



New York State Education Department

*Renewal Site Visit Report
2016-2017*

Evergreen Charter School

Visit Date: **10/18/2016**
Date of Report: **1/20/2017**

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary¹

Name of Charter School	EvergreerCharter School
Board Chair	Gil Bernardino
School Leader	Maritza Meyers
District of location	HempsteadJFSD
Opening Date	September 1, 2009
Charter Terms	Initial charter term: January 13, 2009 January 122014 FirstRenewal Term: January 13, 2014 June 30, 2014 Second Renewal Term: Jp1cJ ET 62.024 533.5 Tm 0

Name of Charter School	EvergreerCharter School
	<i>conservation. ECS students possess a strong academic foundation sufficient to be successful at every subsequent level of education through college and beyond.</i>
Requested Revisions	To expand from serving Grades K through 5 with a maximum enrollment of 375 students to serve Grades through 8 with a maximum enrollment of 600 students.

School Characteristics

Enrollment

School Year	Grades Served	Maximum Authorized Enrollment	Actual Enrollment
2016-2017	K-6	375	376
2015-2016	K-5	300	301
2014-2015	K-5	300	300

METHODOLOGY

A one-day renewal site visit was conducted at EvergreerCharter School (ECS) on October 18, 2016. The CSO team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership, and the teaching team.

- Staff handbook and personnel policies
- A list of curricular documents
- A list of major assessments
- Enrollment data including subgroups
- Professional development plans and schedules
- Academic data

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The Performance Framework, which is part of the oversight plan included in the Charter Agreement for each school that was chartered or renewed in 2012 or beyond, outlines 10 Performance Benchmarks in three key areas of charter school performance:

- Educational Success
- Organizational Soundness
- Faithfulness to Charter and Law

Observational findings from the site visit will be presented in alignment with the [Performance Framework](#) Benchmarks and Indicators according to the rating scale below, although not all indicators will necessarily be assessed on every site visit. performance will precede the benchmark analysis. Each benchmark will be rated; however, the report narrative will highlight those indicators not fully met by the school.

Level	Description
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New York State Education Department
Charter School Performance Framework Rating

Performance Benchmark

Performance Benchmark	Level
Summary of Findings	

In the first two years of the current three year charter term, ECSD produced academic outcomes in ELA and math

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).

Finding: Exceeds

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1: **See Appendix A for further detailed information.**

The percentage of students proficient in ~~ELA~~ mathematics at ~~EGS~~ is significantly higher than that of the Hempstead Unified School District in 2015 and 2016 for the school as a whole and for all subgroups

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.

Finding: The site visit team has determined that Evergreen Charter School Meets Performance Benchmark 2.

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to CCLS.b. Teachers use unit and lesson plans that introduce complex materials, stimulate higher order thinking, and build deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content.c. The curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and vertically between grades.d. The curriculum is differentiated to provide opportunities for all students to master gradelevel skills and concepts.
2. Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The school staff has a common understanding of high quality instruction, and observed instructional practices align to this understanding.b. Instructional delivery fosters engagement with all students.

The school uses the *WriteSteps Writing Program* (based on *6+1 Traits and Madeleine Hunter*) and EngageNY Math Modules as the primary mathematics curriculum. The school added the new writing program in 2016. The program was selected because it fits with its workshop approach and encourages high order independent thinking. Evidence of writing across the curriculum was observed in classrooms throughout the school. The school is also using iReady program, a computer based adaptive resource that provides self-paced instruction based on diagnostic assessments that teachers can use to assign supplemental practice for specific skills. Students receive daily Spanish instruction and are taught either native or non-native Spanish speakers.

School leaders reported on a new curriculum initiative for the Science program. Beginning in 2016, the school implemented the Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES Science 21 curriculum in kindergarten. The curriculum will be rolled out one year at a time from grades 1 through 6. Science 21 is aligned to NYS Standards and encourages student-directed learning. Additionally, the school has a robust music program with the opportunity for students to learn violin, cello, and recorder.

Literacy and math consultants meet with administrators and teachers on a regular basis to work on vertical alignment of the curriculum. Instructional leaders develop annual pacing calendars that are regularly reviewed and revised and used by teachers to guide lesson planning. The school utilizes a lesson framework that gives teachers a common structure with which to collaborate and plan. Grade level teams that include special education teachers meet weekly to develop lesson plans for the coming week, which are then submitted to instructional leaders for review and feedback.

School leaders reported continued improved implementation of the co-teaching model and targeted

small group instruction and the assignment of skills practice using iReady and Accelerated Reader programs. The school tracks Fountas and Pinnell level goals by grade and results were posted in the

The school uses a range of strategies to address the needs of diverse learners. Small group instruction was frequently observed as well as intervention groups and more intensive targeted programs such as phonics intervention. The school uses co-teaching to provide opportunities for individualized support; while many teachers are dually certified in special education, the school does not offer formal integrated co-teaching for special education. The school employs three full-time English as New Language specialists who collaborate or co-

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

describes escalating behavior concerns and the corresponding range of disciplinary actions. At the time of the visit, the school leadership reported not needing to take any actions of suspension or expulsion for the 2016 school year. The school has established a strong, caring community. On the day of the renewal visit the school evidenced a respectful environment.

In addition to having a Parent Association (PA), the school organizes numerous events and workshops for families and reports high participation so that they can interact directly with teachers. The school also shares out school data at board meetings, which are open to the public. The School Family Partnership meetings are another forum for the families to share any questions or concerns they may have with the school leadership and the board. The school reported frequent communication with parents at drop off and pickup as well as by phone and email, and makes sure that notifications for all events are sent to families in both English and Spanish. The school conducts parent-teacher conferences, with accommodations for teachers to have additional coverage in order to meet with a parent at a different time. The PA holds its own meetings and publicly shares the meeting schedule. They also hold fundraisers and special events, organize schoolwide assemblies, and runs a families in need program. The school formally solicits parent feedback through a parent survey and historically has a high response rate to its parent survey. For the 2015-2016 school year, the school reported that 98% of parents expressed satisfaction with the school on the parent survey. The school also has a formal concern or complaint process which families can initiate and find information on at the front desk of the school.

The school has social emotional development practices in place. The social worker provides counseling, along with information about community resources and

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,

Element

Indicators

d. The school has systems to monitor and maintain organizational and instructional quality which includes a formal process for teacher evaluation geared toward improving instructional practice

e. The school has mechanisms to solicit teacher feedback and gauge teacher satisfaction.

a. The board of trustees and school leadership establish effective working relationships with the management company or comprehensive service provider

b.

provider contract comply with required charter amendment procedures

c. The school monitors the efficacy of contracted service providers or partners.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 7:

The school has a stable instructional leadership team in place with clear roles and responsibilities, including the principal, assistant principal, director of curriculum and instruction, and director of data and assessment. On the day of the visit, the instructional leadership team discussed their shared academic priorities of using data to drive instruction, focus on increasing student vocabulary, and targeting unexcused tardiness through their attendance policy. The instructional leads expressed that the principal set the tone for the school, creating a welcoming and comfortable environment of high expectations, and specifically mentioned her as central to the school's success.

Interviewed staff described a collaborative team process with frequent opportunities for input. School instructional leads participate in grade-level team meetings and have a frequent presence in public spaces and classrooms. Other organizational structures for teacher collaboration include twice daily preparation periods, teacher team meetings, and monthly data meetings for staff.

The school has established communication systems and decision-making processes in place, however the separation of the instructional and financial processes present some challenges. The organizational structure of having both the principal and the director of finance and operations report into them has most management decisions being made at the board level.

The school has a stable faculty with minimal turnover. However, the school leadership recognizes that hiring and retaining qualified staff is an ongoing challenge that they face, due to their bilingual model and the competitive salary offered by the school district. Since the last visit, the board approved a salary increase for all teachers and incentives for current or potential staff that demonstrate oral and written proficiency in Spanish, which includes a for

and one that supports teachers as literacy coach with the principal and director of curriculum and instruction, to assist with the development of curriculum and instruction and ongoing coaching. Teachers are also encouraged to attend external workshops and conferences.

The school has a formal teacher evaluation system in place based on two annual observations using the Danielson framework, as well as informal pop-in observations and immediate feedback to improve instructional practices. School leaders do hold staff accountable as evidenced by teachers being let go based on evaluation performance if coaching and mentoring fails to yield significant improvement. Since the last visit, the school has developed measurable student performance goals to drive progress and improvement efforts. The school takes into account the absolute and growth data of student achievement to evaluate teacher effectiveness.

multiple mechanisms. Teachers give feedback formally through surveys. They also provide input informally through staff meetings, grade level meetings, and daily interaction with school leaders. Instructional leaders seek teacher feedback on curriculum materials, pacing calendars, and additional instructional resources during planning meetings.

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.

Finding: The site visit team has determined that Evergreen Charter School Meets Performance Benchmark 8.

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Mission and Key Design Elements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. School stakeholders share a common and consistent understanding of the b. The school has fully implemented the key design elements in approved charter and in any subsequently approved revisions

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 8:

and key design elements. The instructional leaders focused foremost on academic achievement and the continuing development of data-driven instruction. Over the course of the renewal visit, the observed instruction in the classroom The school has increased a number of practices that address its environmental focus, including a recycling program. The school has an Environmental Committee, comprised of students, teachers, administrators, and staff, that utilizes project-based learning and air quality improvement. The school continues to consistently implement its key design element of promoting healthy life choices. The school employs a full-time chef to prepare nutritious meals that follow the guidelines of the USDA Child Nutrition Program, as well as to educate the students and their families on healthy eating.

The school continues to prioritize its bilingual

Students with Disabilities	2014-15			2015-16			2016-17
	7%	10%	-3	8%	10%	-2	7%

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

The school enrolls a high percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged compared to the district of location ECS was slightly below the district for the 2014-2015, 2015-2016 school years, but is increasing

Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance

The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.

Finding:

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

All Students	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS	Delta = (Sch Dct)	School	District		NYS	Delta = (Sch NYS)
		District		NYS	Delta = (Sch Dct)		District		NYS	Delta = (Sch NYS)

Table 4: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup
 English Language Learners: *School, District & NYS Level Aggregates*

English	ELA		Math	
	District	NYS	District	NYS

