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## Executive Summary - Charter School Renewal

|  |                    |                                    |  |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>School:</b> Elmwood Village Charter School (EVCS) |                    |                                    |  |
| <b>Date(s) of Site-Visit:</b>                        | September 14, 2010 | <b>Members of Site-Visit Team:</b> | Susan Gibbons,<br>Andrew McGrath, LoriAnn Curtin |

### I. Introduction/Background Information:

The Elmwood Village Charter School (EVCS) is located in downtown Buffalo, in a former business site that has been renovated into a bright, attractive school. It opened in the fall of 2006 with 125 students in grades K through 4. It currently serves 200 students in grades K through 6. The school is requesting to expand to grade 8 and ultimately serve 350 students during the renewal charter period.

### II. Guiding Questions:

|   |
|---|
| <b>A. Can the school demonstrate the ability to operate in an educationally sound manner?</b> |
|---|

#### Evidence of Strengths:

Through document review and classroom observation during the on-site renewal visit, the renewal site visit team concluded that the EVCS curriculum is aligned to NYS standards. The team observed differentiated instruction, including whole class, groups of varying sizes and individual attention. Academic rigor was evident as students were encouraged to respond to “why” and “how” as well as “what” questions. Student engagement in learning was heightened as lesson content was relevant to their lives. The school evaluates student academic performance for each student on an on-going basis. It takes a comprehensive approach to assessment, including standardized assessments, commercial assessments, locally developed outcome assessments, screening tools, and progress monitoring. Bi-weekly data analysis meetings are held as part of the teachers’ professional development program. Staff members are evaluated for teaching effectiveness and individual goals are set for professional development.

The Responsive Classroom and Cooperative Discipline programs are utilized to help teachers and staff members maintain consistent classroom behavior standards throughout the building. During classroom and school wide observations, the team saw that expectations for appropriate student behavior were clear and teachers had consistent

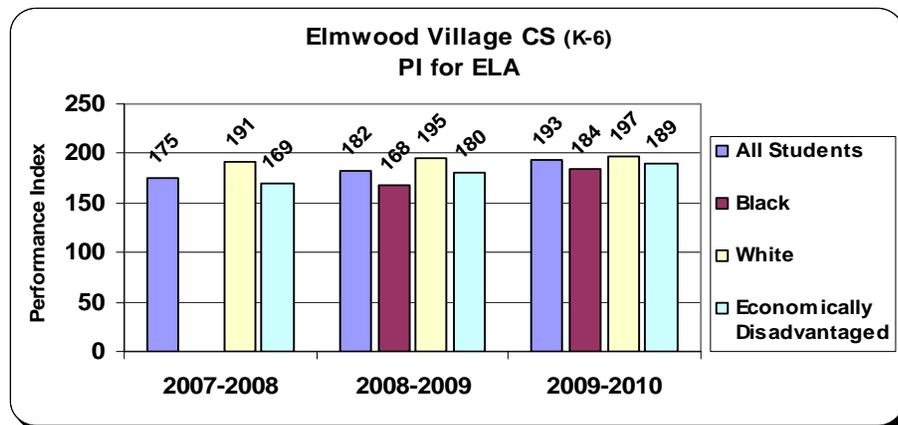
follow-through. Teachers were observed using similar language to voice their expectations of students, and addressed all incidents until they were satisfactorily resolved.

The overall environment of the school promotes academic and personal/social growth. Focus group interviews revealed that the sense of community is strong and consistent throughout the building. This was also evidenced through classroom observations. All staff members, including the school leader, were seen interacting with students; the students were personally known to all the adults.

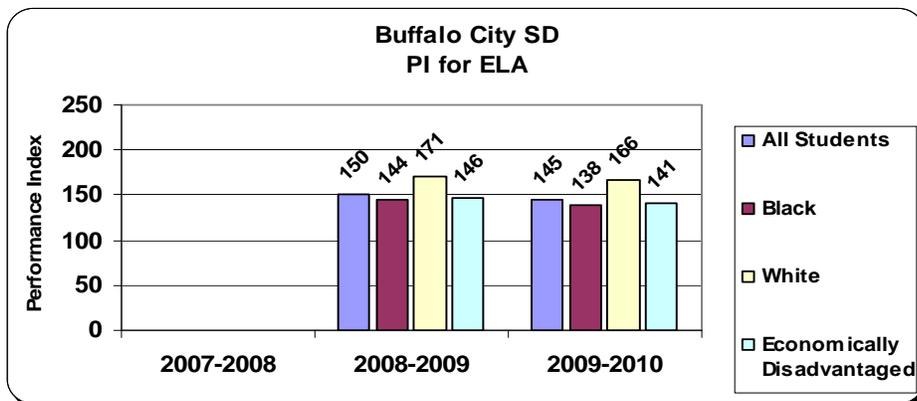
Academic Performance:

The school has made AYP during all three years of the current charter.

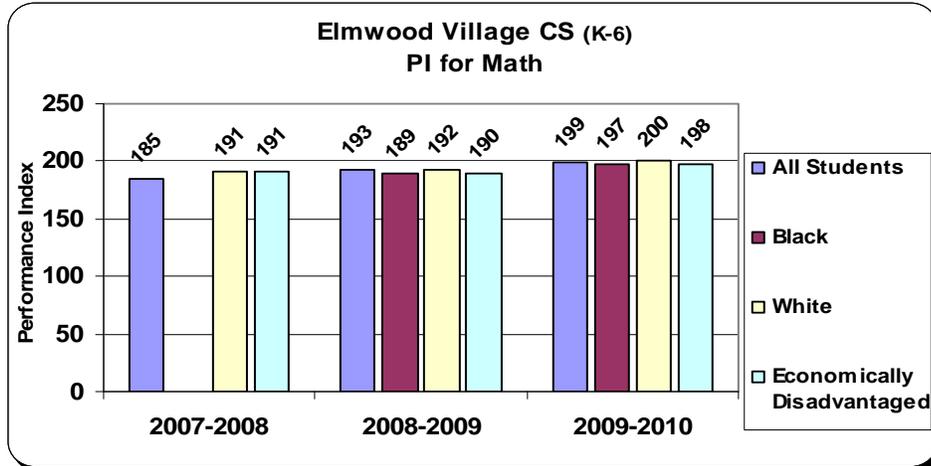
The school outscored the district of location in the “all students” category by 48 Performance Index (PI) points in ELA and by 42 points in math during the 2009-10 school year. State assessment scores have risen steadily in ELA and math for the last three academic years. School wide, 78% of students were proficient in ELA and 84% in math in 2009-10. The school set and achieved its current charter academic performance goals to outperform the district of location. [See Appendix 2]



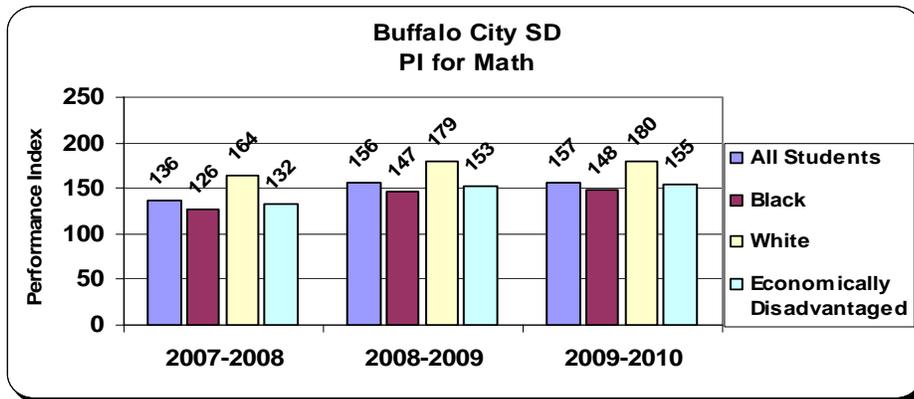
2007-2008 data for Black students was unavailable due to insufficient subgroup size.



2007-2008 data is not available due to appeal.  
Source: The New York State Report Card



2007-2008 data for Black students was unavailable due to insufficient subgroup size.



Source: The New York State Report Card

Evidence of Areas of Concern:  
There are no areas of concern.

**B. Can the school demonstrate the ability to operate in a fiscally sound manner?**

Evidence of Strengths:

The school has demonstrated sound fiscal practices in the current charter term by maintaining a substantial positive net asset balance with the use of normal operating funds and minimal fund raising. They have engaged outside fiscal consultants knowledgeable in

non-profit fiscal accountability and internal control procedures. The consultants report to the Board of Trustees; and are responsible for approving all fiscal reports.

Evidence of Areas of Concern:

The school is planning to purchase a school building during the 2010-11 school year with a portion of its current net asset reserves. Start-up revenue is decreasing by \$175,000 per year due to the end of the school's Federal Charter Schools Program Planning and Implementation Grant. This will cause the school to be on a break-even basis for a few years. Revenues will eventually increase as a result of the anticipated growth in student enrollment and the subsequent increase in grade levels served. The school has a healthy reserve fund to handle any further fiscal restraints.

**C. Can the school demonstrate adequate levels of parent and student satisfaction?**

Evidence of Strengths:

Parent involvement is high in the school. Parent surveys indicate that parents are satisfied with the academic program at the school and are specifically pleased with the attention paid to the development of life skills. The school has a waiting list of over 200 students. It is primarily due to the parents' demand for the middle school program that the board is planning for and has requested as a part of its renewal application.

Evidence of Areas of Concern:

There are no areas of concern.

**D. Can the school demonstrate that it is a viable organization?**

Evidence of Strengths:

From interviews and document review during the site visit, the site visit team concluded that the Board of Trustees has a clear understanding of its role in governing the school and that they are implementing the governance and leadership structure as defined in the charter. The board's relationship with the school leadership was found to be positive and productive. The school leader indicated that he feels well supported by the board. The board stated that the school's leader is effective in guiding the school's staff and its programs. He is highly regarded as a professional by the board, the staff, and the families that were interviewed.

Evidence of Areas of Concern:

There are no areas of concern.

III. **Conclusion:**

Elmwood Village Charter School has a solid record of academic achievement. These results are due to an educational program aligned with the NYS standards, the use of differentiated instruction, and high expectations for student academic achievement. There is a strong, consistent behavior management system in place to guide student and adult behavior in the school. Parents and school leaders state that there is strong parent involvement at the school, and that parents are supportive of the school's staff and academic programs. The school has a waiting list of over 200 students. The school is academically and fiscally sound, and is a viable organization.

**Appendix 1**

| <b>Elmwood Village Charter School – PI for ELA</b> |                  |                  |                  |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Student Group</b>                               | <b>2007-2008</b> | <b>2008-2009</b> | <b>2009-2010</b> |
| All Students                                       | 175              | 182              | 193              |
| Black  |                  | 168              | 184              |
| White  | 191              | 195              | 197              |
| Economically Disadvantaged                         | 169              | 180              | 189              |

| <b>Buffalo City School District – PI for ELA</b> |                  |                  |                  |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Student Group</b>                             | <b>2007-2008</b> | <b>2008-2009</b> | <b>2009-2010</b> |
| All Students                                     | *                | 150              | 145              |
| Black  | *                | 144              | 138              |
| White  | *                | 171              | 166              |
| Economically Disadvantaged                       | *                | 146              | 141              |

\*District Data Not Available  
 Did not make Adequate Yearly Progress

| <b>Elmwood Village Charter School – PI for Math</b> |                  |                  |                  |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Student Group</b>                                | <b>2007-2008</b> | <b>2008-2009</b> | <b>2009-2010</b> |
| All Students  | 185              | 193              | 199              |
| Black   |                  | 189              | 197              |
| White   | 191              | 192              | 200              |
| Economically Disadvantaged                          | 191              | 190              | 198              |

| <b>Buffalo City School District – PI for Math</b> |                  |                  |                  |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Student Group</b>                              | <b>2007-2008</b> | <b>2008-2009</b> | <b>2009-2010</b> |
| All Students                                      | 136              | 156              | 157              |
| Black   | 126              | 147              | 148              |
| White   | 164              | 179              | 180              |
| Economically Disadvantaged                        | 132              | 153              | 155              |

Source: The New York State Report Card

**Appendix 2**

**Charter School Longitudinal ELA & Math Data  
2007-08 through 2009-2010**

| School and Grades                  | 2007-2008 |      |      |     | 2008-2009 |      |      |      | 2009-2010 |      |      |      |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------|------|-----|-----------|------|------|------|-----------|------|------|------|
|                                    | %L1       | %L2  | %L3  | %L4 | %L1       | %L2  | %L3  | %L4  | %L1       | %L2  | %L3  | %L4  |
| Elmwood Village CS<br>ELA Grade 3  | 8         | 12   | 60   | 20  | 4.3       | 17.4 | 69.6 | 8.7  | 0         | 16   | 40   | 44   |
| Buffalo CSD ELA<br>Grade 3         | 12.5      | 40.5 | 43   | 3.9 | 11.8      | 39.2 | 46.5 | 2.4  | 32.9      | 39.1 | 21.8 | 6.2  |
| Elmwood Village CS<br>ELA Grade 4  | 0         | 20   | 64   | 16  | 4         | 12   | 80   | 4    | 0         | 24   | 72   | 4    |
| Buffalo CSD<br>ELA Grade 4         | 20.6      | 37   | 40.2 | 2.1 | 9.9       | 35.9 | 51.6 | 2.5  | 21.9      | 50.1 | 25.9 | 2.1  |
| Elmwood Village CS<br>ELA Grade 5  | 0         | 24   | 72   | 4   | 0         | 26.1 | 56.5 | 17.4 | 4         | 20   | 52   | 24   |
| Buffalo CSD<br>ELA Grade 5         | 5.4       | 41.6 | 51.1 | 1.9 | 2.7       | 41.1 | 52.1 | 4.2  | 29.8      | 44.1 | 22.4 | 3.7  |
| Elmwood Village CS<br>ELA Grade 6  | **        | **   | **   | **  | 0         | 4.2  | 95.8 | 0    | 4.5       | 18.2 | 63.6 | 13.6 |
| Buffalo CSD<br>ELA Grade 6         | 4.2       | 52.1 | 42.8 | 0.9 | 0.2       | 36.2 | 60.6 | 3    | 24.2      | 44.1 | 30   | 1.7  |
| Elmwood Village CS<br>Math Grade 3 | 0         | 8    | 64   | 28  | 0         | 4.3  | 65.2 | 30.4 | 0         | 20   | 24   | 56   |
| Buffalo CSD<br>Math Grade 3        | 9         | 24.5 | 60.4 | 6   | 3.7       | 20.8 | 69.3 | 6.1  | 29.1      | 43.1 | 21.3 | 6.6  |
| Elmwood Village CS<br>Math Grade 4 | 0         | 12   | 52   | 36  | 0         | 0    | 36   | 64   | 0         | 16   | 36   | 48   |
| Buffalo CSD<br>Math Grade 4        | 17.6      | 29.1 | 46.3 | 6.9 | 14.3      | 21.5 | 53.2 | 10.9 | 19.1      | 49.6 | 24.3 | 7    |
| Elmwood Village CS<br>Math Grade 5 | 4         | 16   | 52   | 28  | 0         | 8.7  | 43.5 | 47.8 | 0         | 12   | 40   | 48   |
| Buffalo CSD<br>Math Grade 5        | 17        | 32.8 | 44.4 | 5.8 | 10.6      | 27.6 | 50.5 | 11.4 | 22.2      | 46.3 | 25.7 | 5.8  |
| Elmwood Village CS<br>Math Grade 6 | **        | **   | **   | **  | 0         | 16.7 | 58.3 | 25   | 0         | 13.6 | 54.5 | 31.8 |
| Buffalo CSD<br>Math Grade 6        | 18.1      | 33   | 42   | 6.9 | 10.8      | 32.2 | 48.2 | 8.8  | 24.1      | 45.7 | 22.5 | 7.7  |

\*\* Indicates the school did not enroll students in these grades during this year

Source: The New York State Report Card