

New York State Education Department

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

Hebrew Language Academy Charter School

Renewal Site Visit Dates: November 9-10, 2021
Date of Report: March 21, 2022

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Hebrew Language Academy Charter School 2021-2022 RENEWAL SITE VISIT REPORT

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary

Name of Charter School	Hebrew Language Academy Charter School
Board Chair	Adam Miller
District of location	NYC CS01
Opening Date	Fall 2017
Charter Terms	Initial Charter: 5

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 high 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

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

Year 1 2022 to 2023	Year2 2023 to 2024	Year3 2024 to 2025	Year4 2025 to 2026	Year
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classroom observations. It is shared with the school prior to the site visit and can be found in the [Renewal SV Protocol](#)

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

- Current 2021-2022 organizational chart;
- Board materials (roster, minutes

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The 2015 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

New York State Education Department
 2015 Charter School Performance Framework Rating³

	2015 Performance Benchmark	Level
Educational Success	<p>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 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).</p>	

Summary of Findings

HLA2 is in its fourth year of operation and serves students in Grades 1-5. During its current charter term, the school is rated in the following manner: meeting five benchmarks and approaching five benchmarks. A summary of those ratings is provided below

Summary of Areas of Growth and Strengths

Among only a small network of schools in NYC, center on the student

concerns persist: aggregate enrollment has steadily declined since, 2018 ELL and ED enrollment is still below the district of location, as “fall student” and subgroup retention, based on SY 2020-2021 data. The school is currently in a facility that has capacity limitations, which

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).

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Finding:Approaches

Note: State assessments were not administered in the ~~2020~~2020 school year and were administered under the COVID-19 constraints during the ~~2021~~2021 school year. As such, NYSED is limited to what results it can include from those two years in the analysis of this benchmark. (d)-0.2.2 3-6.8</MCID 4 >>BD

core content, so that “classrooms have teaching frequently occurring at scheduled times in the day/week” creating a student to teacher ratio of about 14 to 1.

HLA2 uses the Gradual Release of Responsibility model to drive instruction, which emphasizes elements of student-driven inquiry.

Instructional strategies applied include focused lessons, guided instruction, collaborative learning and independent learning

From K–Grade4, ELA and social studies content are intertwined through the Literacy Model. In K–Grade2 this is through Readers’ and Writers’ Workshop. In Grade3–Grade4 this is through the Literacy Model.

11/17/2021

modifications. The renewal application asserts that during independent practice teachers conference with students individually and in small groups.

Indicator e: The renewal application states that HLA2 school leadership annually review feedback from student data, classroom teachers, students, and families to assess the curriculum's effectiveness. Also referenced was

students to participate and allow teachers to ascertain knowledge more thoroughly. Teachers appeared skilled at using technology, including a platform that recorded student responses. However, little or no peer-to-peer communication, reading or writing tasks were observed. Ninety-three percent of teachers who responded to the CSO 2021 Teacher Survey strongly or somewhat agree that the school's instructional delivery fosters engagement with all students, whereas 7% who responded strongly or somewhat disagree with that statement.

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Indicator c: The school's 2021-2022 curriculum audit may be a function of assessing the effectiveness of the academic program; however, based on discussions during the focus groups, leadership stated that teachers were being coached to align learning objectives. Since the visit, school leaders have stressed that they are "constantly using data to consider the state of the academic program and what adjustments need to be made" and that "data from interim assessments were used to determine which standards needed spiral review or additional instruction, and adjustments were made to math lessons as a result. The school's 2021 Self Evaluation Report stated that as a result of low reading scores, the team shifted in the 2021 SY to extended time in guided reading and increased small group instruction for students needing additional support. References to the intentionality and focus on small group instruction was a consistent theme throughout the focus group discussions with teachers and was seen during classroom observations. SLA2 leadership has set rigorous goals. For example, reports shared by school leadership indicate that the goal for the current year's TNPSA test administration is: 75% of all Grade 4 and 5 students who took the assessment. (ev (i)-3.3R (t)-5.9 (f (at)-3 a (ev (i)-39

many ELLs tested out of ELL status when the special administration of the NYSITELL was held last fall; however, “wrap around supports” (former ELL services) are still provided.

Indicator b: While school administrators were asked by the CSO team to highlight for observation those classes with a high density of ELLs, it was not apparent within the visit that those students were, and no extra support was noted. It is not known if teachers were dually certified in TESOL, and some classes had only one teacher. According to 2021 NYSED Charter School Information dashboard reports (Attachment 1) HLA2 enrolls a greater percentage of SWDs than that of the NYCCSD21: Most recently, in 2020-2021 HLA2 enrolled twenty-eight percent, while the district enrolled twenty-one percent.

In terms of SWDs and students with an IEP, the school’s renewal application states that HLA2 provides instruction via the least restrictive environment possible to the extent appropriate and subject to the requirements included in each student’s IEP in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations (e.g., IDEA). There is a full-time social worker on campus. (s)Id(s)]52 (n)6 (

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

1. Element: Behavior Management and Safety:

Indicator a: During the teacher focus group, there was a consensus among the group that the social and emotional (SEL) deans and staff were needed to support students as well as teachers, in terms of behavior management. All teachers acknowledged the attentiveness, expertise, and skill of the existing dean, indicating they often engaged him for support, but also stated that he may

Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

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

Finding: Meets

Over this charter term, the trajectory for this benchmark has been consistent as a Meets is based on performance on key indicators derived from the school's independently audited financial statements

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 4:

See the school's fiscal dashboard attached to the end of this report (Charter School Fiscal Accountability Summary). The fiscal dashboard provides detailed information regarding the school's compliance with Benchmark 4 of the Charter School Performance Fra

up for learning loss, maintaining a healthy environment, supporting school leadership and holding the CMO accountable. They are also working on community partnerships, which currently include the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, the Jewish Community Center of Bensonhurst for after school services, and the Kings Bay YMCA. A self-evaluation report indicates the board training and development is offered through BoardSource. However, trustees in the focus group did not identify objectives, goals, or areas of focus for future board development.

Indicator c: Tailored governance training would support and strengthen the board's capacity to provide active oversight of the charter school management and progress toward meeting academic and other school goals. During their focus group, board members expressed that they maintain a good relationship with the CMO and listen to public stakeholders. We bring

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performance. This is supported by responses from the community, which are reflected in the data.

staff who mirror the diversity of the student body and on hiring male teachers as these are underrepresented in elementary schools.

Indicator b: During the focus group discussion, teachers shared that grade teams meet weekly to develop lesson plans and review academic data and that they collaborate with grade teams from other network schools, which all share a similar program. All grade teams have dedicated planning time.

Indicator c: Tw 1619 (m)33 (s)1.1|2.3 (ltb Tc.6 (c)-2.8 (e)-6 76 (t)-2.9)]Te(m)-0.77e3.4 (a)1893Le xam x

3. Element: Contractual Relationships

Indicator a: According to the board of trustees focus group, the board of trustees and the school leadership have an established working relationship with the management company. The

Indicator b:

Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements

The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.

Finding:Meets

Element

Indicators

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 lun

Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance

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

Finding:Approaches

<i>Element</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
1. <i>Legal Compliance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school has compiled a record of substantial compliance with applicable state and federal laws and the provisions of its charter including, but not limited to those related to student admissions and enrollment; FOIL and Open Meetings Law; protecting the rights of students and employees; financial management and oversight; governance and reporting; and health and safety requirements. b. The school has undertaken appropriate corrective action when needed and implemented necessary safeguards to maintain compliance with all legal requirements c. The school has sought Board of Regents and/or Charter School Office approval for significant revisions

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 10:

Over this charter term, the trajectory for this benchmark has declined from a Meets to an Approaches. The school has a record of noncompliance with staff fingerprint clearance and teacher certification requirements as well as overall enrollment below the wme.6 (e)--3.3 (n)

reported that the school has been working closely with the NYC Charter School Center on a certification audit, and HLA2 and its sister schools have launched initiatives to increase the number of certified teachers hired.

In terms of enrollment, and as noted in BM 9, HLA2 has not yet met its targeted or contracted enrollment and is below the 85% threshold that serves as a minimum to indicate that a school is working towards maintaining sufficient enrollment demand to “meet or come close to meeting” the enrollment plan outlined in its charter. The 2020-2021 ELL enrollment for this charter school is underrepresented due to a reporting error.

HLA2 has submitted to the CSO revisions to its bylaws. The CSO has reviewed policies submitted with the school’s renewal application as well as its pet20 Tc



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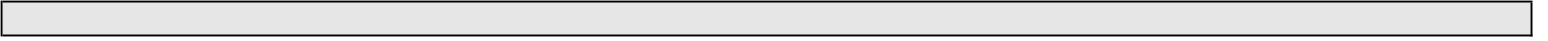
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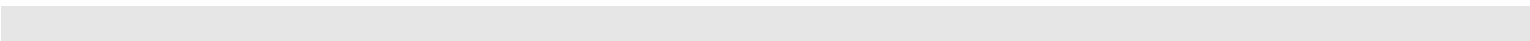
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