



# New York State Education Department

## *Renewal Site Visit Report 2017-2018*

**Math, Engineering, and Science Academy Charter High School**

**Visit Date: November 30, 2017**

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## Renewal Outcomes

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

- x **Full-Term Renewal:** A school's charter may be renewed for the maximum term of five years. For



## **METHODOLOGY**

A one-day renewal site visit was conducted at Math, Engineering, and Science Academy Charter High School (MESA) on November 30, 2017. The CSO team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership team, teachers, and parents.

## 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:

- x Educational Success
- x Organizational Soundness
- x 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
Exceeds	The school meets the performance benchmark; potential exemplar in this area.
Meets	The school generally meets the performance benchmark; few concerns are noted.
Approaches	The school does not meet the performance benchmark; a number of concerns are noted.
Falls Far Below	The school falls far below the performance benchmark; significant concerns are noted.

For the site visit conducted on November 30, 2017 at MESA, see the following Performance Framework benchmark scores and discussion.

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

Performance Benchmark		Level
<b>Educational Success</b>	<p><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).</p>	<b>Meets</b>
	<p><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.</p>	<b>Meets</b>





## 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: Meets**

**Summative Evidence for Benchmark 1:**

### Indicator 1: All Schools

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

MESA's accountability status has been in good standing for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years.

### Indicator 2: Similar Schools Comparison

1.b.i. Similar Schools Comparison-Comparative Proficiency

MESA consistently outperforms similar schools' graduation rates.

Indicator 3: High School Outcomes

3.a.i. and ii. Regents Testing Outcomes Aggregate Annual Regents Outcomes: See Table

**Table 1: Annual Regents Outcomes - Aggregate and Subgroups**

Year	Charter				Math, Engineering and Science Academy CHS				NYS			
	Total Tested	%	%	Differential to NYS	Total Tested	%	%	Differential to NYS	Total Tested	%	%	Differential to NYS
2014-2015	118	59%	53%	+6	26	38%	26%	+122	9	0	6	9

3.a.iii. and iv. Regents Testing Outcomes Regents 4 Year Cohort Outcomes See Table 2.

**Table 2: Regents 4-Year Cohort Outcomes: Aggregate and Subgroups**

		All Students				SWD				ELL				ED			
		Charter Total Cohort	Math, Engineering and Science Academy CHS	NYS	Differential to NYS	Charter Total Cohort	Math, Engineering and Science Academy CHS	NYS	Differential to NYS	Charter Total Cohort	Math, Engineering and Science Academy CHS	NYS	Differential to NYS	Charter Total Cohort	Math, Engineering and Science Academy CHS	NYS	Differential to NYS
ELA	2013	116	91%	85%	+6	20	65%	55%	+10	12	67%	41%	+26	92	92%	80%	+12
	2014	113	88%	84%	+4	21	67%	54%	+13	17	53%	52%	+1	101	88%	78%	+10
Global History	2013	116	83%	78%	+5	20	60%	42%	+18	12	50%	35%	+15	92	83%	70%	+13
	2014	113	81%	77%	+4	21	33%	42%	-9	17	53%	43%	+10	101	81%	69%	+12
Math	2013	116	96%	85%	+11	20	80%	50%	+30	12	83%	53%	+30	92	95%	80%	+15
	2014	113	94%	83%	+11	21	76%	49%	+27	17	71%	59%	+12	101	93%	77%	+16
Science	2013	116	95%	84%	+11	20	75%	52%	+23	12	83%	42%	+41	92	96%	78%	+18
	2014	113	91%	83%	+8	21	67%	52%	+15	17	59%	50%	+9	101	91%	76%	+15
US History	2013	116	85%	81%	+4	20	45%	49%	-4	12	67%	40%	+27	92	87%	74%	+13
	2014	113	87%	80%	+7	21	62%	48%	+14	17	47%	50%	-3	101	86%	72%	+14

3.b.i. and ii. Graduation Outcomes Aggregate and Subgroup Cohort Graduation Rates See Table 3.

**Table 3: High School Graduation Rates by Cohort – Aggregate and Subgroups**

		All Students				SWD				ELL				ED			
		Charter Total Cohort	Math, Engineering and Science Academy CHS	NYS	Differential to NYS	Charter Total Cohort	Math, Engineering and Science Academy CHS	NYS	Differential to NYS	Charter Total Cohort	Math, Engineering and Science Academy CHS	NYS	Differential to NYS	Charter Total Cohort	Math, Engineering and Science Academy CHS	NYS	Differential to NYS
2013 Cohort	4 Year	116	91%	82%	+9	20	70%	58%	+12	12	58%	42%	+16	92	92%	76%	+16
	5 Year	116	93%	85%	+8	20	75%	64%	+11	13	62%	50%	+12	93	95%	80%	+15
2014 Cohort	4 Year	113	93%	83%	+10	21	90%	60%	+30	17	82%	54%	+28	101	93%	76%	+17

## Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that leads to student 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 (NYSL) for 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. Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The school has a documented curriculum that is aligned to the NYSL.</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. Instruction	<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. Assessment and Program Evaluation	<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. Supports for Diverse Learners	<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> </ul>

During summer institute professional development, the school reviews and revises the curriculum to map and align it to NYSLS. The principal works with curriculum specialists during summer institute to amend the curriculum, and a flexible scope and sequence is created and honed during each school year through

students at-risk of academic difficulty. Early intervention takes place prior to a student's referral and is part of the process by which a struggling learner is differentiated from a student with a disability.

Interventionists and classroom teachers are able to collaborate through monthly SPED/ELL meetings—each of which have a topic of focus—and co-planning time is used by teachers to collaborate on lessons and explore data.

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comments indicate that various approaches are used to address these issues, including establishing a strong culture of respect, mediation sessions, phone calls home, and counseling.

#### Family Engagement and Communication

MESA uses multiple forms of family engagement and communication. Communication and engagement practices include the following:

- x Home visits to all new families;
- x A space on MESA's Board designated for a MESA parent;
- x Teachers make at least two positive parent contacts per week;
- x Monthly parent workshops or events;
- x Advisors communicate with parents.

### 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:

- x 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.
- x Unless otherwise indicated, financial data is derived from the school's annual independently audited financial statements.

<b><i>1. Near-Term Indicators:</i></b>	
1a.	Current Ratio
1b.	Unrestricted Days Cash
1c.	Enrollment Variance
1d.	Composite Score

**MESA Charter High School's Composite Scores  
2013-2014 to 2015-2016**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Composite Score</i>
2015-2016	2.7
2014-2015	2.7
2013-2014	2.2

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 2015-2016, MESA Charter High School had a current ratio of 4.8.

**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 2015-2016, MESA Charter High School operated with 67 days of unrestricted cash.

**Enrollment stability** 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. MESA Charter High School's enrollment stability for 2015-2016 was at 98 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 2015-2016, MESA Charter High School's debt to asset ratio was 0.2.

**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 2015-2016, MESA Charter High School's total margin was 0.03.







### 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

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. School Leadership	<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 -3 (s)-289</li></ul>





Regents. MESA complies with reporting procedures of the NYSED's Teacher-Student Data Linkage initiative, aa3(r)8 (t) (c)0a3(r aa3(r uaa3(rs (e)2.1s s (t)6.1u(v)-2.7 (d)-2.7 (e)2.4 (n)2)4 (t)6.1 Ren)4.7 (e)2.4g)6-817.3



### 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 and recruit, retain such students.

#### Finding: Approaches

<u>Element</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
1. Targets are met	a. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet or

**Table 5: Retention – Aggregate and Subgroup**

- o Bilingual parents of students already at the school, called parents of each admitted ELL student to provide them with information in their mother language about the school and its policies.



- x In 2017, MESA was approved for a non-material revision to its charter and board bylaws stating that %tboard will find an appropriate way to evaluate its own performance and needs;
- x In 2017, MESA received a non-material revision to its charter to make an adjustment to its professional development policy for teachers;
- x In 2017, MESA received a non-material revision to its charter to explicitly state that %school year shall include no fewer than 180 instructional days; and
- x In 2017, MESA received a non-material revision to its 0.303 0 Td(d()Tj0.234 Tw 4 0 Tdr(7)0.7 (,)Jj0 T953Jj3.2