New York State Education Department

2021-2022 Renewal Site Visit Report for BoR-Authorized Charter Schools under the 2015 Charter School Performance Framework

Evergreen Charter School

Renewal Site Visit Dates: December 9-10, 2021
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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary[1]

Name of Charter School

1. The school's academic success and ability to operate in an educationally sound manner;
2. The school's

Summary of Findings

ECS is in its 13th year of operation and currently serves students in K - Grade 10. During its current charter term, the school is rated in the following manner: meeting eight benchmarks, approaching one benchmarks, and falling far below one benchmark. A summary of those ratings is provided below.

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in middle and high school academics, both

Benchmark 1: Student Performance
The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward profi52 0s achior,o

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 New York State 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:Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. Curriculum	a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to the NYSLS. b. Teachers use unit and lesson plans that introduce complex materials, stim higher order thinking, and build deep conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content. c. The curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms at the same grad and vertically between grades. d. The curriculum is differentiated to provide opportunities for all students master grade level skills and concepts. e. The curriculum is systematically reviewed and revised.
2. Instruction	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.
3. Assessment and Program Evaluation	a. The school uses a balanced system of formative, diagnostic and summative assessments. b. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to inform instruction improve student outcomes. c. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the quality effectiveness of the academic program and modifies the program accordingl
4. Supports for Diverse Learners	a. The school provides supports to meet the academic needs of all students, including but not limited to: students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students. b. The school has systems to monitor the progress of individual students facilitate communication between [illegible]

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2

Over this charter term, the trajectory for

- Indicator c: Based on focus group discussions with teachers and leaders in the renewal application, teaching teams regularly meet for horizontal and vertical planning to review and revise curriculum documents and pacing guides. Math and ELA consultants also collaborate with teachers to ensure alignment to standards and vertical and horizontal consistency.

- Indicator d: Based on the renewal application, ECS describes differentiation supports in curriculum programs that allow for scaffolding, differentiated texts, and assignments. To inform curriculum and develop differentiated instructional strategies, teacher teams meet monthly with instructional leaders to review and discuss academic performance. During the focus group discussion, teachers shared the following strategies employed for differentiation
    - Small group instruction;
    - Reteaching;
    - Using props and visuals, especially for ELLs;
    - At the high school level using rotating groups--teams of four students supporting each other;
    - Pre-teaching vocabulary;
    - SWDs using self-assessment and peer assessment;
    - Students of mixed ability supporting each other; and
    - For K through Grade 1 we are "big on family and parent support"

- Indicator e: According to the renewal application, ECS consultants collaborate with teachers to review and revise curriculum across grade levels and content areas. Eighty-six percent of those teachers who responded to the 2021 CSO Teacher Survey *strongly or somewhat agree* that the curriculum is systematically reviewed and revised. During the focus group, teachers shared that revising the ELA curriculum was a year-long process that involved convening a team comprised of cl.4 (h)-5.6.217 Td oom a 0.283 9 eolp 0.001 T3risealleuicrig t acrisg

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quarantine" In their focus group, i

learning styles and needs of every student. Instructional strategies such as co-teaching and the use of flexible, small group instruction are coupled with the differentiated curriculum and academic content. Struggling students are engaged with the use of specific intervention strategies to identify and address students' needs.

During the focus group with special populations staff, it was confirmed that English as a new language (ENL) co-teachers are TESOL certified. Most observations took place in early childhood settings, and it was difficult to comment on content and method appropriateness for older students. The integrated ENL class observed appeared to be well planned with ELLs receiving extra

parent respondents (31 percent) to the 2021 CSO Parent Survey, 94 percent *strongly agree or agree* that the discipline policy is clear.

- Indicator b: Based on observations during the school site visit the school appears safe for a school stakeholders. Ninety-nine percent of parent respondents to the 2021 CSO Parent Survey *strongly or somewhat agree* that the school maintains a safe environment.

- Indicator c: Of the teachers responding to the 2021 CSO Teacher Survey, 96 percent *strongly or somewhat agree* that the school has systems in place to ensure that the environment is free from harassment and discrimination

- Indicator d: Based on the classroom observations during the renewal site visit, eight of the classrooms observed, 100 percent were conducive to learning.

3. Element: Social-Emotional Supports

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Benchmark 4: Financial Condition
The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.

Finding: Meets

Over this charter term, the trajectory for this benchmark has been consistent as a Meets, due to annual composite scores indicating good financial health.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 4:

See the school's fiscal dashboard attached to the end of this report (Charter School Fiscal Accountability Summary). The fiscal dashboard provides detailed information regarding the school's compliance with Benchmark 4 of the Charter School Performance Framework. Unless otherwise indicated, financial data is derived from the school's annual independently audited financial statements which can be found on the NYSED website at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/csdirectory/CSLaunchPage.html

- Financial Composite Score
- Working Capital
- Debt to Asset
- Cash Position
- Total Margin

Financial Condition

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

Overall Financial Outlook

A financial composite score is Financ

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

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.

Finding: Approaches

Element	*Indicators*
1. Board Oversight and Governance	a. The board recruits and selects board members with skills and expertise meet the needs of the school b. The board engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning setting priorities and goals that are aligned with the school's mission and educational philosophy

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.

Finding: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. School Leadership	a. The school has an effective school leadership team that obtains commitment to a clearly defined mission and set of goals, allowing for continual improvement in student learning. b. Roles and responsibilities for leaders, staff, management, and board members are clearly defined. Members of the school community adhere to defined roles and responsibilities. c. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place which ensure effective communication across the school.

clearly defined mission and set of goals to staff and the community. During the board focus group, trustees expressed confidence in the leadership lead and improve school performance.

- Indicator b: According to the school's renewal application, the recent approval of the revised organizational structure reflects feedback from the CSO and helps ensure effective leadership as the school expands to serve high school grades. The academic leadership team structure includes the principal and four school directors (lower elementary, upper elementary, middle school, and high school). The instructional leadership team also includes the director of curriculum and instruction (DCI), director of data and attendance (DDA), director of finance and operations, and special education coordinator (SEC). This approach has been successful for ECS as evidenced by years of strong academic, fiscal, and organizational outcomes.

- Indicator c: Seventy-eight percent of teachers who responded to the h c

the summer PD focuses on "who we are, what we do, and why we do it." All teachers have opportunities to receive "outside" co-teaching PD through, for example, BOCES or through the New York Regional Teaching Partnership via Long Island University. In addition, many staff have received BOCES training on ELL best practices and how to properly administer the NYSITELL. Teachers are encouraged to share out or turnkey their PD, and school leaders provide an end-of-year series of surveys to find out what kind of PD teachers want: "Staff and teachers recommend presenters, and we provide another survey that rates the PD." Also offered is "diversity, equity, and inclusion" training and development, via Adelphi University. Teachers in their focus emphasized that they are continuing with Kagan training in the classroom, have "mentor teachers," and apply lead teachers at the lower level. Additionally, ECS maintains the services of four expert consultants (one each for ELA and math at both the elementary and middle/high school level) who lead sessions with teachers.

- Indicator d: Based on the renewal application and discussions with the instructional leadership team, the Danielson Framework for Teaching is used to support professional growth and development among instructional staff. Annually, the school engages in PD focused

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: Meets

Element	*Indicators*
1. *Mission and Key Design Elements*	a. School stakeholders share a common and consistent understanding o school's mission and key design elements outlined in the charter b. The school has fully implemented the key design elements in the approv charter and in any subsequently approved revisions

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 8:

Over this charter term, the trajectory for this benchmark has been consistent as a Met

- Indicator a: ELL enrollment has been below the DoL for all but one year of the charter term, and in May 2021 ECS was issued a Notice of Concern for failing to enroll a comparable number of ELLs (minus six percentage points in SY-2019-20) when compared to the DoL. SY 2020-2021 data likewise indicates ELL enrollment at six percentage points below the district.

- Indicator b: In its charter renewal application, ECS outlines the following recruitment strategies to attract and retain subgroup populations:
  - Changing messaging as necessary;
  - Investing more resources in student recruitment;
  - Increasing outreach efforts and advertising;
  - Monitoring provision of services for diverse learners;
  - Maintaining relationships with community and faith-based organizations; and
  - Continuing to translate outreach materials and communications

  These strategies were affirmed 0.014 (s)]TJ o5ounedrra

Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance
The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.

Finding: Falls Far Below

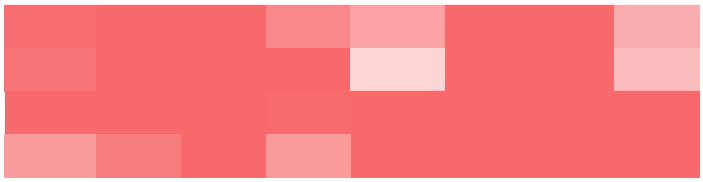
Element	*Indicators*
1. Legal Compliance	a. The school has compiled a record of substantial compliance with applicable state and federal laws and the provisions of its charter including, but not limited to those related to student admissions and enrollment; FOIL and Open Meetings Law; protecting the rights of students and employees; financial management and oversight; governance and reporti3.3 (d)-0.7 (ma- 4.386 375.12 628.5.1 c]1

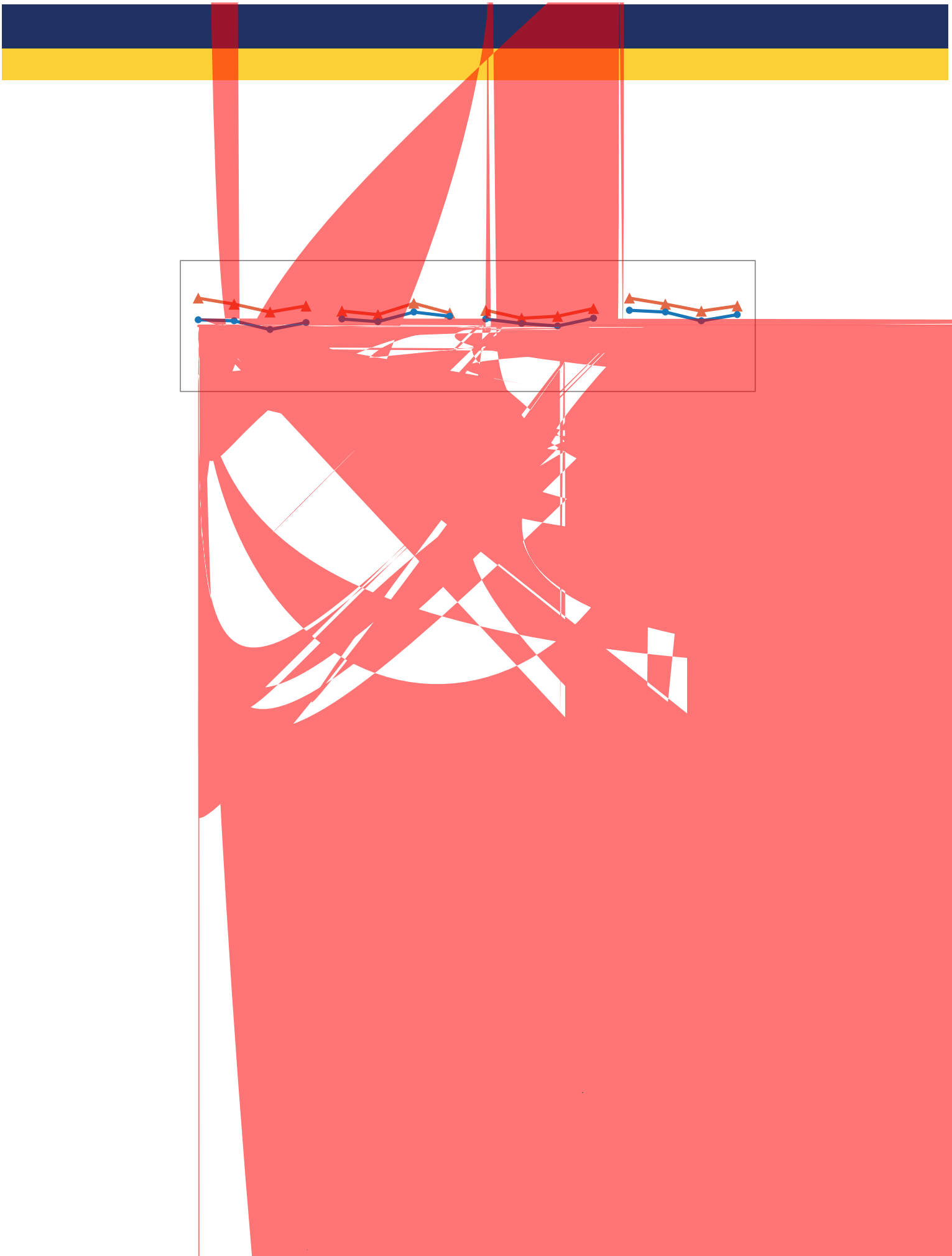
school's annual reports fail to accurately reflect the number, location, and planned use of its facilities. As of the date of this report, NYSED is investigating a formal complaint filed by the Hempstead Union Free School District against ECS, alleging violations of the charter and the law related to the school's facility in Franklin Square, NY.

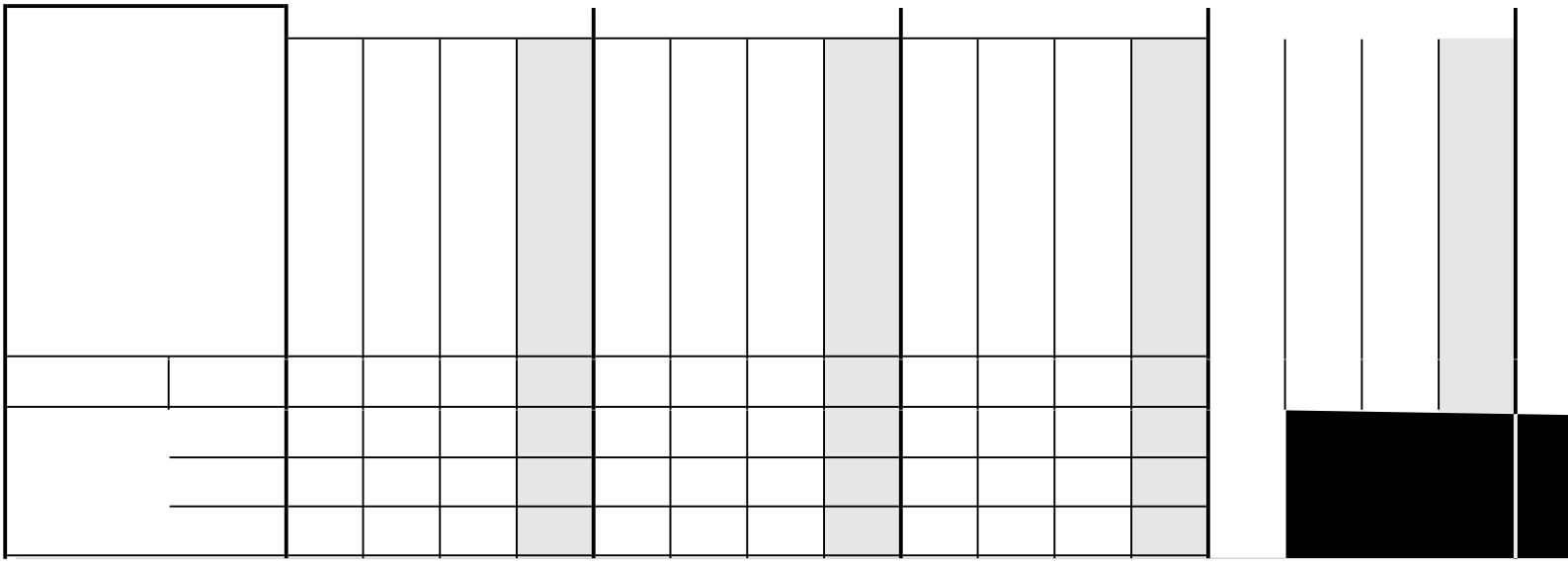
- Multiple school policies require revisions to be in compliance with state laws and regulations.
- In May 2021, ECS was issued a Notice of Deficiency with Request for a Corrective Action Plan for holding and scheduling fewer than twelve board of trustee meetings per year. Based on information submitted with the school's annual reports, fewer than twelve meetings were held for all but two calendar years between SY 2011-2012 and SY 2019-2020. After being apprised of this concern by the CSO, only eleven meetings were reported held in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.
- Also, in May 2021, the CSO issued ECS a Notice of Concern for:
  - Failing to enroll a comparable number of ELLs (plus or minus six percentage points in SY 2019-2020) when compared to the DoL.
  - Failing to follow charter school revision requirements by not seeking CSO approval for charter revisions and implementing them without CSO approval, particularly as concerns changes to its staffing structure and facility, moves, purchases, and leases.

- Indicator b: In May 2021, ECS submitted a CAP for its annual board meeting deficiency but within that CAP denied existence of the issue, despite evidence recorded in the school's annual reports. The CAP was accepted in June 2021 after the CSO requested revisions multiple times, and will be terminated when the school has a record of maintaining monthly board meetings for one school year following issuance of the CAP. The renewal application asserts that deficiencies related to the number of board of trustees meetings and classification of uncertified teachers have been resolved for the upcoming charter term.

- Indicator c: The school has submitted a charter revision to lease space in Hempstead that will be used to house the grades that are currently in the Franklin Square School District as a "swing space" during construction of the new school building. This move will bring all grades back into Hempstead while the construction project progresses and is currently under CSO review.







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