



2014-15 Ten-Year Charter Review Report

Bridges Public Charter School

January 26, 2014

DC Public Charter School Board
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND KEY FINDINGS	1
CHARTER REVIEW STANDARD.....	1
SCHOOL OVERVIEW	2
SECTION ONE: GOALS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS	4
SECTION TWO: COMPLIANCE WITH CHARTER AND APPLICABLE LAWS	14
SECTION THREE: FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY.....	19

BOARD VOTE AND KEY FINDINGS

The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (“PCSB”) staff has conducted a charter review of the Bridges Public Charter School (“Bridges PCS”) pursuant to the School Reform Act, D.C. Code §§ 38-1802 *et seq.* (“SRA”).¹

PCSB staff’s analysis of the school’s goals and academic achievement expectations (“academic expectations”) concludes that Bridges PCS fully met five goals.² One of these goals measures parent satisfaction demonstrated by the rate of students reenrolling from year to year – which was 100% in the 2013-14 school year for kindergarten and first grade students.

To assess the school’s goals and academic expectations, PCSB reviewed the school’s performance in academic years 2010-11 through 2013-14. In 2010-11 and 2011-12, Bridges PCS operated a pre-kindergarten program serving three- and four-year-old students. In August 2012, PCSB approved a request from the school to amend its charter to expand to serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade. In 2012-13 and 2013-14, the last two years of this review, the school was in its first and second years of executing its six-year growth plan. Given Bridges PCS’s ongoing expansion, PCSB will carefully monitor the school’s academic progress over the coming years.

The school has neither materially violated applicable law nor its charter, and is in strong fiscal health. Based on these findings, the PCSB Board voted 6-0 at its January 26, 2015 meeting to grant full charter continuance to Bridges PCS.

CHARTER REVIEW STANDARD

The SRA provides that the PCSB “shall review [a school’s] charter at least once every [five] years.”³ As part of this review, PCSB must determine whether:

- (1) The school committed a material violation of applicable laws or a material violation of the conditions, terms, standards, or procedures set forth in its charter, including violations relating to the education of children with disabilities; and/or
- (2) The school failed to meet the goals and student academic achievement expectations set forth in its charter.⁴

If PCSB determines that a school has committed a material violation of applicable law, or has not met its goals and academic expectations, as described above, it may, at its discretion, revoke the school’s

¹ D.C. Code § 38-1802.12(a)(3).

² PCSB did not assess one additional goal for reasons described on page 7 of this report.

³ *Id.*

⁴ D.C. Code § 38-1802.12(c).

charter, or grant the school a conditional continuance. Additionally, there is a fiscal component to the charter review. PCSB is required by the SRA to revoke a school's charter if PCSB determines in its review that the school (1) has engaged in a pattern of nonadherence to generally accepted accounting principles; (2) has engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement; and/or (3) is no longer economically viable.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Bridges PCS began operation in 2005 under PCSB's authorization to serve students in pre-kindergarten-3 and pre-kindergarten-4.⁵ It operates one campus in Ward 4. In 2012, the PCSB Board approved a petition from the school to amend its charter to serve students through the fifth grade.⁶ It currently serves students through the second grade, and will reach full capacity in the 2017-18 school year. The school's mission is:

*To provide an exemplary educational program that includes students with special needs. Our developmentally appropriate, student and family-centered educational approach nurtures students to expand their developmental skills, in order to build a foundation for life-long learning.*⁷

In 2013-14, Bridges PCS had an audited enrollment of 211 students in grades PK3 – 1. 42.0% of its students were English language learners ("ELLs"), and 25.2% of students were classified as students with disabilities.⁸ To support these students, three to four Bridges PCS staff members (a teacher, assistant teacher, and other aides) are in each classroom of 15-20 students.⁹ In these classrooms there are both general and special education students. The school also offers five "non-categorical" classrooms for level four special education students (which are not organized by grade or age), each with a minimum of four staff members and 5-10 students.¹⁰

The school uses a project approach to learning, with teachers developing "studies" over the course of the school year in response to students' development and interest over the course of the school year.¹¹ Students begin participating in Writer's Workshops in kindergarten and first grade, where they learn strategies for good writing.¹² The school uses portions of the Responsive Classroom and Second Steps programs to assist students in developing social skills.¹³

⁵ Bridges PCS charter agreement, dated April 6, 2000, attached to this report as Appendix B.

⁶ See April 20, 2012 letter from Mr. Brian Jones, PCSB Board Chair, to MS. Betsy Centofanti, Bridges PCS Board Chair, attached to this report as Appendix C.

⁷ See 2013-14 Annual Report, attached to this report as Appendix D.

⁸ 2013-14 Performance Management Framework ("PMF").

⁹ See Bridges PCS Qualitative Site Review, p. 2, attached to this report as Appendix E.

¹⁰ See Appendix E, p. 2.

¹¹ See Appendix D, p. 5.

¹² See Appendix D, p. 5.

¹³ See Appendix D, p. 5.

Summary of Performance

Bridges PCS has been held accountable to Accountability Plans, and last year the Early Childhood Performance Management Framework (“EC PMF”) pilot.

2013-14 Grade Levels	Ward	Year Opened	2013-14 Student Enrollment	2010-11 Accountability Plan	2011-12 PMF Accountability Plan	2012-13 PMF Accountability Plan	2013-14 EC PMF
PK3-1	4	2005	211	Met 6 of 11 targets	Met 5 of 5 targets	Met 8 of 9 targets	Met 8 of 8 PMF floors

Charter Amendments

In March 2012, the PCSB Board conditionally approved the school’s request to amend its charter to expand to serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade, through adding two inclusion classrooms and one non-categorical special education classroom per grade every year. In August 2012, the PCSB Board fully approved the amendment petition.¹⁴ In November 2014, the Board approved an amendment petition from the school to adopt the EC PMF as its goals and academic expectations.¹⁵

Previous Charter Reviews

Per PCSB’s policy in place at the time, PCSB conducted preliminary charter reviews. If a school did not meet all relevant standards in its preliminary review, it would have a year to make improvements before its charter review the following academic year. In Bridges PCS’s 2010 preliminary charter review, PCSB found that the school had met the non-academic and organizational performance standards in place at that time, but that it did not meet academic performance standards.¹⁶ PCSB staff noted that the school’s time-intensive search for a facility, as well as a funding issue, negatively contributed to the school’s failure to meet these standards.¹⁷ But PCSB staff noted in its performance development review of the school that Bridges PCS was “on an upward trajectory, with the school consistently scoring proficient and exemplary on the curriculum, instruction, and assessment indicators.”¹⁸

In February 2011, PCSB conducted the school’s charter review and found that the school met the standard of review. In its review analysis, PCSB staff noted that the school’s program was “preparing the majority of four-year-olds for kindergarten success regardless of their language dominance or the language of the test administration.”¹⁹ Based on this finding, the PCSB Board fully continued the school’s charter.²⁰

¹⁴ See August 20, 2012 PCSB Board memorandum, attached to this report as Appendix F.

¹⁵ See November 17, 2014 memorandum, attached to this report as Appendix G.

¹⁶ See February 22, 2010 PCSB Board Memorandum, attached to this report as Appendix H. At that time, PCSB did not assess a school’s goals and academic expectations in its charter reviews.

¹⁷ See Appendix H.

¹⁸ S See Appendix H.

¹⁹ See PCSB Charter Review Analysis, p. 2, attached to this report as Appendix I.

²⁰ See PCSB February 2011 board minutes, attached to this report as Appendix J.

SECTION ONE: GOALS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

The SRA requires PCSB to review whether a school has met its goals and academic expectations at least once every five years. Goals are specific aims that are measurable and usually related to a school's mission, which may be categorized as academic, non-academic, and organizational, whereas academic expectations are student academic aims measured by state or externally validated assessments. Goals and academic expectations are only considered as part of the review analysis if they were included in a school's charter, charter amendment, or accountability plans approved by the PCSB Board (collectively, the "Charter").

Per Bridges PCS's 2014 amendment to its charter and charter agreement, it adopted the EC PMF indicators as its goals and academic expectations for its early childhood grades. However, consistent with PCSB policy, because the EC PMF was in pilot status at the time the 2014 amendment was approved, the amendment details that the school will be deemed to have met its early childhood goals and academic expectations if:

- In 2013-14, it meets or exceeds the minimum threshold (or floor) for each individual measure; and
- In school years 2010-2011, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, the school meets two-thirds of its goals from its approved Accountability Plans for that given year.

The table below summarizes PCSB's determinations, which are further detailed in the body of this report.

	Goals and Academic Expectations	Met?
1	Literacy Progress	Yes
2	Literacy Achievement	N/A ²¹
3	Math Progress	Yes
4	Attendance	Yes
5a	CLASS – Emotional Support	Yes
5b	CLASS – Classroom Organization	
5c	CLASS – Instructional Support	
6	Parent Satisfaction	Yes
7	Reenrollment	

²¹ PCSB did not assess the school's literacy achievement targets as part of its review analysis, given that education research supports that literacy achievement targets are not developmentally appropriate for pre-kindergarten students.

1. Goal: **Early Childhood Literacy Progress.**

Assessment: **Bridges PCS met this academic expectation.** Since 2010-11, the school has met all literacy progress targets that it set, with the exception of one ELL target set for the 2010-11 school year.²²

Pre-Kindergarten Literacy Progress		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2011-12	70% of pre-kindergarten-3 and pre-kindergarten-4 students will demonstrate a gain of four standard scale points or score at least 85 by the spring administration of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT”).	Yes (92% of students demonstrated a gain of 4 points or scored at least 85.)
2011-12	75% of pre-kindergarten-3 students will increase by six letters or master at least 11 by the spring administration of the Individual Growth and Development Indicators (“IGDI”) assessment.	Yes (84.9% of students increased by 6 letters or mastered at least 11.)
2011-12	75% of pre-kindergarten-4 students will increase by six letters or master at least 16 letters by the spring administration of the IGDI assessment.	Yes (83.3% of students increased by 6 letters or mastered at least 16.)
2012-13	70% of pre-kindergarten-3 and pre-kindergarten-4 students will demonstrate a gain of four standard scale points or score at least 85 by the spring administration of the PPVT.	Yes (92.7% of students met this goal.)
2012-13	75% of pre-kindergarten-3 students will increase by six letters or master at least 11 letters by the spring administration of the IGDI assessment.	Yes (91.0% of students met this goal.)
2012-13	80% of pre-kindergarten-4 students will increase by six letters or master at least 16 letters by the spring administration of the IGDI assessment.	Yes (88.6% of students met this goal.)
2013-14	The percentage of pre-kindergarten-3 and pre-kindergarten-4 students who will meet or exceed widely held expectations per the growth report on the literacy portion of the PPVT assessment, as designated by the publisher, will be equal to or greater than the percentage floor for the corresponding EC PMF indicator as detailed in the EC PMF Technical Guide for that given year.	96.8% (Above PMF floor, which was 60%.)

²² In the school’s 2014 charter amendment, a goal was included regarding alternative assessments: “The percentage of students with disabilities, who meet or exceed widely held expectations per the growth report on the alternative assessment, Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program, as designated by the publisher, will be equal to or greater than the percentage floor for the corresponding EC PMF indicator as detailed in the EC PMF Technical Guide for that given year.” However, student performance on this assessment was not considered separately, and instead was considered alongside student performance on the non-alternative literacy assessments. Thus, this report does not assess this goal separately.

Kindergarten and First Grade Literacy Progress		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2012-13	80% of kindergarten students will know 25 sight words or more or will increase the number of sight words that they will recognize by 10 words by the spring administration of the Fountas and Pinnell Reading assessment.	Yes (85.0% of students met this goal.)
2013-14	The percentage of kindergarten and first grade students who meet or exceed widely held expectations per the growth report on the literacy portion of PPVT assessment, as designated by the publisher, will be equal to or greater than the percentage floor for the corresponding EC PMF indicator as detailed in the EC PMF Technical Guide for that given year.	91.4% (Above the PMF floor, which was 50%)

English Language Learner Progress		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2010-11	80% of English language learners will demonstrate a growth of at least 10 scale score points from the fall administration to the spring administration of the PPVT.	No (63% of students grew 10 scale score points or more.)

Qualitative Evidence

In September 2014, PCSB staff conducted a Qualitative Site Review (“QSR”) of Bridges. In their report, they described the following related to this goal:

The QSR team observed a range of literacy instruction across all grades. Students in pre-kindergarten read books, participated in read-alouds, and literacy centers. Observers saw students actively engaged in each approach. In kindergarten through second grades, students had similar experiences. The read-alouds observed were engaging with purposeful questions posed to students to allow for critical thinking. Students also had access to a variety of books in which they worked on answering questions and identifying key parts of the story.

While these tasks were engaging in the classroom, teachers struggled with challenging students in all tasks. During independent work, many students were off task or confused by unclear directions. Special education teachers also focused on literacy activities in non-categorical rooms and pull-out sessions. Students participated in sight word games and were provided sentence starters to vocabulary and context cues.²³

²³ See Appendix E, pp. 3-4.

2. Goal: Early Childhood Literacy Achievement.

Assessment: **PCSB did not assess the school's literacy achievement targets as part of its review analysis.** In 2010-11, the school failed to meet several targets related to pre-kindergarten literacy achievement. After that year, per PCSB's guidance, DC early childhood programs no longer set pre-kindergarten literacy achievement targets, based on the premise that achievement targets are not developmentally appropriate for pre-kindergarten students. Given this, PCSB did not include these targets in this charter review analysis.

PK Literacy Achievement		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2010-11	70% of pre-kindergarten-3 students will score at or above 85 scale points on the PPVT.	Yes (72% of students scored at or above 85 scale points.)
2010-11	70% of pre-kindergarten-4 students will score at or above 85 scale points on the PPVT.	No (63% of students scored at or above 85 scale points.)
2010-11	75% of pre-kindergarten-3 students will master at least 11 letter identifications on the IGDI assessment.	No (74% of students scored at or above mastery of 11 letters.)
2010-11	70% of pre-kindergarten-4 students will master at least 16 letter identifications on the IGDI assessment.	No (67% of students scored at or above mastery of 16 letters.)
2010-11	85% of pre-kindergarten-4 students will score at or above 85 scale score points on the Bracken School Readiness Assessment.	No (73% of students scored at or above 85 scale points.)

English Language Learner Literacy Achievement		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2010-11	75% of English language learners will score at or above 85 scale score points on the Bracken School Readiness Assessment.	Yes (77% of students scored at or above 85 scale points.)

Special Education Literacy Achievement		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2010-11	58% of pre-kindergarten-3 and pre-kindergarten-4 special education students will master at least 11 or 16 letter identifications, respectively, on the IGDI assessment.	Yes (64% of students scored at or above the benchmark.)

3. Goal: Early Childhood Math Progress

Assessment: **Bridges PCS met this academic expectation.** In 2013-14, Bridges PCS set math progress targets for the first time, and met both of them.²⁴

Pre-Kindergarten Math Progress		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2013-14	The percentage of pre-kindergarten-3 and -4 students who meet or exceed widely held expectations per the growth report on the mathematics portion of the Learning Accomplishment Profile, Third Edition (“LAP-3”) assessment, as designated by the publisher, will be equal to or greater than the percentage floor for the corresponding EC PMF indicator as detailed in the EC PMF Technical Guide for that given year.	93.6% (Above 60%, which was the EC PMF floor.)
Kindergarten and First Grade Math Progress		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2013-14	The percentage of kindergarten and first grade students who meet or exceed widely held expectations per the growth report on the mathematics portion of the Test of Early Mathematics Ability (“TEMA”) assessment, as designated by the publisher, will be equal to or greater than the percentage floor for the corresponding EC PMF indicator as detailed in the EC PMF Technical Guide for that given year.	84.0% (Above 50.0%, which was the PMF floor.)

Qualitative Evidence

In September 2014, PCSB staff conducted a Qualitative Site Review (“QSR”) of Bridges. In their report, they described the following related to this goal:

Teachers helped students work on literacy and math skills by assisting them in writing and typing math questions. One kindergarten math classroom worked on the math problem of the week where students independently were asked to add circles and squares together. While a few students struggled with this word problem, most kindergarteners were finished in a minute and waited until the teacher pulled the group back together.²⁵

²⁴ In 2013-14, kindergarten math progress and achievement were not considered as separate indicators. Instead, these two indicators are considered as one – with students given credit for being proficient by the end of the year and/or how many students made at least one year of progress.

²⁵ See Appendix E, p. 4.

4. Goal: Early Childhood Attendance.

Assessment: **Bridges PCS met this goal.** The school met all targets related to this goal.

Pre-kindergarten Attendance Targets		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2010-11	On average, pre-kindergarten-3 students will attend school 85% of the days.	Yes (The average daily attendance was 96.1%.)
2010-11	On average, pre-kindergarten-4 students will attend school 85% of the days.	Yes (The average daily attendance was 95.5%.)
2011-12	On average, pre-kindergarten-3 and -4 students will attend school 88% of the days.	Yes (The average daily attendance was 96.7%.)
2012-13	On average, pre-kindergarten-3 and -4 students will attend school 88% of the days.	Yes (The average daily attendance was 96.1%.)
2013-14	On average, pre-kindergarten-3 and -4 students will attend school at a rate equal to or greater than the floor for the corresponding EC PMF indicator as detailed in the EC PMF Technical Guide for that given year.	91.4% (Above PMF, which had a floor of 80.0%)
Kindergarten and First Grade Attendance Targets		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2012-13	On average, kindergarten students will attend school 92% of the days.	Yes (The average daily attendance was 95.6%.)
2013-14	On average, kindergarten students will attend school at a rate equal to or greater than the floor for the corresponding EC PMF indicator as detailed in the EC PMF Technical Guide for that given year.	92.2% (Above PMF floor of 82.0%)

5a. Goal: The school will score, on the Emotional Support domain of the CLASS Assessment, a rating equal to or greater than the floor for the corresponding EC PMF indicator as detailed in the EC PMF Technical Guide for that given year.

5b. Goal: The school will score, on the Classroom Organization domain of the CLASS Assessment, a rating equal to or greater than the floor for the corresponding EC PMF indicator as detailed in the EC PMF Technical Guide for that given year.

5c. Goal: The school will score, on the Instructional Support domain of the CLASS Assessment, a rating equal to or greater than the floor for the corresponding EC PMF indicator as detailed in the EC PMF Technical Guide for that given year.

Assessment: **Bridges PCS met these goals.** All DC charter early childhood programs that participated in PCSB’s EC PMF Pilot, including Bridges PCS, were assessed by independent reviewers using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (“CLASS”) tool, which focuses on classroom interactions that boost student learning. The CLASS tool measures emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. Each indicator is scored on a scale from 1-7, where 1-2 is low, 3-5 is medium, and 6-7 is high. For each of these indicators, ECA PCS scored above the EC PMF floor.

2013-14 CLASS Performance		
	Bridges PCS	EC PMF Floor
Emotional Support	5.9	3
Classroom Organization	5.3	3
Instructional Support	3.1	1

Qualitative Evidence

In September 2014, PCSB staff conducted a Qualitative Site Review (“QSR”) of Bridges. In their report, they described the following related to this goal. The evidence supports the ratings of the CLASS observers, in that the majority of teachers had strong classroom environments but just over half scored proficient or advanced in instructional strategies.

The QSR team scored 84% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport. Teachers encouraged respectful talk between students and called students by name or “friend”. Most of the teachers also used positive language, such as “Great Job”, “High five” and “I love it”. Even at times when students had trouble maintaining control of their behavior, the teachers remained composed and supported the student to reengage in the learning activity.²⁶

...

²⁶ See Appendix E, p. 7.

The QSR team scored 74% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Establishing a Culture for Learning. Teachers communicated the importance of hard work to all students saying statements such as, “Today we are going to work really hard at our school work” and “Great job! You can do it!”²⁷

PCSB reviewers observed the following regarding classroom organization.

The QSR team scored 63% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Managing Classroom Procedures. There was little loss of instructional time in these classrooms as teachers had clearly established routines for transitions and distribution of materials. Many teachers used a bell or chime to help students transition to the next activity. In PK classrooms, students self-selected centers after the teacher explained the directions. Support staff in the rooms assisted with the collection and distribution of materials to minimize loss of instructional time²⁸

...

The QSR team scored 86% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Managing Student Behavior. In most classrooms, standards of conduct were established and frequently monitored by the staff in the room. In the event that a student needed redirection, students were able to refocus with the teacher’s positive reinforcement and clear and consistent direction, for example, “I like how this table is sitting and ready to go!” and “If you need to get my attention, I’ll come over when you raise your hands.”²⁹

PCSB reviewers observed the following regarding instructional support.

...

The QSR team scored just over half (58%) of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques. In these classrooms, teachers used a variety of techniques to challenge students. Teachers created genuine discussions with the class by extending students’ answers and asking open-ended questions to continue discussions. Teachers also effectively used wait time to allow students to think before responding.

...

The QSR team scored 68% of the observations as proficient or

²⁷ See Appendix E, p. 7.

²⁸ See Appendix E, p. 8.

²⁹ See Appendix E, p. 9.

distinguished in Using Assessment in Instruction. In these classrooms, teachers consistently elicited evidence of student understanding while monitoring the classroom. The teachers asked clarifying questions or had the students explain what they were working on. When students chose a title for their written stories, the students had to explain to the teacher how the title connected with the content of the story. In rooms with less verbal students, the teacher provided pictures for the students to work with. Teachers used the pictures to assess student understanding by asking questions and having these students answer by pointing to the correct pictures.³⁰

6. Goal: **Parent Satisfaction.**

7. Goal: **Reenrollment.**

Assessment: **Bridges PCS met these goals. From 2010-11 to 2012-13**, the school set and met Accountability Plan targets related to a parent satisfaction survey. In 2013-14, the school did not include a parent survey target as a mission-specific goal in the EC PMF. However, the EC PMF does include a target regarding reenrollment for students in kindergarten and older.³¹ The school's 2013-14 kindergarten and first grade reenrollment was 100.0%, above the 60.0% EC PMF floor.

Parent Satisfaction Targets		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2010-11	80% of parents of pre-kindergarten-3 and -4 children will report being "Satisfied" or "Highly Satisfied" with the school on the end-of-year Parent Satisfaction Survey.	Yes (100% of parents who responded reported being satisfied or highly satisfied.)
2011-12	80% of parents or guardians will report being satisfied or highly satisfied with the school on the end of year parent satisfaction survey.	Yes (99% of parents surveyed reported being satisfied or highly satisfied.)
2012-13	80% of parents or guardians will report being satisfied or highly satisfied with the school on the end of year parent satisfaction survey.	Yes (92.9% of parents surveyed reported being satisfied or highly satisfied.)
2013-14	The school will have a reenrollment rate for its kindergarten through second grade students that is equal to or greater than the floor for the corresponding EC PMF indicator as detailed in the EC PMF Technical Guide for that given year.	Yes (100% of K-1 graders reenrolled, which is above the EC PMF floor of 60%)

³⁰ See Appendix E, p. 12.

³¹ Pre-kindergarten is not mandatory in the District of Columbia, so pre-kindergarten reenrollment (reenrolling from pre-kindergarten-3 to pre-kindergarten-4) is not assessed as part of the EC PMF.

Qualitative Evidence

PCSB reviewers observed the following regarding this goal:

The QSR team observed a student- and family-centered environment. Parents were welcomed into the building with staff communicating to families in their native language, which included mostly Spanish. Some parents ate breakfast in the classrooms with their students and the leadership team welcomed families by name. This created a warm environment for the school community.³²

³² See Appendix E, p. 3.

SECTION TWO: COMPLIANCE WITH CHARTER AND APPLICABLE LAWS

The SRA requires PCSB to determine at least every five years whether a school has “committed a material violation of applicable laws or a material violation of the conditions, terms, standards, or procedures set forth in its charter, including violations relating to the education of children with disabilities.”³³ The SRA contains a non-exhaustive list of applicable laws, and PCSB monitors charter schools for compliance with additional laws in annual compliance reviews. Below is a summary of the school’s compliance record.³⁴

Compliance Item	Description	School’s Compliance Status 2011-12 to present
Fair enrollment process D.C. Code § 38-1802.06	DC charter schools must have a fair and open enrollment process that randomly selects applicants and does not discriminate against students.	Compliant since 2011-12
Notice and due process for suspensions and expulsions D.C. Code § 38-1802.06(g)	DC charter school discipline policies must afford students due process ³⁵ and the school must distribute such policies to students and parents.	Compliant since 2011-12
Student health and safety D.C. Code §§ 38-1802.04(c)(4), 4-1321.02, 38-651	The SRA requires DC charter schools to maintain the health and safety of its students. ³⁶ To ensure that schools adhere to this clause, PCSB monitors schools for various indicators, including but not limited to whether schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have qualified staff members that can administer medications; - conduct background checks for all school employees and volunteers; and - have an emergency response plan in place and conduct emergency drills as required by DC code and regulations. 	Compliant since 2011-12
Equal employment D.C. Code § 38-1802.04(c)(5)	A DC charter school’s employment policies and practices must comply with federal and local employment laws and regulations.	Compliant since 2011-12

³³ D.C. Code § 38.1802.12(c).

³⁴ These compliance findings are based on annual compliance reviews conducted by PCSB. Bridges PCS’s 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 compliance reports are attached to this report as Appendix K.

³⁵ See *Goss v. Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565 (1975).

³⁶ SRA § 38.1802.04 (c)(4)(A).

Compliance Item	Description	School's Compliance Status 2011-12 to present
Insurance As required by the school's charter	A DC charter school must be adequately insured.	Compliant since 2011-12
Facility licenses D.C. Code § 47-2851.03(d); D.C. Mun. Regs., tit. 14, §§ 14-1401 <i>et seq.</i>	A DC charter school must possess all required local licenses.	Compliant since 2011-12
Highly Qualified Teachers Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§ 6601 <i>et seq.</i> ("ESEA")	DC charter schools receiving Title I funding must employ "Highly Qualified Teachers" as defined by ESEA.	Compliant since 2011-12
Proper composition of board of trustees D.C. Code § 38-1802.05	A DC charter school's Board of Trustees must have: an odd number of members that does not exceed 15; a majority of members that are DC residents; and at least two members that are parents of a student attending the school.	In 2013-14, the Board Roster included an even number of members, and only had one parent representative. The school has since cured this issue.
Accreditation Status D.C. Code § 38-1802.02(16)	A DC charter school must maintain accreditation from an approved accrediting body approved by the SRA.	Compliant since 2011-12

Procurement Contracts

D.C. Code § 38-1802.04(c)(1) requires DC charter schools to utilize a competitive bidding process for any procurement contract valued at \$25,000 or more, and within three days of awarding such a contract, to submit to PCSB all bids received, the contractor selected, and the rationale for which contractor was selected. To ensure compliance with this law, PCSB requires schools to submit a "Determinations and Findings" form to detail any qualifying procurement contract that the school has executed.

Year	Qualifying contracts executed by Bridges PCS	Corresponding documentation submitted to PCSB
2010-11	Data unavailable	-

Year	Qualifying contracts executed by Bridges PCS	Corresponding documentation submitted to PCSB
2011-12	0	0
2012-13	2	0
2013-14	1	0

Special Education Compliance

Charter schools are required to comply with all federal and local special education laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act³⁷ (“IDEA”) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.³⁸ The following section summarizes Bridges PCS’s special education compliance from 2011-12 to the present.

OSSE Special Education Compliance Reviews

The DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (“OSSE”) monitors charter schools’ special education compliance and publishes three types of reports detailing these findings: (1) Annual Determinations; (2) On-Site Monitoring; and (3) Quarterly Findings (also called Special Conditions Reports). OSSE’s findings of Bridges PCS’s special education compliance are summarized below.

Annual Determinations

As required by IDEA’s implementing regulations, OSSE annually analyzes each LEA’s compliance with 20 special education compliance indicators, and publishes these findings in an Annual Determination report.³⁹ Each year’s report is based on compliance data collected several years earlier. As such, OSSE does not require schools to cure any compliance issues detailed in these reports. In 2014, OSSE published its 2011 Annual Determination reports, which include determination scores and levels for the 2011-12 school year.

Bridges PCS’s Annual Determination compliance performance is detailed in the table below.⁴⁰

Year	Percent compliant with audited special education federal requirements	Determination Level
2010	87%	Meets Requirements
2011	89%	Meets Requirements
2012	106% ⁴¹	Meets Requirements

³⁷ 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 *et seq*

³⁸ 20 U.S.C. § 794.

³⁹ As required by federal regulation 34 C.F.R. § 300.600(c).

⁴⁰ See Bridges PCS 2010 and 2011 annual determination reports, attached to this report as Appendix L.

⁴¹ The school’s compliance rate is over 100% because OSSE issued a “bonus” compliant indicator – not having any longstanding noncompliance issues from FY2009, FY2010, or FY2011.

On-Site Monitoring Report

OSSE periodically conducts an on-site assessment of an LEA's special education compliance with student-level and LEA-level indicators, and publishes its findings in an On-Site Monitoring Report. If a school is less than 100% compliant with a student-level and/or LEA-level indicator, it must implement corrections and report these corrections to OSSE.⁴²

In 2013, OSSE published an on-site Compliance Monitoring Report of Bridges PCS based on the school's performance in the 2011-12 school year.⁴³ The school was required to implement corrections as indicated in the following table. OSSE has since verified that Bridges PCS has implemented corrections for all identified student- and LEA-level findings.

Student-Level Compliance		LEA-Level Compliance	
Compliance Area	Number of indicators where corrections were required	Compliance Area	Number of indicators where corrections were required
Part C to B Transition	0 out of 1	Data Verification	0 out of 1
Initial Evaluations and Reevaluations	2 out of 6	Dispute Resolution	0 out of 3
Individualized Education Program Development	2 out of 10	Access to Instructional Materials	0 out of 1
Least Restrictive Environment	1 out of 2	Fiscal	0 out of 17
Discipline	0 out of 2	Total indicators where corrections were required	0 out of 22
Data Verification	3 out of 8		
Total indicators where corrections were required	8 out of 28		

Special Conditions Quarterly Reports

OSSE submits quarterly reports to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education

⁴² If OSSE finds that the school is less than 100% compliant with a student-level indicator that was impossible for the school to cure retroactively, OSSE would identify the point of noncompliance as an LEA-level violation.

⁴³ See 2012-2013 On-Site Monitoring Report Attachments in Appendix M.

Programs detailing District of Columbia LEAs' compliance in three areas: (1) Initial and Reevaluation Timelines; (2) Early Childhood Transition Timelines; and (3) Secondary Transition Requirements.

In recent special conditions reporting on OSSE's DC Corrective Action Tracking System Database, no areas of non-compliance were identified for Bridges PCS in the 2012-13 or 2013-14 school years.

Blackman Jones Implementation Review

With compliance requirements pursuant to IDEA and the 2006 Blackman Jones Consent Decree, OSSE manages and oversees the Blackman Jones database that tracks each LEA's timely implementation of Hearing Officer Determinations (HODs) and Settlement Agreements (SAs).

As of the time of this report's publication, the Blackman Jones Database shows Bridges PCS has no HODs or SAs.

SECTION THREE: FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY

INTRODUCTION

The SRA requires PCSB to revoke a school's charter if PCSB determines that the school:

- Has engaged in a pattern of non-adherence to generally accepted accounting principles ("GAAP");
- Has engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement; and/or
- Is no longer economically viable.⁴⁴

As part of the charter review process, PCSB reviewed Bridges PCS's financial records regarding these areas.⁴⁵ PCSB finds that Bridges PCS's financial performance is strong, and that there are no grounds to revoke the school's charter based on the standard above.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Bridges PCS received the highest possible score on PCSB's CHARM framework in both FY2012 and FY2013, and their metrics improved in FY2014, meaning the school will again be considered a top fiscal performer. The school has no pattern of non-adherence to GAAP, nor are there indications that it has engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement. The school has had no audit findings in each of the last four years, and has run an operating surplus in each of the last four years.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Enrollment climbed significantly in FY2013 and again in FY2014 with a corresponding increase in revenue to \$5.43MM. Bridges also had the fourth highest revenue spent per student of any charter school in DC in FY2013. This may be due to the high number of level four special education students enrolled at the school. While its revenue per student declined slightly in FY2014, it is still among the highest in DC. The school's net asset position also improved significantly in the last two years growing from under \$300K in FY2012 to ~\$1.14MM in FY2014.

The following table provides an overview of Bridges PCS's financial information over the past four fiscal years.

⁴⁴ See D.C. Code § 38-1802.13(b).

⁴⁵ See Bridges PCS Fiscal Audits, attached to this report as Appendix N.

	Audit Year			
	2011	2012	2013	2014
Audited Enrollment	86	86	143	211
Total DC Funding Allocation	\$1,785,208	\$1,988,714	\$3,258,177	\$4,797,137
Total Federal Entitlements and Funding	\$81,275	\$10,453	\$305,289	\$327,666
Unrestricted Cash and Cash Equivalents on 6/30/14	\$226,764	\$273,212	\$690,139	\$1,422,746
Total Assets	\$599,665	\$601,246	\$1,123,228	\$1,756,148
Total Current Assets	\$378,165	\$420,988	\$898,025	\$1,608,999
Total Liabilities	\$332,677	\$304,853	\$418,458	\$612,309
Total Current Liabilities	\$242,984	\$225,214	\$356,463	\$612,309
Net Asset Position	\$266,988	\$296,393	\$704,770	\$1,143,839
Total Revenues	\$2,020,166	\$2,216,416	\$3,880,034	\$5,433,329
Total Expenses	\$1,994,727	\$2,187,011	\$3,471,657	\$4,994,260
Change in Net Assets	\$25,439	\$29,405	\$408,377	\$439,069

SPENDING DECISIONS

Bridges PCS had among the lowest occupancy cost of all DC charter schools in FY2013 at 8% of revenue. While that ratio increased slightly to 9% in FY2014, it remains among the lowest in the city. Expenses rose due to the increased enrollment in the last two years, but expenses did not increase at the same rate as revenue. As a result, the school's operating surplus improved to \$408K in FY2013 and again to \$439K in FY2014. The following table provides an overview of the School's spending decisions over the past four years.

	Audit Year			
	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Personnel Salaries and Benefits	\$ 1,224,130	\$ 1,382,460	\$ 2,239,339	\$ 3,326,963
Total Direct Student Costs	\$ 266,640	\$ 314,640	\$ 471,968	\$ 589,233
Total Occupancy Expenses	\$ 327,670	\$ 243,959	\$ 308,709	\$ 491,918
Total Office Expenses	\$ 80,285	\$ 52,976	\$ 42,272	\$ 66,525
Total General Expenses	\$ 96,002	\$ 192,976	\$ 409,369	\$ 519,621
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 25,439	\$ 29,405	\$ 408,377	\$ 439,069
as a percent of revenue				
Total Personnel Salaries and Benefits	61%	62%	58%	61%
Total Direct Student Costs	13%	14%	12%	11%
Total Occupancy Expenses	16%	11%	8%	9%
Total Office Expenses	4%	2%	1%	1%
Total General Expenses	5%	9%	11%	10%
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	1%	1%	11%	8%

ADHERENCE TO GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES

Audits of Bridges Charter School establish that the School has adhered to GAAP. The auditor expressed unqualified/unmodified opinions on the financial statements in each of the past four years. Additionally, Bridges PCS has not had any findings during the four years.

The following table provides a summary of audit results for each of the past four fiscal years.

	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014
Statement Opinion. Required when auditor finds areas of doubt/questionable matters.	Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified	Unmodified
Statement Material Weakness. A deficiency in internal control, indicating a reasonable possibility that a material financial misstatement will not be prevented.	No	No	No	No
Statement Non-Compliance. Auditor tests for compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements.	No	No	No	No
Program Opinion (A133). Review of compliance with federal requirements conducted when school receives \$500K+ in federal funds.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Unmodified
Program Material Weakness (A133). Lack of internal control over compliance with applicable laws, regulations, etc.	N/A	N/A	N/A	No
Findings & Questioned Costs. Findings important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance, with documentation of corrective action plans noting the responsible party.	0	0	0	0
Unresolved Prior Year Findings. Disclosure of prior audit findings that have not been corrected.	0	0	0	0
Going-Concern Issue. Indicates the financial strength of the school is questioned.	N/A	No	No	No
Debt-Compliance Issue. School was not in compliance with certain debt covenants. A debt-compliance issue may prelude insolvency.	N/A	No	No	No

FISCAL MANAGEMENT

The school has not engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement. The School has had consistently clean audits for the last four years. Bridges PCS received a perfect CHARM score in FY2012 and FY2013 and will likely receive a perfect score again for FY2014. Additionally, the school strengthened its balance sheet, including building up its cash position, and staff has no concerns about the school's management of public funds as of the date of this report

ECONOMIC VIABILITY

Bridges PCS is economically viable. Audited enrollment increased from 86 students in FY2012 to 211 students in FY2014. The school has a solid balance sheet that improved significantly in the last two years as the operating surpluses improved most of the school's metrics. The following tables provide a summary of financial results for the past four fiscal years. Areas of concern (where the school falls outside the norm among DC charter schools) are highlighted where applicable.

Financial Performance

PCSB assesses a school's financial performance with two key indicators. The first indicator is a school's "operating result" – how much its total annual revenues exceed its total annual expenditures. In general, PCSB recommends that a school's annual operating results are positive. Another indicator of a school's

financial performance is its earnings before depreciation (“EBAD”)⁴⁶, a financial performance measure of profitability. Based on these measures, **the School’s financial performance was strong for the last four years** because earnings have been consistently positive.

	Indicator of Concern	Audit Year			
		2011	2012	2013	2014
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	< 0	\$25,439	\$29,405	\$408,377	\$439,069
Earnings Before Depreciation	< 0	\$75,957	\$76,684	\$512,673	\$549,816
Aggregated 3-Year Total Margin	< -1.5	3.3%	3.6%	5.7%	7.6%

Liquidity

Two indicators of a school’s short-term economic viability are its current ratio⁴⁷ and its days of cash on hand.⁴⁸ A current ratio greater than one indicates a school’s ability to satisfy its immediate financial obligations. Bridges PCS’s current ratio has been above 1.0 each of the past four years and has increased each year to a high of 2.6 in FY2014.

Days of cash on hand is arguably the most important liquidity measure because it reflects whether a school can withstand unexpected cash delays and still satisfy its financial obligations. Typically, 90 days or more of cash on hand is recommended. Less than 30 days of cash on hand is a liquidity concern.

Bridges PCS’s cash on hand has been above 30 days all four years and grew to 103 days by the end of FY2014. The School has realized a positive cash flow from operations in the last three years.

	Indicator of Concern	Audit Year			
		2011	2012	2013	2014
Current Ratio	< 0.5	1.6	1.9	2.5	2.6
Days of Cash On Hand	< 30	41	45	72	103
Cash Flow from Operations	< 0	(\$97,465)	\$52,485	\$566,168	\$741,952
Multi-Year Cumulative Cash Flow	< 0	\$180,812	(\$60,385)	\$463,375	\$1,149,534

Debt Burden

A school’s debt ratio⁴⁹ indicates the extent to which a school relies on borrowed funds to finance its operations, and a ratio in excess of 0.92 is a concern to PCSB. Bridges PCS’s debt ratio has decreased

⁴⁶ EBAD is the change in net assets plus amortization and depreciation.

⁴⁷ A school’s current ratio is its current assets divided by current liabilities.

⁴⁸ “Cash on hand” equals unrestricted cash and cash equivalents divided by total expenditures divided by 360 days. It is a measure of the school’s ability to pay debts and claims as they come due.

⁴⁹ Debt ratio equals total liabilities divided by total assets.

from 0.55 in FY2011 to 0.35 in FY2014 as the school has built up its balance sheet. Since the school had no outstanding balance on its line of credit in any of the last three years, its debt service ratio was zero. **Therefore, Bridges PCS's debt burden doesn't pose a concern to its economic viability.**

	Indicator of Concern	Audit Year			
		2011	2012	2013	2014
Debt Ratio	> 0.92	0.55	0.51	0.37	0.35
Debt Service Ratio	> 10.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Sustainability

A school's net assets⁵⁰ and primary reserve ratio are indicators of its sustainability.⁵¹ PCSB recommends that schools accrue net asset reserves equal to three to six months of operating expenditures and PCSB would be concerned with net assets reserves below zero. The school's net asset position more than quadrupled since FY2011. While it is still below three months of operating expenses, it is well above the indicator of concern. The primary reserve ratio is also positive. Therefore, **Bridges PCS has metrics that indicate the school is sustainable.**

	Indicator of Concern	Audit Year			
		2011	2012	2013	2014
Net Asset Position	< 0	\$266,988	\$296,393	\$704,770	\$1,143,839
Primary Reserve Ratio	< 0.00	0.13	0.14	0.20	0.23

⁵⁰ Net Assets equals total assets minus total liabilities.

⁵¹ Primary Reserve Ratio equals total net assets divided by total annual expenses.