

New York State Education Department

Renewal Site Visit Report
2019-2020

Genesee Community Charter School

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary

Name of Charter School	Genesee Community Charter School
Board Chair	Michele Hannagan
District of location	Rochester City School District
Opening Date	Fall 2000
Charter Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Term: November 10, 2000-November 2005 • First Renewal Term: November 10, 2005-June 30,2010 • Second Renewal Term: July 1, 2010-June 30, 2015 • Third Renewal Term: July 1, 2015-June 30, 2020
Current Term Authorized Grades/ Approved Enrollment	K– Grade 6/ 225 students
Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/ Proposed Approved Enrollment	K– Grade6/225 students
Comprehensive Management Service Provider	None
Facilities	657 East Avenue, Rochester, New York 14607 Private Space
Mission Statement	

terms and/or requirements may include, but are not limited to, restrictions on the number of students and grades to be served by the school, additional student performance metrics, heightened reporting requirements, or specific corrective ~~acti~~.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Current Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2015 to 2016	Year 2 2016 to 2017	Year 3 2017 to 2018	Year 4 2018 to 2019	Year 5 2019 to 2020
Grade Configuration	K-Grade 6	K-Grade 6	K-Grade 6	K-Grade 6	K-Grade 6
Total Approved Enrollment	225	225	225	225	225

Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Projected Enrollment Requested by the School

	Year 1 2020 to 2021	Year 2 2021 to 2022	Year 3 2022 to 2023	Year 4 2023 to 2024	Year 5 2024 to 2025
Grade Configuration	K-Grade 6	K-Grade 6	K-Grade 6	K-Grade 6	K-Grade 6
Total Proposed Enrollment	225	225	225	225	225

METHODOLOGY

A two-day renewal site visit was conducted at Genesee Community Charter School on November 6, 2019 and

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The Performance Framework, which is part of the oversight plan included in the Charter Agreement for each school, outlines 10 Performance Framework benchmarks in three key areas of charter school performance:

- Educational Success
- Organizational Soundness
- Faithfulness to Charter Law

Observational findings from the review of the renewal application, supporting data, and the site visit will be presented in alignment with the Performance Framework benchmarks and Indicators according to the rating scale below. A brief summary of the school's strengths will precede the benchmark analysis. Each benchmark will be rated; and the report narrative will provide evidence-based information relative to each indicator.

Level	
Exceeds	
Approaches	noted.
Falls Far Below	

For the site visit conducted from November 6-7, 2019 at Genesee Community Charter School, see the following Performance Framework benchmark ratings and narrative.

New York State Education Department
Charter School Performance Framework Rating

Performance Benchmark	Level
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Summary of Findings

GCCS is in year 18 of operation and serves students in kindergarten through Grade 6. During its current charter term, the school is rated in the following manner: meeting 7 benchmarks and approaching 3 benchmarks. Additional details regarding those ratings are provided below.

Areas of Strengths

- GCCS executes a project-based, interdisciplinary-focused educational program grounded in the theories and practices of the EL Education model. Professional practices that strengthen instruction include a looping model, extensive (313 hours) and strategically employed professional development, as well as consistent observation, feedback and teacher coaching. These systematic practices allow teachers to further hone their craft as facilitators of the academic program and simultaneously ensure students remain engaged and experience growth during the school year. GCCS codifies its theories, practices and approach toward elementary education and fosters collaboration with other traditional public and charter schools to increase student access to its proven model for high student achievement.
- Overall student retention during the charter term is 95%, and CSO data shows that 91% of EDs, 96% of SWDs, and 100% of ELLs/MLLs were retained at the closing of that time. The school recently engaged in a zip code analysis to further identify specific areas to engage in focused recruitment.
- GCCS school environment is warm and inviting, with classrooms, hallways and common areas offering displays of the rich "history-based and globally-connected program." A demonstration of school culture is incorporated into the weekly community circle, where presentations and performances by classes and other groups support community building with parents and guests who attend and, on occasion, participate.

Areas in Need of Improvement

- GCCS has not met the enrollment targets established in the charter law for economically disadvantaged students (EDs), English language learners (ELLs) /Multilingual learners (MLLs) or students with disabilities (SWDs). Limited seats are available at the kindergarten level which makes it difficult for the school to meet targets.
- GCCS by-laws continue to require revisions as certain components are inconsistent with the law and/or NYSED guidance.

Finding:

Academic Program for Elementary School/Middle School

- GCCS employs a project-based learning model grounded in EL Education. Students engage with the curriculum through interdisciplinary-designed units embedded with projects from a historical and environmental focus.

Finding:

leadership acknowledged, in its renewal application, that teachers often supplement the math curriculum and expeditions to incorporate more complex problem-solving methods and strategies. For example, teachers supplement the math modules by integrating math concepts with learning expeditions, which enhances the student's ability to utilize a range of math skills and solve higher-order, complex problems.

- Indicator b: Teachers write and prepare modules/lessons for the learning expeditions, which incorporate ELA standards for each grade level. The duration of an expedition or experience is not explicitly stated in the proposal; however, lessons are supplemented, as teachers feel is necessary. A foundational skills block is utilized to reinforce basic skills and strategies. GCCS received the highest rating from EdReports based on the ELA curriculum used in primary grades, which is a testament to the rigorous, multi-layered design and development process. Specific protocols, such as teacher observation and student-work review are followed to allow teachers to provide feedback on lesson and learning expeditions.
- Indicator c: GCCS employs an interdisciplinary approach, therefore curriculum is not only aligned across content areas (i.e.; social studies and science standards are aligned); “bundling” process allows teachers to engage ELA standards across all content areas throughout the year. There is one classroom per grade level and looping with teachers allows for alignment of curriculum and personalized instruction plans based on a student's current skill and ability level.
- Indicator d: Design of the curriculum allows for differentiation based on assessment (i-Ready) results. Every week students are administered i-Ready diagnostics (20-40 minutes), which generate individualized lessons. Teachers scaffold and modify lesson plans for small group instruction. The Wilson Intervention program is utilized for students requiring intense intervention, and primary grade-level students receive enhanced instruction via the EL Education Reading Foundational Skills curriculum.
- Indicator e: Annually, teachers engage in curriculum design, and grade-level documents are developed for reference and alignment to the state learning standards. Based on discussions with the school leader, the school engaged in a deeper review of whether the math curriculum is best suited to meet the needs of teachers and students. Teachers and school leadership determined the existing curriculum (EngageNY) does not provide students with sufficient opportunities to engage in complex inquiry and problem-solving. Teachers have already started to supplement the math curriculum in expedition modules. As leadership further explores math curricula, they will incorporate a process by which options are evaluated in conjunction and consideration of special student populations, specifically ELL/MLL and SWD students. GCCS leadership also noted, in focus group discussions, an interest in exploring curriculum that incorporate culturally relevant and contemporary components that will further enhance projects and expeditions.

2. Element: Instruction:

- Indicator a: Teacher professional development is designed to improve professional practice

respective "crew," and work together daily to solve problems related to the project, and display acts of kindness and support to one another in their learning journey. Teachers were observed providing direct and clear feedback to students during classroom lessons, and vocabulary used during discussions reinforced concepts in expeditions and built comprehension.

Finding:

Element

Indicators

1. Behavior

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.

Financial Condition

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

Overall Financial Outlook

A composite score is an overall measure of financial health. This score is based on a weighting of primary reserves, equity, and net income. A charter school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is considered to be in good financial health. Genesee Community Charter School's 2018-2019 composite score is 2.91.

Composite Scores
2014-2015 to 2018-2019

Year	Composite Score
2014-2015	2.03
2015-2016	2.47
2016-2017	2.91
2017-2018	2.42
2018-2019	2.91

Finding: Meets

Renewal is based on evidence that the following indicators are generally present:

1. The school has an accurate and functional accounting system that includes monthly budgets.
2. The school sets budget objectives and regularly analyzes its budget in relation to those objectives.
3. The school has allocated budget surpluses in a manner that is fiscally sound and directly attends to the social and academic needs of the students attending the school.
4. The school has and follows a written set of fiscal policies.
5. The school has complied with state and federal financial reporting requirements.
6. The school has and is maintaining appropriate internal control procedures.
7. The school follows generally accepted accounting principles as evidenced by independent financial audits with an unqualified audit opinion, a limited number of findings that are quickly resolved.

The Charter School Office reviewed Genesee Community Charter School's 2018-2019 audited financial statements to determine whether the independent auditor observed sufficient internal controls over financial reporting. The auditor did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls that could be considered material weaknesses.

The renewal application budget submission does not reflect the school's financial condition as reported in the school's annual financial statements. The school's audited financial report shows that it maintained cash and cash

Educational Governance Council approve any board action. Board membership, as identified on the school's website and on the board roster that was submitted with the renewal application, although not in meeting minutes, includes the school leader and two staff members. The school has been reminded of the inappropriate members predating the current charter.

- Indicator b: Members of the GCCS board focus group indicated they will soon engage in the development of a five-year strategic plan, determine which committee of the board will lead this endeavor, and identify what the expected outcomes or goals of the plan will include. The board continually engages in training and development

c. The school ensures that staff has requisite skills, expertise, and professional development necessary to meet students' needs.

of 2019, teachers in teams of three went out into the city on an initiative called "Take the bus." They visited the targeted zip code areas of the city taking city buses to experience some of the challenges felt by the families they serve those with limited income, no personal means of transportation, and living conditions sometimes far from ideal.

- Indicator b: Effective collaboration, support and coaching of teachers is evidenced by the 88% retention rate CCS experienced in the 2018-2019 school year, an increase of 4% over the term of the charter. Collaboration is also evidenced by participation on various school-wide committees; for example, the technology committee is responsible for updating usage policies. Additionally, teachers collaborate with one another during expeditions for example, classroom teachers meet mid-expedition with the arts teachers to ensure the integration fidelity of the art curriculum with the respective expedition.
- Indicator c: The initial hiring of teaching staff is an in-depth process to ensure that teachers

Finding:

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. Targets are met	a. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet or come close to meeting the enrollment plan outlined in the charter. a. The school is making regular and significant annual progress toward meeting the targets b. The school has implemented extensive recruitment strategies and provided services to attract and retain students with disabilities, etc.
2. Targets are not met	

- Indicator b: For the 2019-2020 enrollment period, GCCS received a slight increase in applications (172 up from 163) from the previous year. The outreach campaign included a variety of marketing efforts, including targeting five zip codes that represent families in under-represented and high poverty areas within the Rochester City School District. GCCS will continue to conduct bilingual advertising and work with advocates within ethnic-centered community organizations to conduct outreach. Additionally, GCCS plans to engage the five zip codes via public transportation routes, local radio and events within these communities.
- Indicator c: In addition to identifying and analyzing the zip codes of the existing student population, the application pool, and other areas where there is a high incidence of targeted populations, GCCS has partnered with a local organization, E3 Rochester, to enlarge its footprint for recruitment and marketing efforts. Zip code analysis allows GCCS to target its outreach and the common application process creates a streamlined process for families to access choice options in the area.

See Attachment 1 for data tables and additional information.

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

Finding: Approaches

Element	Indicators
1. Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 reporting; and health and safety requirements. b. The school has undertaken appropriate corrective action when needed and implemented necessary safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements. c. The school has sought Board of Regents and/or Charter School Office approval for significant revisions.

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 10:

1. Element: Legal Compliance
 - Indicator a. The school has failed to implement changes to policy documents, specifically, the by-laws, as required by NYSED during the charter term, despite NYSED guidance dating back to the second renewal charter term. The school will work with the CSO to review, update, and finalize the by-laws in accordance with law and regulation.

2.b.i. and 2.b.ii.

2.b.iii. Aggregate Grade Level Proficiency See Table 3 below.

Indicator 3: High School Outcomes

(Not applicable for this charter school)

Benchmark 9

Table 4: Student Demographics

	SWD			ELL/MLL			ED		
	Genesee Community CS	Rochester CS	Differential to District	Genesee Community CS	Rochester CS	Differential to District	Genesee Community CS	Rochester CS	Differential to District
2015-2016	11%	21%	-10	1%	14%	-13	31%	93%	-62
2016-2017	14%	22%	-8	1%	15%	-14	31%	92%	-61
2017-2018	14%	22%	-8	0%	16%	-16	34%	92%	-58
2018-2019	11%	23%	-12	1%	17%	-16	36%	92%	-56

*See NOTES (2) and (6) below.

Table 5: Retention- Aggregate and Subgroups

	All Students			SWD			ELL/MLL			ED		
	Genesee Community Charter School	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	Genesee Community Charter School	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	Genesee Community Charter School	Rochester CSD	Differential to District	Genesee Community Charter School	Rochester CSD	Differential to District
2016-2017	95%	87%	+8	85%	89%	-4	100%	86%	+14	93%	87%	+6
2017-2018	93%	87%	+6	86%	90%	-4	100%	86%	+14	95%	87%	+8
2018-2019	95%	87%	+8	96%	90%	+6	100%	87%	+13	91%	87%	+4

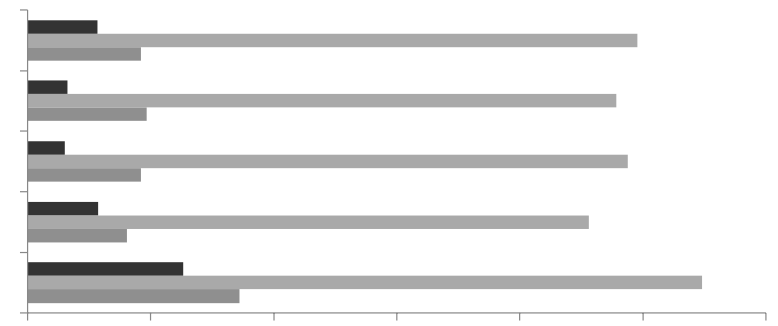
*See NOTES (2) and (6) below.

***NOTES:**

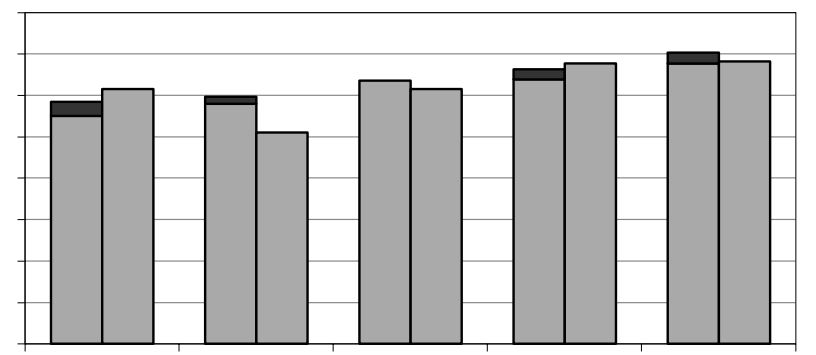
(1) Data in the table above represents tested students who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on the NYS ELA and/or math assessment.

(2) For the students with disabilities and the ELL/MLL subgroups, both current and former members of the subgroups have been combined.

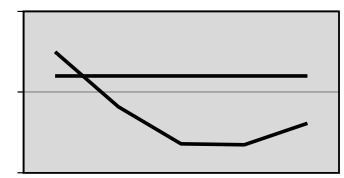
- (3) Pursuant to NYSED business rules, the data was suppressed for subgroups containing <5 students and the subgroup category may not be included for the metric.
- (4) Data in the table above represents students who passed the Annual Regents or equivalents (score of 65 or better).
- (5) The 4 and 5-year graduation rates reported are as of August. The 6-year graduation rates are as of June.
- (6) Data in the table above represents a comparison between those grades served in the charter school to only those same grades in the district.
- (7) A "." in any table indicates that the data was suppressed, no students sat for the exam, or the exam was not given.
- (8) Data in the table above represents tested students who either maintained a proficient score from one year to the next or students whose proficiency level increased from one year to the next (a proficient score is level 3 or 4).
- (9) Data in the table above represents students within their respective subgroups who have passed three out of the five Annual Regents and Regents Common Core Examinations (score of 65 or better).
- (10) Data in the table above represents the percentage of students from the original 9th grade cohort who persisted within the same school to a year graduation (includes August graduates).



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