – the lottery was held. There were 10 openings for Kindergarten which were filled and there is an extensive waiting list. There was one opening at the 1st Grade level and one opening at the 2nd grade level, and these were both filled from the waiting list.

Jean Hurst has been invited by EL to spend six weeks writing ELA curriculum units. This is an honor for her and she is looking forward to it. EL will pay for a sub for the six weeks she will be gone. Lisa is comfortable with the substitute.

Testing “Opt Out” – there are several students who have opted out of the NYS testing. They will be given appropriate alternative activities. Lisa is a little concerned that these students, who would easily pass the test, will lower our passing percentages.

The school has an Opt-Out policy for tests. Lisa will share it with parents/community via letters and/or email.

### **Charter Renewal Discussion**

Bill Gargan provided information from a phone discussion with Bill Clarke at the State Education Department. The charter renewal will be on the May agenda. Bill Clarke strongly suggests that our Board pass a resolution regarding complying with the new laws regarding charter school demographics.

Bridget, Lisa, and Michele Hannagan met with Regent Andrew Brown for 2.5 hours on Wednesday, April 8, 2015. He was given a 30 minute school tour by students, discussed our renewal situation. He explained some of the current dynamics and made some suggestions about how we should proceed. He said that we should understand that the Regents are our audience. He suggested that we pass a Board resolution and make sure that he and Wade Norwood are copied in.

A draft resolution, based on a similar resolution passed by a Buffalo charter school, was extensively discussed and revised.

### **Motion 150408.2**

Upon motion of Kathleen DaBoll-Lavoie and duly seconded by Michelle Erklenz-Watts,

WHEREAS, since its inception in 2000 as a small elementary urban charter school, the Genesee Community Charter School, a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School, has deeply valued the diversity of its school community and has been committed to providing high quality education for all children, while remaining in full compliance with the laws of NYS;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School has fulfilled its charter as approved by the New York State Board of Regents in 2000 and renewed in 2005 and 2010, which states that it will serve a diverse population representative of the demographics of Monroe County;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School’s economically disadvantaged students achieved a 38% passing rate on the NYS ELA exam and a 27% passing rate on the NYS Math exam where the comparable cohort in the school district of location has achieved a 4% passing rate in ELA and a 6% passing rate in math;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School recognizes and believes that high quality education is vital to all children;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School recognizes that subsequent changes to the New York State Charter Schools Act now require charter schools to make extensive efforts to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for specified at-risk categories of students in percentages that are comparable to those of the school district of location;

WHEREAS, the New York State Education Department (hereinafter “NYSED”) now states that “all charter schools... are expected to meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets set by the Regents or, if not, to show that the School has made good faith efforts to attract and retain students in certain academically at risk categories, including those in poverty” (“economically disadvantaged students”);

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School has made extensive efforts to attract, enroll and retain at-risk students;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School recognizes that the classification of economically disadvantaged students is not static or fixed and that the corresponding variations in percentages and the timing of reporting cloud the accuracy of such data, complicate its tracking and distort analysis of overall recruitment and compliance outcomes;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School has consistently had high levels of parent satisfaction and an almost 100% student retention rate in all categories, including economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and ELL students, resulting in limited open seats each year, with said openings primarily being in Kindergarten;

WHEREAS, Genesee Community Charter School’s open enrollment lottery (as outlined in NYS charter school law) ensures that everyone has the same inherently fair chance to any seat in the school;

WHEREAS, the Genesee Community Charter School Board of Trustees is mindful of its responsibilities not to discriminate against any at-risk category such as students with disabilities or English Language Learners (ELL) whether or not from economically disadvantaged families,

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED,

Genesee Community Charter School maintains that it is in compliance with all applicable enrollment and retention requirements under NYS law.

Nevertheless, Genesee Community Charter School will implement additional policies and procedures, including, but not limited to:

Amending the 2016 application to include optional economic information sections for applying families. This information will be used to track applicants to determine the makeup of the lottery pool and to further focus and adjust future recruiting efforts.

Developing data tracking techniques to determine and track origination point of application and inform future recruiting efforts.

Further developing and/or creating relationships with relevant community partners, including but not limited to non-profit, religious and other community associations that serve refugee and economically disadvantaged populations.

Increasing budget allocation for recruitment targeting under-served subgroups and additional marketing efforts such as radio, print, billboard, social media, etc., especially promoting the date of the Genesee Community Charter School admissions lottery, the school’s acknowledged leadership as an Expeditionary Learning School, its designation as a National Blue Ribbon School, and its high quality special education, services for English Language Learners (ELL), and academic intervention supports.

Hiring a marketing consultant to assist with targeted marketing of the school.

Form a task force of Board members, parents, and teachers to market the school at off-site events and information sessions.

Amending current procedures for identifying economically disadvantaged students and currently enrolled students. Per SED’s definition of economically disadvantaged, Genesee Community Charter School will, in addition to identifying students by enrollment in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch program, ask families to report participation in other economic assistance programs, such as Social Security Insurance (SSI), Food Stamps, Foster Care, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC),

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Safety Net Assistance (SNA), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) or Family Assistance; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Genesee Community Charter School is strongly committed to carrying out said additional measures in continuation of its good faith enrollment efforts. In doing so, Genesee Community Charter School expects to experience an increase in the lottery pool of economically disadvantaged applicants, which will presumably result in an enrollment of target populations continuing the pattern of increases realized over the past charter term, while maintaining fairness for all. Genesee Community Charter School Board of Trustees remains committed to adhering to and being compliant with all laws applicable to the school.

**Voting in the Affirmative:** Kathleen DaBoll-Lavoie, Michelle Erklenz-Watts, William Gargan, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Harry Pierre-Philippe, Martin Presberg, Mark Schiesser, Bridget Shumway, Ann Marie Spinney, Alexis Stubbe, Tracy Walker, Lisa Wing

**Voting in the Negative:** None

**Members Absent:** Stacey Cicero-Ryan

Motion 150408.2 passed 13 to 0

**Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion 150311.2**

Upon motion of Alexis Stubbe, and duly seconded by Marcia Joy,  
RESOLVED, that this meeting of his Board be adjourned.

**Voting in the Affirmative:** Kathleen DaBoll-Lavoie, Michelle Erklenz-Watts, William Gargan, Michele Hannagan, Marcia Joy, Harry Pierre-Philippe, Martin Presberg, Mark Schiesser, Bridget Shumway, Ann Marie Spinney, Alexis Stubbe, Tracy Walker, Lisa Wing

**Voting in the Negative:** None

**Members Absent:** Stacey Cicero-Ryan

**Motion 150408.3 passed 13 to 0**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tracy Walker - Board Secretary

