



# New York State Education Department

## ***Renewal Site Visit Report 2018-2019***

### **Amani Public Charter School**

**Visit Date: October 15-16, 2018  
Date of Report: April 8, 2019**

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## CONTENTS

<b>SCHOOL DESCRIPTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>BENCHMARK ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	7
BENCHMARK 1: STUDENT PERFORMANCE.....	8
BENCHMARK 2: TEACHING AND LEARNING.....	13
BENCHMARK 3: CULTURE, CLIMATE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT .....	15
BENCHMARK 4: FINANCIAL CONDITION .....	17
BENCHMARK 5: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT .....	19
BENCHMARK 6: BOARD OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNANCE .....	21
BENCHMARK 7: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY.....	23
BENCHMARK 8: MISSION AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS.....	25
BENCHMARK 9: ENROLLMENT, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION .....	26
BENCHMARK 10: LEGAL COMPLIANCE .....	28

## SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

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

<b>Name of Charter School</b>	Amani Public Charter School
<b>Board Chair</b>	Sidney Burke
<b>District of location</b>	Mount Vernon School District
<b>Opening Date</b>	August 2011
<b>Charter Terms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• August 29, 2011 - June 30, 2016</li> <li>• July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2019</li> </ul>
<b>Current Term Authorized Grades/ Approved Enrollment</b>	Grades 5-8/ 355 students
<b>Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/ Proposed Approved Enrollment</b>	Grades 5-8/ 355 students
<b>Comprehensive Management Service Provider</b>	None
<b>Facilities</b>	60 South Third Avenue, Mount Vernon 10552 (Private Space)
<b>Mission Statement</b>	<i>The Mission of the Amani Public Charter School (Amani) is to provide 100% of Mount Vernon students who attend the school from the 5th through the 8th grade with the academic and critical thinking skills necessary to succeed in competitive high school programs, college and the career of their choice.</i>
<b>Key Design Elements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Teaching</li> <li>• Rigorous Academic Program</li> <li>• Strong School Culture</li> </ul>
<b>Requested Revisions</b>	None

All stakeholders demonstrated a thorough commitment to the success of scholars and fulfilling the mission of the school. Amani Public Charter School (APCS) is well regarded in the community, as evidenced by its high rate of applicants and low rate of student attrition. The successful public campaign to build a library media center at the school is also evidence of the high regard that community members have for the school.

### Renewal Outcomes

Pursuant to the Board of Regents Renewal Policy, the following renewal outcomes are possible:

- **Full-Term Renewal:** A school's charter may be renewed for the maximum term of five years. For a school to be eligible for a full-term renewal, during the current charter term the school must have compiled a strong and compelling record of meeting or exceeding Benchmark 1, and at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all other performance benchmarks in the Framework.

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

- **Short-Term Renewal:** A school’s charter may be renewed for a shorter term, typically of three years. As discussed above, the Regents will place an even greater emphasis on student performance for schools applying for their second or subsequent renewal, which is consistent with the greater time that a school has been in operation and the corresponding increase in the quantity and quality of student achievement data that the school has generated. In order for a school to be eligible for short-term renewal, a school must either:

(a) have compiled a mixed or limited record of meeting Benchmark 1, but at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework which will likely result in the school’s being able to meet Benchmark 1 with the additional time that short-term renewal permits, **or**

(b) have compiled an overall record of meeting Benchmark 1 but falls far below meeting one or more of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework.

- **Non-Renewal:** A school’s charter will not be renewed if the school does not apply for renewal or the school fails to meet the criteria for either full-term or short-term renewal. In the case of non-renewal, a school’s charter will be terminated upon its expiration and the school will be required to comply with the Charter School Office’s Closing Procedures to ensure an orderly closure by the end of the school year.

**Please Note:** The Regents may include additional terms, conditions, and/or requirements in a school’s Full-Term or Short-Term Renewal charter to address specific situations or areas of concern. For example, a school may meet the standards for full-term renewal or short-term renewal with regard to its educational success; but may be required to address organizational deficiencies that need to be corrected but do not prevent the Regents from making the required legal findings for renewal. A school may also meet the standards for full-term renewal or short-term renewal of only a portion of its educational program (e.g., for the elementary school program, but not the middle school program). Such additional 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 action.

### SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

#### Current Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment

	<b>Year 1 2016 to 2017</b>	<b>Year 2 2017 to 2018</b>	<b>Year 3 2018 to 2019</b>
<b>Grade Configuration</b>	Grades 5-8	Grades 5-8	Grades 5-8
<b>Total Approved Enrollment</b>	355	355	355

**\*Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment**

	<b>Year 1 2019 to 2020</b>	<b>Year 2 2020 to 2021</b>	<b>Year 3 2021 to 2022</b>	<b>Year 4 2022 to 2023</b>	<b>Year 5 2023 to 2024</b>
<b>Grade Configuration</b>	Grades 5-8	Grades 5-8	Grades 5-8	Grades 5-8	Grades 5-8
<b>Total Approved Enrollment</b>	355	355	355	355	355

**\*This proposed chart was submitted by Amani Charter School in its renewal application. It is subject to change pending the final recommendation and approval by the Board of Regents.**

## **METHODOLOGY**

A two day renewal site visit was conducted at Amani Public Charter School on October 15-16, 2018. The New York State Education Department’s Charter School Office (CSO) team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership team, teachers, parents and students. In cooperation with school leadership, the CSO administered an anonymous online survey to teachers.

The team conducted twenty classroom observations in Grades 5-8. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length and conducted jointly with the director of curriculum and instruction and the instructional coaches for STEM and Humanities.

The documents and data reviewed by the team before, during, and after the site visit included the following:

- **Renewal Application**
- **Academic data**
- **Renewal Site Visit Workbook**
- **Current organizational chart**
- **A master school schedule**
- **Map of school with room numbers and teacher names**
- **Board materials (roster, minutes, and strategic plan, if applicable)**
- **Board self-evaluation processes and documents**
- **Student/family handbook**
- **Staff handbook and personnel policies**
- **A list of major assessments**
- **Teacher and administrator evaluation processes**
- **Interventions offered at the school**
- **School-conducted surveys of teachers, parents, and/or students, and/or NYC DOE surveys**
- **Professional development plans and schedules**
- **Efforts towards achieving enrollment and retention targets**
- **School submitted Annual Reports**

## 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 and 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, although not all indicators will necessarily be assessed on every site visit. A brief summary of the school's strengths 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
<b>Exceeds</b>	The school meets the performance benchmark; potential exemplar in this area.
<b>Meets</b>	The school generally meets the performance benchmark; few concerns are noted.
<b>Approaches</b>	The school does not meet the performance benchmark; a number of concerns are noted.
<b>Falls Far Below</b>	The school falls far below the performance benchmark; significant concerns are noted.

For the site visit conducted from 10/15/2018 to 10/16/2018 at Amani Public Charter School, see the following Performance Benchmark scores and discussion.

**New York State Education Department  
Charter School Performance Framework Rating**

Performance Benchmark		Level
<b>Educational Success</b>	<b>Benchmark 1: Student Performance:</b> 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).	Approaches
	<b>Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning:</b> 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.	Meets
	<b>Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Family Engagement:</b> 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.	Meets
<b>Organizational Soundness</b>	<b>Benchmark 4: Financial Condition:</b> The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.	Meets
	<b>Benchmark 5: Financial Management:</b> 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.	Approaches
	<b>Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance:</b> 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.	Meets
	<b>Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity:</b> 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.	Meets
<b>Faithfulness to Charter &amp; Law</b>	<b>Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements:</b> The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.	Meets
	<b>Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention:</b> 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.	Approaches
	<b>Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance:</b> The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.	Meets

## *Summary of Findings*

- Amani Public Charter School is in year eight of operation and serves students in Grades 5-8. During its current charter term, the school is rated in the following manner: meeting 7 benchmarks, approaching 3 benchmarks, and falling far below for none of the benchmarks. Additional details regarding those ratings are provided below.
  
- **Areas of Strengths:** The Amani Public Charter School received a Meets in all but three Performance Framework benchmarks, indicating that the school is generally organizationally, fiscally, and educationally sound. Since its renewal, the school has implemented changes in an effort to improve student outcomes and meet the Performance Framework benchmarks. All stakeholders demonstrated a thorough commitment to the success of scholars and fulfilling the mission of the school. Amani is well regarded in the community, as evidenced by its high rate of applicants and low rate of student attrition. School leadership and the governing board have been stable though there have been minimal changes to each.
  
- **Areas in Need of Improvement:** Site visit team members observed high-quality instructional practices and mixed levels of student engagement in the majority of classroom observations. Although the school has not yet reached state averages in ELA or mathematics, academic performance on state assessments had been trending upwards. Scores over the past several years have generally exceeded that of the district of location. Assessment results for 2017 showed a drop-in math performance.



## **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: Approaches**

The school has mixed academic outcomes. In some years they outperformed the Mount Vernon School District on state assessments in math and ELA. The school has not met the state's average proficiency rates in math or ELA. In the most recent academic year in which data is available, the school's ELA proficiency rate is above the Mount Vernon SD aggregate proficiency rate. In math, the proficiency rate in the most recent academic year in which data is available is below the Mount Vernon SD aggregate proficiency rate. It should be noted that during the same year, 2017, 96% of 8th grade students that took the Algebra Regents exam in lieu of the math assessment achieved a passing score.

In previous years misreported and unattributed data had been submitted to the state and students who should have been identified as economically disadvantaged, a student with a disability, or an English language learner (ELL)/ multi-lingual learner (MLL) were not properly identified, thus the school's enrollment data did not accurately reflect the demographics of the school. The school has since restructured its process to collect, analyze and report data with more accurate information reported to the state in 2017.

From the data that was submitted, students who were identified as economically disadvantaged (poverty) tended to perform as well as their non-poverty students enrolled at Amani Charter School in ELA, whereas poverty students showed a slightly better trajectory in mathematics when taking into account students that passed the Algebra Regents exam. At-risk students who were identified as students with disabilities performed slightly below their at-risk peers in the Mount Vernon SD and across the state in ELA and above in math. English language learners (ELLs)/Multi-lingual learners (MLLs), who make-up 3% of the student enrollment performed below the district and NYS in ELA and math.

### **Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1:**

#### Indicator 1: All Schools

##### *1.a.i. Accountability - ESEA Accountability Designation:*

The school's ESEA Accountability Designation for 2017-18 was a school in Good Standing.

##### *1.b.i. Similar Schools Comparison – Comparative Proficiency:*

The NYSED CSO provided Amani with a list of 8 "similar schools," generated using 2016-17 enrollment data from the Student Information Repository System (SIRS). Due to the school's administrative error in 2016-17, Amani's record in SIRS was incorrect. Therefore, the list of school was not an accurate comparison since it was to schools with 0%-10% economically disadvantaged students. Amani created a separate, supplemental list which included schools within 5% of APCS's actual 2016-2017 enrollment. In comparison, APCS did outperform those schools in ELA proficiency but not in Math.

#### Indicator 2: Elementary/Middle School Outcomes

##### *2.a.i. Trending Toward Proficiency – Aggregate Standards-Based Trend Toward Proficiency:*

In 2015-2016, 46% of students attending Amani Public Charter School were trending towards proficiency in ELA. In 2016-2017, the rate was 32%, and in 2017-2018, the rate was 45%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework.

In 2015-2016, 25% of students attending Amani Public Charter School were trending towards proficiency in math. In 2016-2017, the rate was 32%, and in 2017-2018, the rate was 25%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework.

*2.a.ii. Trending Toward Proficiency - Subgroup Standards-Based Trend Toward Proficiency:*

In 2017-2018, 25% of students with disabilities attending Amani Public Charter School were trending towards proficiency in ELA. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework. In 2017-2018, 11% of students with disabilities attending Amani Public Charter School were trending towards proficiency in math. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework.

In 2017-2018, 25% of ELLs/MLLs attending Amani Public Charter School were trending towards proficiency in ELA. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework. In 2017-2018, 0% of ELLs/MLLs attending Amani Public Charter School were trending towards proficiency in math. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework.

In 2015-2016, 46% of economically disadvantaged students attending Amani Public Charter School were trending towards proficiency in ELA. In 2017-2018, the rate was 41%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework. In 2015-2016, 24% of economically disadvantaged students attending Amani Public Charter School were trending towards proficiency in math. In 2017-2018, the rate was 23%. This falls below the minimum expectation of 75% as set forth in the Charter School Performance Framework.

*2.b.i. Proficiency - Aggregate School Level Proficiency for All Students: See Table 1 below.*

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

	ELA					Math				
	Amani Public CS	Mount Vernon SD	Variance to District	NYS	Variance to NYS	Amani Public CS	Mount Vernon SD	Variance to District	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	21%	12%	+9	31%	-10	24%	11%	+13	36%	-12
2015-2016	28%	19%	+9	36%	-8	16%	12%	+4	36%	-20
2016-2017	22%	24%	-2	39%	-17	20%	17%	+3	37%	-17
2017-2018	37%	32%	+5	43%	-6	17%	23%	-6	41%	-24

NOTE:

(1) Data in the table above represents all students tested who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment.

**NOTE: A “.” In any table indicates that the data is suppressed, no student sat for the exam, or the exam was not given.”**

2.b.ii. Proficiency – Subgroup School Level Proficiency: See Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup**

Subject	School Year	Students with Disabilities (Variance to the district of location)	ELLs/MLLs (Variance to the district of location)	Economically Disadvantaged (Variance to the district of location)
ELA	2014-2015	. .	. .	26% (+17)
	2015-2016	. .	. .	29% (+12)
	2016-2017	. .	. .	. .
	2017-2018	5% (-4)	11% (-10)	34% (+4)
Mathematics	2014-2015	. .	. .	33% (+30)
	2015-2016	. .	. .	16% (+5)
	2016-2017	. .	. .	. .
	2017-2018	5% (+1)	0% (-7)	16% (-6)

NOTES:

- (1) Data in the table above represents tested students in respective subgroups who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment.
- (2) For the students with disabilities and the ELL/MLL subgroups, both current and former members of the subgroups have been combined.
- (3) In some cases, student subgroups still did not have enough tested students to form a representative sample (<5 students). For these subgroups testing data was withheld.
- (4) The Amani Public Charter School reports that a data reporting error was made in the 2016-2017 school year regarding the percentages of subgroup students enrolled in the school.

2.b.iii. Proficiency – Grade Level Proficiency: See Tables 3 - 4 below.

**Table 3: Grade Level Proficiency for All Students: ELA**

	SY 2015-2016			SY 2016-2017			SY 2017-2018		
	Amani Public CS	Mount Vernon SD / NYS	Variance to Mount Vernon SD / NYS	Amani Public CS	Mount Vernon SD / NYS	Variance to Mount Vernon SD / NYS	Amani Public CS	Mount Vernon SD / NYS	Variance to Mount Vernon SD / NYS
Grade 5	18%	14% / 34%	+4 / -16	14%	25% / 35%	-11 / -22	27%	26% / 37%	+1 / -10
Grade 6	40%	24% / 34%	+16 / +6	18%	19% / 32%	-1 / -14	46%	45% / 49%	0 / -3
Grade 7	19%	13% / 36%	+5 / -17	27%	23% / 42%	+3 / -15	24%	23% / 40%	0 / -16
Grade 8	34%	23% / 41%	+11 / -7	34%	30% / 46%	+4 / -11	53%	32% / 48%	+21 / +6

NOTE:

- (1) Data in the table above represents all students tested who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment.

**Table 4: Grade Level Proficiency for All Students: Math**

	SY 2015-2016			SY 2016-2017			SY 2017-2018		
	Amani Public CS	Mount Vernon SD / NYS	Variance to Mount Vernon SD / NYS	Amani Public CS	Mount Vernon SD / NYS	Variance to Mount Vernon SD / NYS	Amani Public CS	Mount Vernon SD / NYS	Variance to Mount Vernon SD / NYS
Grade 5	4%	16% / 40%	-12 / -36	18%	24% / 43%	-6 / -25	16%	30% / 44%	-14 / -28
Grade 6	32%	20% / 40%	+12 / -8	31%	25% / 40%	+7 / -8	33%	34% / 44%	-1 / -11
Grade 7	20%	6% / 36%	+14 / -16	19%	11% / 38%	+8 / -19	12%	14% / 41%	-2 / -29
Grade 8	2%	5% / 24%	-3 / -22	0%	4% / 22%	-4 / -22	2%	11% / 30%	-9 / -28

NOTE:

- (1) Data in the table above represents all students tested who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on each state assessment.

**Table 5: 2017-2018 8th Grade Annual Regents Outcomes by Subgroup**

Regents Test	Student Subgroup	Total Charter Tested	Amani Public Charter School	State Passed	Variance to State
Algebra I (Common Core)	All Students	25	96%	90%	+6
	Economically Disadvantaged	17	94%	81%	+13
Physical Setting/Earth Science	All Students	25	96%	94%	+2
	Economically Disadvantaged	17	94%	84%	+10

**NOTES:**

- (1) Data in the table above represents students within their respective subgroups who passed the Annual Regents and Regents Common Core Examinations (score of 65 or better).
- (2) For the students with disabilities and the ELL/MLL subgroups, both current and former members of the subgroups have been combined.
- (3) In some cases, student subgroups still did not have enough tested students to form a representative sample (<5 students). For these subgroups the testing was withheld.

APCS administered two Regents exams during the current charter term – Algebra 1 (Common Core) and Physical Setting/Earth Science. Aggregate outcomes for both exams demonstrate performance 2-13 percentage points above state average proficiency rates.

## 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

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Curriculum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to the NYSLs.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>c. The curriculum is aligned horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and vertically between grades.</li> <li>d. The curriculum is differentiated to provide opportunities for all students to master grade-level skills and concepts.</li> </ul>
2. <i>Instruction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The school staff has a common understanding of high-quality instruction, and observed instructional practices align to this understanding.</li> <li>b. Instructional delivery fosters engagement with all students.</li> </ul>
3. <i>Assessment and Program Evaluation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The school uses a balanced system of formative, diagnostic and summative assessments.</li> <li>b. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to inform instruction and improve student outcomes.</li> <li>c. The school uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the academic program, and modifies the program accordingly.</li> </ul>
4. <i>Supports for Diverse Learners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The school provides supports to meet the academic needs for all students, including but not limited to: students with disabilities, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students.</li> <li>b. The school has systems to monitor the progress of individual students and facilitate communication between interventionists and classroom teachers regarding the needs of individual students.</li> </ul>

### Summative Evidence for Benchmark 2:

#### **Curriculum:**

School leaders that met with the site review team stated that the school developed and continues to improve curriculum maps that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Beginning this year, on Wednesdays, teachers submit lesson plans based on a common template to the director of curriculum and instruction and coaches for review on a weekly basis. In addition, teachers have opportunities to meet at grade level team meetings on Wednesdays. There are also regular departmental meetings. Teachers and leaders also reported that

teachers have received instructional supports for specific content areas that have made substantive, positive differences. For pacing purposes in ELA, Engage NY (6<sup>th</sup> grade) and Elevate Now (5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> grades) are being used. In math the school is using Engage NY

***Instruction:***

Amani is generally meeting indicators under this benchmark. For this academic year the leadership team is focusing on greater consistency across the school. Such practices as an emphasis on Gradual Release of Responsibility (where students are given more voice and autonomy) and LEADs (Learning Objectives, Essential Questions, Agenda, and Do Nows) are to be seen in every classroom. Site visit team members observed high levels of rigor and student engagement in many classrooms. There appears to be a common understanding that activities must be varied to meet the diverse learning styles of students though this was not consistently observed during the classroom visits. Some lessons incorporated the use of interactive notebooks, manipulatives, cooperative learning, visuals, technology, and some rotating centers with timed activities.

***Assessment and Program Evaluation:***

The school has been increasing the use of data to drive instruction. The data coordinator has created a comprehensive database to analyze and monitor student progress in math and help teachers plan lessons informed by student data. Leaders and coaches are in the preliminary stages of creating a similar database for ELA. Currently, the school utilizes a database for the ELA department to analyze and monitor scholars' performance. Teachers use Fountas & Pinnell levels as well as STAR Reading assessments, to determine students' independent reading levels. Data is also derived from exit ticket that are aligned to Engage NY standards. Leaders state that this combined data drives ELA lesson plans as they monitor student progress throughout the year.

To address the student performance needs, the school has made staffing and programmatic changes that continue to be implemented. For example, this year greater emphasis across all grades has been placed on reading with dedicated time at the beginning of every ELA class. Teachers are increasing the level of rigor in mathematics by building out modules from Engage NY, since the school determined that the math program used previously was not meeting the expectations of the CCLS.

***Supports for Diverse Learners:***

Academic Intervention Services (AIS) take place during the day and after school. In ELA interventions are held during the 90-minute ELA block with additional support available via online self-guided programs Renaissance Learning and Kahn Academy. The school has initiated this year TransMath for math intervention. During Wednesday Advisory periods, all staff speak with students and discuss their needs including academic assistance. Students with disabilities are serviced in integrated co-teaching (ICT) classrooms with a team of co-teachers that consists of general education and special education teachers. In addition, Saturday Academy will be offered beginning with the second semester for students three or more grades behind.

The Response to Intervention (RtI) has been restructured to be addressed during the day with an Academy period. In addition, after school office hours with teachers and targeted small group supports are also provided.

**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.*

**Finding: Meets**

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Behavior Management and Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The school has a clear approach to behavioral management, including a written discipline policy.</li> <li>b. The school appears safe and all school constituents are able to articulate how the school community maintains a safe environment.</li> <li>c. The school has systems in place to ensure that the environment is free from harassment and discrimination.</li> <li>d. Classroom environments are conducive to learning and generally free from disruption.</li> </ul>
2. <i>Family Engagement and Communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Teachers communicate with parents to discuss students’ strengths and needs.</li> <li>b. The school assesses family and student satisfaction using strategies such as surveys, feedback sessions, community forums, or participation logs, and considers results when making schoolwide decisions.</li> <li>c. The school has a systematic process for responding to parent or community concerns.</li> <li>d. The school shares school-level academic data with the broader school community to promote transparency and accountability among parents, students and school constituents.</li> </ul>
3. <i>Social-Emotional Supports</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. School leaders collect and use data to track the socio-emotional needs of students.</li> <li>b. School leaders collect and use data regarding the impact of programs designed to support students’ social and emotional health.</li> </ul>

**Summative Evidence for Benchmark 3:**

**Behavior Management and Safety**

This year, Amani Public Charter School has implemented classroom management norms based on “Teach Like a Champion” with greater fidelity, including greater use of a merit/demerit system, common hand gestures and count-down language. The director and deans of school culture have been working with staff to reinforce systems across the classes and grades. In addition, Amani continues to implement Kickboard, a school-wide behavior management system that helps students achieve positive social and emotional character development. Teachers use this online system to reward students with bonus points and parents can access the system in real-time to review their student’s behavior. To discourage undesired behaviors, bonus points can be deducted, resulting in reduced points by the end of the week. Paychecks are sent home weekly to be signed by parents and returned to the school. Bonus points accrued over time make scholars eligible to participate in special school events, i.e., dances, field trips, and more.



The shift in student expectations (e.g. silent hallways) were instituted to focus more time on task and create a more seamless transition from hallways to classrooms. Students that met with the review team noted the differences from the previous year to this year but complied with the new expectations.

All school personnel play a role in contributing to a safe and positive school. The lower school and the upper school deans and security staff are strategically located in areas of the school that ensure their visibility and immediate response if/when needed, i.e. front door areas, corridors, meal areas, etc. Teachers stand at their doorways to ensure smooth transitions and greet students as they enter their classrooms.

Even with the recent changes in student behavioral expectations, students felt welcomed and supported by teachers and staff. Mutual respect between staff and scholars was observed in the classrooms and in all areas of the school. There appears to be a cohesive and sincere care for the socio-emotional and educational well-being of all scholars throughout the school by all staff.

### **Family Engagement and Communication**

Family surveys show parents are satisfied with the school. All stakeholders reported that communications are ongoing. Parents that met with the review team spoke about the support they received from the school, especially parents that were new to the school. They reported open and frequent points of communication, from the daily morning greetings by school leadership to the weekly progress reports through the paycheck system. Teachers and other school personnel also keep contact with parents frequently through phone calls, e-mail and face-to-face meetings in addition to parents being able to check on their students' behavioral and academic progress via on-line portal systems. To incentivize parents to participate and get involved, scholars are awarded extra bonus points every time their parents engage in anything school related, i.e., parent/teacher conferences, school activities and events, volunteering on a field trip, etc.

### **Social Emotional Supports**

The school emphasizes supporting the social emotional needs of students. The dean and assistant deans of scholars are available upon request to all scholars. The social worker and two social worker interns work very closely with the deans to ensure their collaborative efforts in deciding rewards and consequences.

The deans of scholars have designated a weekday for every grade level to have a morning meeting. These meetings are intended to inspire and motivate students as they start their day. School leaders, teachers, and students participate in these lively, upbeat presentations.

The deans of scholars work with the school social worker to bring guest speakers who present special programs and assemblies that address topics of interest to middle school students, i.e. bullying, drugs, gangs, etc. Consistent behavioral norms were observed and the overall tone of the school, both during the school day and afterschool activities, were positive. Students and families were engaged and indicated that the efforts to ensure the school is supporting the social and emotional well-being of students are effective.

## Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

*The school is in sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.*

### Finding: Meets

#### Important Notes:

- The key financial indicators used to evaluate this benchmark will be presented within a separate fiscal dashboard instrument that will provide context for the school's performance on each of the metrics, outline the specific targets for each metric, and also provide additional subsidiary detail on each calculation.
- Unless otherwise indicated, financial data is derived from the school's annual independently audited financial statements.

<b>1. Near-Term Indicators:</b>	
1a.	Current Ratio
1b.	Unrestricted Days Cash
1c.	Enrollment Variance
1d.	Composite Score
<b>2. Sustainability Indicators:</b>	
2a.	Total Margin
2b.	Debt to Asset Ratio
2c.	Debt Service Coverage Ratio

### Summative Evidence for Benchmark 4:

#### Financial Condition

Amani Public 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.

The Charter School Office reviews the financial performance and management of charter schools using quantitative and qualitative methods. Near-term indicators, such as the current ratio and unrestricted days cash, are measures of liquidity and of the charter school's capacity to maintain operations. 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 Outlook

A *composite score* is an overall measure of financial health calculated by the Department's 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 to be in strong financial health. Amani Public Charter School's 2016-2017 composite score is 2.1.

**Amani Public Charter School’s Composite Scores  
2014-2015 to 2016-2017**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2014-2015	3.0
2015-2016	2.6
2016-2017	2.1

*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 Charter School Office uses three measures:

The *current ratio* is a financial ratio that measures whether or not a charter 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 2016-2017, Amani Public Charter School had a current ratio of 4.0.

*Unrestricted cash* measures, in days, whether the charter school can meet operating expenses without receiving new income. Charter schools typically strive to maintain at least 90 days of cash on hand. For fiscal year 2016-2017, Amani Public Charter School operated with 133 days of unrestricted cash.

*Enrollment maximization* measures whether or not a charter school is meeting its enrollment projections, thereby generating sufficient revenue to fund ongoing operations. Actual enrollment that is over 85 percent is considered reasonable. Amani Public Charter School’s enrollment maximization for 2016-2017 was at 97 percent.

**Long-Term Indicators**

A charter 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 2016-2017, Amani Public Charter School’s debt to asset ratio was 0.4.

*Total margin* measures the deficit or surplus a charter 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 2016-2017, Amani Public Charter School’s total margin was -4 percent.

## **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.*

### **Finding: Approaches**

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 controls and 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 corrected, and the absence of a going concern disclosure.

### **Summative Evidence for Benchmark 5:**

The Charter School Office reviewed Amani Public Charter School's 2016-2017 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.

However, when the auditor performed tests of the school's compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of financial statement amounts, the results of the tests disclosed one instance of noncompliance must be reported under Government Auditing Standards:

#### **Board Oversight**

By meeting ten times over the course of the year ending June 30, 2017 and by not holding its June annual meeting, the board of trustees did not operate pursuant to the school's by-laws in regard to governance. Management responded that it planned to amend the bylaws to change the frequency of meetings to "a minimum of (12) meetings shall be scheduled each year" and the timing of the annual meeting to "June of each year, or such other month as the Board may determine."

#### **Tagging of Temporarily Restricted Revenue**

Revenue and expenses related to a fundraiser where all donations would go to the 21st Century Learning Center and the library were not tagged as such. The auditor recommended that the school implement procedures to track the restrictions on all fundraising income and contributions received during the year, as well as the satisfaction of those restrictions.

**Special Education Teacher Documentation**

There were two instances in which the school was not able to readily supply support for special education teacher qualifications. The school ultimately provided completed HOUSSSE rubrics demonstrating the teachers' qualifications. The auditor recommended the school implement stronger procedures to obtain and maintain documentation of teachers' qualifications as special education providers.

The auditor also reported on the status of matters from the 2015 audit:

**Billing for Special Education Services and Review of Reconciliation**

The auditor noted that one student was provided special education services and tracked in the detailed special education reconciliation of services provided and billed; but was not billed initially. Also, in 2016 and 2017, the auditor noted that out-of-date special education tuition rates were being used, leading to unbilled amounts the school would have been entitled to receive. The auditor recommended the Charter School review per pupil and special education full time equivalent reconciliations for accuracy and completeness to ensure services billed for are proper and that up-to-date special education tuition rates be used.

**Operating Reserves**

The school was holding and, as of the 2017 audit, continues to hold a large amount of cash planned for leasehold improvements without a board-approved policy regarding the purpose and use of the reserve funds. The auditor recommended that the school adopt a policy that reflects the intended use of the reserve and that the board approve it.

## 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: Meets

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. <i>Board Oversight and Governance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The board recruits and selects board members with skills and expertise that meet the needs of the school.</li><li>b. The board engages in strategic and continuous improvement planning by setting priorities and goals that are aligned with the school’s mission and educational philosophy.</li><li>c. The board demonstrates active oversight of the charter school management, fiscal operations and progress toward meeting academic and other school goals.</li><li>d. The board regularly updates school policies.</li><li>e. The board utilizes a performance-based evaluation process for evaluating school leadership, itself and providers.</li><li>f. The board demonstrates full awareness of its legal obligations to the school and stakeholders.</li></ul>

### Summative Evidence for Benchmark 6:

The Amani Public Charter School is generally meeting the indicators under this benchmark. The Board has expanded its capacity by brining on a trustee with relevant academic experience. However, it still lacks a coherent, rubrics-based evaluation for the executive director. In the past, performance reviews were conducted in the form of a discussion between the chairman and the school leader with a self-evaluation. Though the board indicated that it was to adopt an evaluative rubric that is aligned to what the executive director uses to evaluate her leadership team, at the time of the school visit it had not been finalized. The intention is that the evaluation would include annual goals that are based on academic performance and qualitative measures such as parent and staff satisfaction rates. The board did not articulate what direct supports are provided to the executive director to help her achieve the goals.

Board members are highly invested in the school. Each member, including the newest trustee who has an education background, contributes their expertise and skills by participating in various committees. The board demonstrates full awareness and understanding of its charter responsibilities and hired the consultants used to conduct the curriculum audit in January 2018 that has led to the programmatic changes in the school. The Board is also clear on its fiduciary obligations. Members are active and present in the school and in the community. Many current board members are founders of the school, though there has been a transition with three members stepping off and a new member added during this charter term.

Board meetings are held monthly. A multi-paged dashboard provides the board with critical data and information about the school.

At the end of every school year, the board meets to update and revise policies and strategically plan for the following year. Board members participate in a board retreat annually and hire consultants to provide them with board development and training.

**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**

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>School Leadership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The school has an effective school leadership team that obtains staff commitment to a clearly defined mission and set of goals, allowing for continual improvement in student learning.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>c. The school has clear and well-established communication systems and decision-making processes in place which ensure effective communication across the school.</li> <li>d. The school successfully recruits, hires, and retains key personnel, and makes decisions – when warranted – to remove ineffective staff members.</li> </ul>
2. <i>Professional Climate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The school is fully staffed with high quality personnel to meet all educational and operational needs, including finance, human resources, and communication.</li> <li>b. The school has established structures for frequent collaboration among teachers.</li> <li>c. The school ensures that staff has requisite skills, expertise, and professional development necessary to meet students’ needs.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>e. The school has mechanisms to solicit teacher feedback and gauge teacher satisfaction.</li> </ul>
3. <i>Contractual Relationships</i> <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The board of trustees and school leadership establish effective working relationships with the management company or comprehensive service provider.</li> <li>b. Changes in the school’s charter management or comprehensive service provider contract comply with required charter amendment procedures.</li> <li>c. The school monitors the efficacy of contracted service providers or partners.</li> </ul>

**Summative Evidence for Benchmark 7:**

**School Leadership**

The Amani Public Charter School is generally meeting the indicators under this benchmark. Staff is clear about the chain of command and understands the roles and responsibilities of all administrative staff. School leadership is stable; the executive director has led the school since its inception and has rebuilt a leadership team that effectively supports and promotes the mission and vision of the school. The executive director reports directly to the board, and all instructional, non-instructional, and administrative personnel report to the executive director. There are four teams in place: finance, operations, instruction and culture that are led by directors. Each director works closely with the



executive director and each other to ensure that there's operational and fiscal alignment to execute the school's mission and vision. With the emphasis this year on "Teach Like a Champion" framework, the director of culture and his team works closely with the director of curriculum and instruction and her team to support consistency in approach in behavioral norms and classroom management. They are working to establish and enforce consistency in discipline that ensures a positive and safe teaching and learning environment for students, staff and families.

### **Professional Climate**

The Amani Public Charter School is staffed with competent and qualified personnel. The director of curriculum and instruction (DCI) leads the educational program by developing curriculum, overseeing its effective implementation, and in conjunction with the instructional coaches, conducts all formal observations of teachers in the school. The DCI and the instructional coaches (one focused on ELA and social studies, the other on math and science) ensures that schedules allow for common planning time with grade level teams as well as subject based teams.

Professional development is ongoing and provided in whole-group, small-group, and one-on-one coaching. Frequent formal and informal observations determine the areas of coaching and support for teachers. Teachers are supported by instructional coaches that work with teachers via one-on-one meetings and observational feedback. This academic year in addition to more support provided by the instructional coaches, teachers have also received technology support in the form of smartboards. Training on smartboard use has been teacher lead.

Teacher survey results and the teacher focus group indicate that teacher morale is high. However, teacher retention data from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 indicate an unusually high rate of turnover with ten teachers' attrition through a combination of leaving and being let go. School leadership indicated that this was primarily due to the increase greater expectations and feedback. New and returning Amani staff demonstrate and articulate a high level of dedication and commitment to their work, scholars, and the success of the school.

The schedule was intentionally structured to include more common planning times for grade level teachers to plan and collaborate at grade team meetings and participate in peer inter-visitations annually. Inter-visitation promotes the sharing of best practices and provides teachers with opportunities to showcase their talents and strengths.

The school solicits feedback from staff through annual surveys. The results are used to inform future school practices and make changes and/or adjustments to policies as needed. The good rapport observed and described by teachers, administrators, students, families, and the board contributes to the collegial and respectful atmosphere within the school.

## 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

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

### Summative Evidence for Benchmark 8:

All stakeholders express a shared and committed vision to the success of scholars and the school generally shows fidelity to the school’s mission and key design elements. The board members, leadership, staff, students, and parents that spoke to the review team all expressed a strong commitment to the school.

**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.*

**Finding: Approaches**

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Targets are met</i>	a. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet or come close to meeting the enrollment plan outlined in the charter.
2. <i>Targets are not met</i>	<p>a. The school is making regular and significant annual progress toward meeting the targets.</p> <p>b. The school has implemented extensive recruitment strategies and program services to attract and retain students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible for free and reduced priced lunch. Strategies include, but are not limited to: outreach to parents and families in the surrounding communities, widely publicizing the lottery for such school, efforts to academically support these students, and enrollment policy revisions, such as employing a weighted lottery or enrollment preference, to increase the proportion of enrolled students from the three priority populations.</p> <p>c. The school has implemented a systematic process for evaluating recruitment and outreach strategies and program services for each of the three categories of students, and makes strategic improvements as needed.</p>

As stated above, in previous years misreported and unattributed data had been submitted to the state and students who should have been identified as economically disadvantaged, a student with a disability, or an English language learner (ELL)/ multi-lingual learner (MLL) were not properly identified, thus the school’s enrollment data did not accurately reflect the demographics of the school. The school has since restructured its process to collect, analyze and report data with more accurate information reported to the state in 2017.

**Table 6: Student Demographics - Amani Public Charter School Compared to District of Location**

	2016-2017			2017-2018		
	Amani Public Charter School *	Mount Vernon SD	Variance *	Amani Public Charter School	Mount Vernon SD	Variance
Students with Disabilities	.	18%	-18	6%	18%	-12

ELL/MLL	1%	10%	-9	3%	14%	-11
Economically Disadvantaged	.	80%	-80	76%	86%	-10

\* The Amani Public Charter School reports that a data reporting error was made in the 2016-17 school year regarding the percentages of subgroup students enrolled in the school. The actual percentages as reported by the school are 10% for students with disabilities, 1% for ELLs/MLLs and 63% for economically disadvantaged students, representing -8, -9 and -17 point variances with the district of location respectively.

**NOTES:**

- (1) Data in the table above represents a comparison between those grades served in the charter school to only those same grades in the district.
- (2) For the students with disabilities and the ELL/MLL subgroups, both current and former members of the subgroups have been combined.
- (3) A "." In any table indicates that the data is suppressed, no student sat for the exam, or the exam was not given.

According to NYSED data, in the 2017-2018 school year, 92% of students were retained in Amani Public Charter School compared with 94% in the district of location.

**Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:**

The school has been fairly consistent in retaining students and has made some progress toward meeting enrollment targets for ELLs/MLLs, students with disabilities (SWDs), and students who are economically disadvantaged (ED). The school has grown its ELLs/MLLs population though the number and the number of SWDs is not comparable to the numbers served in the Mount Vernon School District. The board and school leaders described some challenges in meeting these targets and acknowledge that recruitment of subgroups is an area that requires more focus. As a response, the board has approved an amendment to APCS’s admission policies and beginning in 2019 will implement a weighted lottery system with preferences given to ELLs/MLLs and SWDs. Amani Public Charter School will set targets for ELLs/MLLs and SWDs on an annual basis on the percentages of ELLs/MLLs and SWDs in the Mount Vernon School District, as determined from the final BEDS-day enrollment for the same grades served by APCS in the year prior to the lottery.

**Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance**

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

**Finding: Meets**

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

**Summative Evidence for Benchmark 10:**

The school is currently overenrolled by 11 students. A material revision to the charter requesting to increase student enrollment is underway due to additional space afforded by the school’s new facility. The school is requesting to increase its maximum authorized enrollment from 320 students to 355 students.

According to the 2014-2015 annual report, while the school is in compliance with the overall number of uncertified teachers allowable by NYS Education Law Section 2854(3)(a-1), the three uncertified teachers do not fall into any of the four statutory exemption categories specified by law. Subsequent to the renewal site visit, school leaders informed the CSO that one of the uncertified teachers now falls into one of the exemption categories, another is no longer employed there, and the third has been paired with a certified teacher.