



Lea Crusey
Board Chair

Michelle J. Walker-Davis, Ed.D.
Executive Director

September 23, 2024

Via Electronic Mail

Patrina Clark
Board Chair

Leicester Johnson
Chief Executive Officer

Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School
2315 18th Place NE
Washington, DC 20018

Re: 10-Year Charter Review of Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School

Dear Dr. Clark and Ms. Johnson:

As you know, the DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) must conduct a high-stakes review of a public charter school at least once every five years to determine whether the school's charter should be continued or revoked.¹ During the 2023 – 24 school year, DC PCSB conducted such a review of Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School.² DC PCSB staff prepared a comprehensive review report to assess the performance of the school according to the standard required by the School Reform Act.³

On August 19, 2024, DC PCSB provided the school with a draft version of this report and allowed an opportunity for the school to respond. DC PCSB considered the school's feedback and incorporated it where staff determined appropriate to create a preliminary charter review report. Based on the findings in the preliminary charter review report, staff developed a proposal to present before the DC PCSB Board recommending the school's charter be continued.

¹ See DC Code § 38-1802.12(a)(3).

² DC PCSB postponed the continuance vote for Academy of Hope PCS's 10-year review until September 2024 due to academic data availability.

³ See DC Code § 38-1802.13(a)-(b).



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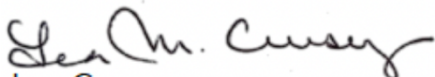
At its public board meeting on September 16, 2024, the DC PCSB Board voted to continue the school's charter for the reasons outlined in the review report and accompanying proposal, incorporating and adopting the staff's findings and recommendations.

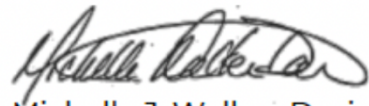
Representatives from the school attended the meeting and were provided an opportunity to address the DC PCSB Board prior to this vote. Members of the public were also allowed an opportunity to provide public comment prior to the vote.

Please see the following signed copy of the accompanying staff proposal, which outlines the basis upon which the DC PCSB Board voted to continue the school's charter along with the finalized version of the charter review report.

Thank you for your continued efforts in service of the students of the District of Columbia.

Sincerely yours,


Lea Crusey
Board Chair


Michelle J. Walker-Davis, Ed.D.
Executive Director

Cc: School Leaders

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

Charter Actions Requiring a Vote

- ☐ Approve a Charter Application
- ☐ Approve a Charter Renewal
- ☒ Approve Charter Continuance
- ☐ Approve a Charter Amendment Request
- ☐ Give a Charter Notice of Concern
- ☐ Lift the Charter Notice of Concern
- ☐ Commence Charter Revocation Proceedings
- ☐ Revoke a Charter
- ☐ Board Action, Other _____

Non-Voting Board Items

- ☐ Public Hearing Item
- ☐ Discussion Item
- ☐ Read into Record

Policies

- ☐ Open a New Policy or Changes to a Policy for Public Comment
- ☐ Approve a New Policy
- ☐ Approve an Amendment to an Existing Policy

PREPARED BY: Gina Lucchesi, Senior Specialist, School Performance Department

SUBJECT: Charter Review: Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School

DATE: September 16, 2024

Recommendation

District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) staff recommends that its Board vote to continue the charter of Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School (Academy of Hope PCS). This recommendation aligns with DC PCSB's Strategic Roadmap Priority of Excellent Schools.¹

Charter Review Findings

DC PCSB staff conducted a 10-year charter review of Academy of Hope PCS, as required by the School Reform Act (SRA).² The review includes an evaluation of the school's 1) progress toward meeting its goals and academic achievement

¹ DC PCSB is creating the policies and conditions to support a network of public charter schools in Washington, DC, offering families quality, equity, and diverse educational choices. See the Strategic Roadmap here: <https://bit.ly/3EVeKYq>.

² D.C. Code §§ 38-1802 *et seq.*

expectations (charter goals); 2) compliance with its charter and applicable federal and local laws; and 3) fiscal management. The charts below summarize DC PCSB staff's findings in these three areas over the review period.

Charter Review Findings	
Review Period	School year (SY) 2018 – 19 through SY 2022 – 23
Charter Goals	Academy of Hope PCS met its charter goals.
Compliance	Academy of Hope PCS did not violate the law or materially violate its charter.
Finance	Academy of Hope PCS did not commit fiscal mismanagement.

Academy of Hope PCS Goal Attainment				
2018 – 19	2019 – 20	2020 – 21	2021 – 22	2022 – 23
PMF	Not applicable (NA)			Charter Goals Policy
57.7%				Met a Pathway

Academy of Hope PCS adopted the Performance Management Framework (PMF) as its charter goals, in accordance with DC PCSB's *Elect to Adopt the PMF as Charter Goals Policy (PMF as Goals Policy)*.³ In doing so, the school committed to earning an average PMF score equal to or exceeding 45.0% for school years 2018 – 19, 2019 – 20, 2020 – 21, 2021 – 22, and 2022 – 23. However, given the disruption in schooling and data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic and DC PCSB's PMF revision efforts,^{4,5} DC PCSB only published PMF outcomes for SY 2018 – 19. Further, per DC PCSB's *COVID-19 Impact Policy*, DC PCSB did not assess goal attainment for school years 2019 – 20, 2020 – 21, or 2021 – 22. Consequently, for this review period, DC PCSB staff assessed Academy of Hope PCS's charter goals performance using 1) SY 2018 – 19 PMF outcomes and 2) SY 2022 – 23 goal attainment pathway performance as outlined in DC PCSB's *Charter Goals Policy*.⁶

The *Charter Goals Policy* offers multiple pathways to demonstrate SY 2022 – 23 goal attainment, including performance on transitional goals or a nationally normed growth assessment.⁷ Per the policy, a school need only satisfy one pathway to meet its SY 2022 – 23 goals.

³ See the *PMF as Goals Policy* here: <https://bit.ly/2PTj7fL>.

⁴ Per DC PCSB's *COVID-19 Impact Policy*, DC PCSB ceased collection, aggregation, and publication of SY 2019 – 20 academic data and did not produce the SY 2019 – 20 PMF. See the *COVID-19 Impact Policy* here: <https://bit.ly/3fy5zDo>.

⁵ In September 2021, DC PCSB announced its plan to revise its accountability system. Consequently, DC PCSB did not produce the PMF for SY 2021 – 22 or SY 2022 – 23.

⁶ See the *Charter Goals Policy* here: <https://bit.ly/4cpui8I>.

⁷ "Transitional goals" refers to standard measures that DC PCSB historically collected from schools. In school years 2021 – 22 and 2022 – 23, DC PCSB collected transitional goals data from all schools to support evaluation during the COVID-19 recovery period.

Academy of Hope PCS met its charter goals by exceeding the PMF target of 45.0% in SY 2018 – 19 and exceeding the sector average in all four transitional goals measures in SY 2022 – 23.

On its transitional goals measures, Academy of Hope PCS demonstrated strong performance in General Educational Development (GED) subject test achievement and persistence, exceeding the sector average and improving from SY 2021 – 22 to SY 2022 – 23. The school also exceeded the sector average in high-level certification and secondary credential attainment. Particularly noteworthy are Academy of Hope PCS's persistence rate of 68.9% (16 percentage points higher than the average among adult public charter schools) and its “earned high-level certification” rate of 94.1% (29.8 percentage points higher than average).

DC PCSB staff also evaluated the school's compliance with applicable federal and local laws, compliance with its charter, and fiscal management. DC PCSB staff determined the school has not committed a violation of law or a material violation of its charter, has adhered to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), has not engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement, and is economically viable.

DC PCSB staff's complete findings are detailed in the school's Preliminary Charter Review Report (Attachment A), which forms the basis of the staff's recommendation along with this proposal. The report will be finalized following the Board's vote on the school's continuance.

Based on these findings, DC PCSB staff recommends the Board vote to continue Academy of Hope PCS's charter.

Additional Academic Data

Separate and apart from the school's goal attainment, results from the SY 2022 – 23 Qualitative Site Review (QSR) suggest room for improvement in the classroom environment and instruction domains. The school had lower percentages of core content classrooms rated proficient or distinguished in both domains compared to the average percentage of comparable public charter classrooms that underwent a QSR in SY 2021 – 22.⁸

Charter Review Standard

The SRA stipulates that DC PCSB “shall review [a school's] charter at least once every [five] years.”⁹ As part of this review, DC PCSB must determine whether:

⁸ DC PCSB compares Academy of Hope PCS's QSR results to the adult education average from the prior school year (SY 2021 – 22) because DC PCSB did not observe comparable charter schools (i.e., adult-serving public charter schools) in SY 2022 – 23.

⁹ D.C. Code § 38-1802.12(a)(3).

- 1) The school committed a violation of applicable law, 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.¹⁰

If DC PCSB determines that a school has committed a violation of applicable law or a material violation of the terms of its charter, or has not met its goals and academic achievement expectations, it may, at its discretion, revoke the school's charter, or grant the school a continuance.¹¹

Additionally, there is a fiscal component to the charter review. DC PCSB is required by the SRA to revoke a school's charter if DC 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.¹²

Background

Academy of Hope PCS began operation in 2014 under authorization from DC PCSB. The school educates 840 adult students.¹³ The school operates one campus at two facilities located in Wards 5 and 8. Academy of Hope PCS's mission is:

To provide a high quality adult basic education in a manner that changes lives and improves our community.

Notification

On July 29, 2024, DC PCSB staff notified Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners Lauren Rogers (5C02), Tequia Hicks Delgado (5C03), Jacqueline Manning (5C04), Dascha Cleckley (8C03), Erica Green (8C04), and Salim Adofo (8C07) of the school's 10-year charter review. DC PCSB staff also posted a notice for public comment on the charter review in the DC Register and on the DC PCSB website.¹⁴

Attachment to this Proposal

Attachment A: Academy of Hope PCS 10-Year Preliminary Charter Review Report

¹⁰ D.C. Code § 38-1802.13(a).

¹¹ DC PCSB may impose conditions of continuance if it deems such conditions appropriate.

¹² D.C. Code § 38-1802.13(b).

¹³ This enrollment figure represents audited enrollment for the SY 2023 – 24 school year. This is the most up-to-date, validated enrollment figure at the time of the writing of this proposal.

¹⁴ See the notice here: <https://bit.ly/4fLChyD>.

Date: Sept 16, 2024

DC PCSB Action: ☒ Approved ☐ Approved with Changes ☐ Rejected

Changes to the Original Proposal:

Signature of the Board Chair: Gen M. Cussey



2023 – 24 10-Year Charter Review Report Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School

September 16, 2024

DC Public Charter School Board
100 M Suite SE, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 328-2660
www.dcpccb.org

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BOARD VOTE AND KEY FINDINGS¹

Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School (Academy of Hope PCS)^{2, 3}	
Review or Renewal	10-year charter review
Review Period	School year (SY) 2018 – 19 through SY 2022 – 23
Charter Goals	Academy of Hope PCS met its charter goals.
Compliance	Academy of Hope PCS did not violate the law or materially violate its charter.
Finance	Academy of Hope PCS did not commit fiscal mismanagement.
Board Vote	The Board voted 7 – 0 to continue Academy of Hope PCS's charter.

Pursuant to the School Reform Act (SRA), the DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) “shall review [a school’s] charter at least once every [five] years.”⁴ As such, DC PCSB conducted a 10-year charter review of Academy of Hope PCS, evaluating the school’s progress toward meeting its goals and academic achievement expectations (charter goals). DC PCSB also evaluated the school’s compliance with applicable federal and local laws, compliance with its charter, and fiscal management.

Charter Goals

Academy of Hope PCS adopted the Performance Management Framework (PMF) as its charter goals, in accordance with DC PCSB’s *Elect to Adopt the PMF as Charter Goals Policy (PMF as Goals Policy)*.⁵ In doing so, the school committed to earning an average PMF score equal to or exceeding 45.0% for school years 2018 – 19, 2019 – 20, 2020 – 21, 2021 – 22, and 2022 – 23. However, given the disruption in schooling and data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic and DC PCSB’s PMF revision efforts,^{6, 7} DC PCSB only published PMF outcomes for SY 2018 – 19. Further, per DC PCSB’s *COVID-19 Impact Policy*, DC PCSB did not assess goal attainment for school years 2019 – 20, 2020 – 21, or 2021 – 22. Consequently, for this review period, DC PCSB assessed Academy of Hope PCS’s charter goals performance using 1) SY 2018 – 19 PMF outcomes and 2) SY 2022 – 23 goal attainment pathway performance as outlined in DC PCSB’s *Charter Goals Policy*.⁸

¹ To request a text-only and/or a black and white version of this report, please contact communications@dcpcsb.org.

² See the appendices to this report here: <https://bit.ly/46u9Ukd>.

³ See Academy of Hope PCS’s Charter Agreement and Amendments, Appendices A1 – A6.

⁴ D.C. Code § 38-1802.12(a)(3).

⁵ See the *PMF as Goals Policy* here: <https://bit.ly/2PTj7fL>.

⁶ Per DC PCSB’s *COVID-19 Impact Policy*, DC PCSB ceased collection, aggregation, and publication of SY 2019 – 20 academic data and did not produce the SY 2019 – 20 PMF. See the *COVID-19 Impact Policy* here: <https://bit.ly/3fy5zDo>.

⁷ In September 2021, DC PCSB announced its plan to revise its accountability system. Consequently, DC PCSB did not produce the PMF for SY 2021 – 22 or SY 2022 – 23.

⁸ See the *Charter Goals Policy* here: <https://bit.ly/4cpui8l>.

The *Charter Goals Policy* offers multiple pathways to demonstrate SY 2022 – 23 goal attainment, including performance on transitional goals or a nationally normed growth assessment.⁹ Per the policy, a school need only satisfy one pathway to meet its SY 2022 – 23 goals.

Academy of Hope PCS's goal attainment results are as follows:

Academy of Hope PCS Goal Attainment				
2018 – 19	2019 – 20	2020 – 21	2021 – 22	2022 – 23
PMF	NA			<i>Charter Goals Policy</i>
57.7%				Met a Pathway

Academy of Hope PCS met its charter goals by exceeding the PMF target of 45.0% in SY 2018 – 19 and exceeding the sector average in all four transitional goals measures in SY 2022 – 23.¹⁰

Academic Performance Snapshot

Academy of Hope PCS demonstrated strong performance in General Educational Development (GED) subject test achievement and persistence, both exceeding the sector average and improving from SY 2021 – 22 to SY 2022 – 23. The school also exceeded the sector average in high-level certification and secondary credential attainment. Particularly noteworthy are Academy of Hope PCS's persistence rate of 68.8% (16 percentage points higher than the average among adult public charter schools) and its "earned high-level certification" rate of 94.1% (29.8 percentage points higher than average). Separate and apart from the school's goal attainment, results from the school's SY 2022 – 23 Qualitative Site Review (QSR) suggest room for improvement in the classroom environment and instruction domains.¹¹ The school had lower percentages of core content classrooms rated proficient or distinguished in both domains compared to the average percentage of comparable public charter classrooms that underwent a QSR in SY 2021 – 22.¹²

Compliance and Finance

DC PCSB determined the school has not committed a violation of law or a material violation of its charter, has adhered to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), has not engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement, and is economically viable.

⁹ "Transitional goals" refers to standard measures that DC PCSB historically collected from schools. In school years 2021 – 22 and 2022 – 23, DC PCSB collected transitional goals data from all schools to support evaluation during the COVID-19 recovery period.

¹⁰ See data on page 13 of this report.

¹¹ See the QSR section on page 7 – 9 of this report for further details about the school's QSR performance.

¹² DC PCSB compares Academy of Hope PCS's QSR results to the adult education average from the prior school year (SY 2021 – 22) because DC PCSB did not observe comparable charter schools (i.e., adult-serving public charter schools) in SY 2022 – 23.

Board Vote

At its public meeting on September 16, 2024, the DC PCSB Board voted 7 – 0 to continue Academy of Hope PCS's charter.

The following report includes a school background section followed by analyses of the school's academic performance and goal attainment, charter and legal compliance, and fiscal management.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Academy of Hope PCS			
Year Opened	2014	Ward(s)	5 and 8
Number of Campuses	1	Year(s) of Previous Review	2018 – 19
Chartered Grade Span	Adult	Current Enrollment Ceiling	1,000
Audited Enrollment and Grade Span¹³			
840, Adult			
Mission Statement			
To provide a high quality adult basic education in a manner that changes lives and improves our community. ^{14, 15}			

School Overview

Academy of Hope PCS began operation in 2014 under authorization from DC PCSB, serving adult students (aged 18 and older). Beginning in 1985, the school operated as a community-based organization (CBO)—a not-for-profit, state-sponsored organization that provided adult education (AE) services. DC PCSB approved the school's application to become a charter school in 2013. Since becoming a public charter school, Academy of Hope PCS has expanded its operation. The local education agency (LEA)¹⁶ currently educates students at two facilities and offers in-person, virtual, and hybrid programming. The LEA introduced virtual and hybrid programming during the COVID-19 pandemic and decided to maintain these options to better serve students' evolving needs.

Academy of Hope PCS provides instruction in adult basic education.¹⁷ It also prepares students to earn a high school diploma through the GED exam or the National External Diploma Program (NEDP).¹⁸ The LEA also offers workforce training in healthcare and information technology through which students can earn industry-recognized certifications. In addition, students can earn college credit via dual enrollment with six postsecondary institutions. Academy of Hope PCS integrates digital literacy, career

¹³ This enrollment figure represents audited enrollment for SY 2023 – 24. This is the most up-to-date, validated enrollment figure at the time of the writing of this report.

¹⁴ This mission statement is captured in Academy of Hope PCS's charter agreement.

¹⁵ Academy of Hope PCS's website (<https://bit.ly/3Yo9oCv>) states: "Our mission is to provide high quality adult education and services that change lives and improve our communities." The school must seek DC PCSB's approval to formally adopt the revised mission statement in its charter agreement.

¹⁶ An "LEA" is any individual or group of public charter schools operating under a single charter.

¹⁷ Adult basic education "services are designed for adults who need to improve their reading, writing, and basic math skills in order to obtain a high school diploma or GED and/or transition to postsecondary education and/or the workforce," as quoted in DC's 2016 "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) 2016 – 2020 Unified State Plan," available here: <http://bit.ly/2oSeZg6>.

¹⁸ See Academy of Hope PCS's annual report for SY 2022 – 23, Appendix B.

counseling, and college preparation in all its programming. To support students in addressing potential barriers to learning, Academy of Hope PCS's Student Support Services team connects students with supports such as affordable childcare, housing, and transportation.

Enrollment and Demographic Data

Academy of Hope PCS enrolls students from every ward in the District. In SY 2022 – 23, 40.7% of Academy of Hope PCS students lived in Ward 8 and 20.6% lived in Ward 7. Most of the remaining students lived in Wards 4, 5, and 6.¹⁹ The table below shows the LEA's enrollment history.

School Year	2018 – 19	2019 – 20	2020 – 21	2021 – 22	2022 – 23
Audited Enrollment ²⁰	461	482	360	540	652
Enrollment Projections ²¹	452	500	515	500	525
Enrollment Ceiling ²²	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

The chart below shows the school's student demographics in SY 2022 – 23.²³

Student Group	Percentage Enrolled
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.5%
Asian	0.0%
Black or African American	95.4%
Hispanic/Latino	2.9%
Multiracial	0.0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.3%
White	0.9%

School Climate

The charts below report Academy of Hope PCS's performance across two school environment measures: out-of-school suspension (OSS) rates and in-seat attendance (ISA)

¹⁹ The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) provides LEA-level audited enrollment data by student home ward is provided to DC PCSB by. If the student's address information was not submitted or submitted incorrectly, that data will not be reflected in these totals. As a result, there may be discrepancies in the data reported in each LEA's official audited enrollment totals here: <https://bit.ly/49Nec7o>.

²⁰ OSSE conducts an annual enrollment audit to determine the number of students at each public school in the District.

²¹ Each year, charter LEAs, DC PCSB, and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) must project student enrollment for the following school year. The enrollment projections displayed are determined by DME and DC PCSB and may be different than the LEA's projections.

²² Each charter LEA has an enrollment ceiling in its charter agreement, designating the maximum number of students for which the school can receive per pupil funding during each school year.

²³ DC PCSB does not report on emerging multilingual learners (EML) or students with disabilities for Academy of Hope PCS. During the review period, Academy of Hope PCS did not have any EML students. In addition, the LEA does not accept funding for special education services, and thus is not required to provide special education services to its students.

rates for SY 2022 – 23. These data do not factor into DC PCSB’s continuance decision. For a full report on Academy of Hope PCS’s school environment measures across the review period, please see Appendix C.

OSS

An OSS is when a school temporarily removes a student from school grounds for disciplinary reasons. The OSS rate is the percentage of students who received an OSS.

Key for OSS Rates	
Green	Equal to or less than the AE sector rate
Red	More than the AE sector rate
Grey	n < 10; the number of students (n-size) is less than 10 ²⁴

SY 2022 – 23 OSS Rate	
AE Sector Rate	Academy of Hope PCS
0.1%	0.0%

ISA

The ISA rate is the percentage of students who were present each day.

Key for ISA Rates	
Green	Equal to or more than the AE sector rate
Red	Less than the AE sector rate
Grey	n < 10; the n-size is less than 10

SY 2022 – 23 ISA Rate	
AE Sector Rate	Academy of Hope PCS
65.4%	61.0%

Qualitative Site Review (QSR)

DC PCSB uses QSR visits to assess schools across two domains—classroom environment and instruction, as defined in the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.²⁵ From November 7 – 18, 2022, in anticipation of this review, DC PCSB staff conducted a QSR at Academy of Hope PCS.²⁶ In December 2022, due to unique circumstances experienced by the school community, the school appealed its QSR findings and asked DC PCSB to conduct additional observations. DC PCSB conducted additional observations from February 6 – March 10, 2023.

²⁴ DC PCSB does not report values when the n-size is less than 10.

²⁵ Danielson, Charlotte. *The Framework for Teaching: Evaluation Instrument*. Princeton, NJ: Danielson Group, 2013.

²⁶ See Academy of Hope PCS’s QSR Reports, Appendices D1 – D2.

DC PCSB observers visited a mix of in-person and virtual classes at Academy of Hope PCS.²⁷ Observers had challenges accessing virtual classrooms during the observation window.

In classrooms that DC PCSB observers visited, ISA was lower during the first QSR compared to the appeal QSR.²⁸ In one instance during the first QSR, an observer joined a virtual classroom with an Academy of Hope PCS instructor, but there no students were present. When asked, the instructor stated they did not expect any students to join the class. During the appeal QSR, ISA across classrooms observed was comparable to the SY 2022 – 23 ISA sector average for AE schools.²⁹

In the classroom environment domain, observers noted that student behavior was entirely appropriate across all classrooms, and any instances of misconduct were minor and promptly resolved. Additionally, teacher-student interactions were friendly and demonstrated general care and respect. Teachers called students by name, and in some classrooms, teachers kindly joked with students.

In the instruction domain, observers noted that teachers clearly stated what students would be learning, and learning tasks and activities were aligned with instructional objectives. Observers also noted that in most classrooms, students actively engaged in academic content, and most students put forth good effort to complete high-quality work. However, in some classrooms, teachers posed questions that limited student discussion. In classrooms where student discussion was limited, teachers posed questions that led students along a single path of inquiry.

After conducting unannounced observations,³⁰ the QSR team rated the classroom environment and instruction as “unsatisfactory,” “basic,” “proficient,” or “distinguished.” The following chart details the percentage of Academy of Hope PCS classrooms the QSR team rated as proficient or distinguished in each domain. It also reports the average percentage of comparable AE public charter school classrooms that received proficient and distinguished ratings in each domain during the prior school year, SY 2021 – 22.³¹

²⁷ During the first QSR (November 2022), 28.6% of observations were in-person and 71.4% were virtual. During the appeal QSR (February – March 2023), 35.3% of observations were in-person and 64.7% were virtual.

²⁸ ISA during the first QSR (November 2022) was 40.8% – 50.5% across classrooms observed. ISA during the appeal QSR (February – March 2023) was 63.8% – 69.8% across classrooms observed.

²⁹ The SY 2022 – 23 ISA sector average for AE schools was 65.4%.

³⁰ During SY 2022 – 23 QSR visits, the QSR team observed 75.0% of a campus’s core content classrooms. DC PCSB defines core content classrooms as English language arts (ELA), Math, Science, and Social Studies. The QSR team also observed electives when the coursework was essential to the school’s mission.

³¹ As previously noted, DC PCSB compares Academy of Hope PCS’s QSR results to the AE average from SY 2021 – 22 rather than an AE average from SY 2022 – 23 because DC PCSB did not observe any other adult-serving public charter schools in SY 2022 – 23.

Key for One-Year QSR Average	
Green	Equal to or more than the one-year QSR average
Red	Less than the one-year QSR average

School/Sector	Classroom Environment	Instruction
Percentage of Classrooms Rated Proficient or Distinguished		
Academy of Hope PCS	90.4%	68.8%
Academy of Hope PCS (Appeal QSR)	89.2%	72.1%
SY 2021 – 22 average score for AE public charter schools	98.5%	89.0%

Academy of Hope PCS scored below the average in the classroom environment and instruction domains compared to AE public charter schools that received a QSR in the prior school year, SY 2021 – 22.

Previous Charter Reviews

Five-Year Review

In SY 2018 – 19, DC PCSB conducted a five-year review of Academy of Hope PCS and found the school met its goals and student academic achievement expectations.³² Throughout the review period, the school improved its academic achievement dramatically, as measured by the PMF. DC PCSB also determined that the school did not violate the law or its charter and had not engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement. Based on these findings, in February 2019, DC PCSB voted to continue Academy of Hope PCS's charter.

Communication with the School

In February 2024, DC PCSB staff met with Academy of Hope PCS staff to discuss the school's 10-year review. DC PCSB staff provided the school with an overview of the review process and an explanation of how DC PCSB assesses goal attainment for SY 2022 – 23 per the *Charter Goals Policy*. In May 2024, DC PCSB staff met with Academy of Hope PCS staff to provide an update about the charter review timeline. In a follow-up email, DC PCSB staff and Academy of Hope PCS staff agreed upon the September 2024 public meeting date for the DC PCSB Board to vote on the school's charter review and continuance.

³² See Academy of Hope PCS's Five-Year Review Report, Appendix E.

CHARTER REVIEW STANDARD

The SRA stipulates that DC PCSB “shall review [a school's] charter at least once every [five] years.”³³ As part of this review, DC PCSB must determine whether:

- 1) The school committed a violation of applicable law, 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.³⁴

If DC PCSB determines that a school has committed a violation of applicable law or a material violation of the terms of its charter or has not met its goals and academic achievement expectations, it may, at its discretion, revoke the school's charter, or grant the school a continuance.³⁵

Additionally, there is a fiscal component to the charter review. DC PCSB is required by the SRA to revoke a school's charter if DC PCSB determines in its review that the school: 1) has engaged in a pattern of nonadherence to GAAP, 2) has engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement, and/or 3) is no longer economically viable.³⁶

³³ D.C. Code § 38-1802.12(a)(3).

³⁴ D.C. Code § 38-1802.13(a).

³⁵ DC PCSB may impose conditions of continuance if it deems such conditions appropriate.

³⁶ D.C. Code § 38-1802.13(b).

SECTION ONE: GOALS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

Per the SRA, DC PCSB must review whether a school has met its charter goals at least once every five years.

In November 2018,³⁷ Academy of Hope PCS amended its charter agreement to adopt an updated version of the PMF as its charter goals.³⁸ In doing so, the LEA agreed to the following review standard:

The [s]chool... will be deemed to have met its goals and academic achievement expectations if [it]... at its ten-year charter review, obtains an average PMF score for school years 2018 – 19, 2019 – 20, 2020 – 21, 2021 – 22, and 2022 – 23 equal to or exceeding 45%.

As previously noted, given the disruption in schooling and data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic and DC PCSB's PMF revision efforts, DC PCSB only published PMF scores for SY 2018 – 19. Further, per the *COVID-19 Impact Policy*, DC PCSB did not assess goal attainment for school years 2019 – 20, 2020 – 21, or 2021 – 22. For SY 2022 – 23, DC PCSB resumed goal attainment assessment using pathways established in its *Charter Goals Policy*.³⁹ Consequently, for this review period, DC PCSB evaluated Academy of Hope PCS's progress meeting its charter goals using 1) SY 2018 – 19 PMF outcomes and 2) SY 2022 – 23 goal attainment pathway performance.

Academy of Hope PCS's goal attainment results are as follows:

Academy of Hope PCS Goal Attainment				
2018 – 19	2019 – 20	2020 – 21	2021 – 22	2022 – 23
PMF	NA			<i>Charter Goals Policy</i>
57.7%				Met a Pathway
Determination: Academy of Hope PCS met its charter goals, earning a PMF score above 45.0% in SY 2018 – 19 and meeting a goal attainment pathway per the <i>Charter Goals Policy</i> in SY 2022 – 23.				

The remainder of Section One contains:

1. A description of the PMF and Academy of Hope PCS's SY 2018 – 19 PMF outcomes; and
2. A description of the goal attainment pathways in the *Charter Goals Policy* and data pertaining to the school's pathway performance in SY 2022 – 23.

³⁷ See Academy of Hope PCS's Goals Charter Amendment, Appendix A6.

³⁸ For details, see the 2019 – 20 PMF Policy & Technical Guide here: <https://bit.ly/2D2lvqc>.

³⁹ See the *Charter Goals Policy* here: <https://bit.ly/4cpui8l>.

The appendices to this report include a full summary of Academy of Hope PCS's academic performance during the review period.⁴⁰

PMF Overview and Academy of Hope PCS's SY 2018 – 19 PMF Outcomes

DC PCSB evaluated Academy of Hope PCS—and similar schools—under its Adult Education PMF (AE PMF). Using a 100-point scale, the AE PMF identified schools as high-performing, mid-performing, or low-performing based on their overall performance in four categories. In SY 2018 – 19, Academy of Hope PCS earned a score of 57.7% on the PMF (the equivalent of a “mid-performing” rating). In doing so, the school exceeded its PMF target of 45.0%.

Charter Goals Policy Pathway Overview and Academy of Hope PCS's SY 2022 – 23 Pathway Performance

The *Charter Goals Policy* established four pathways for schools to demonstrate goal attainment in SY 2022 – 23. Per the policy, DC PCSB evaluated a school's SY 2022 – 23 goal attainment using the pathways in the order in which they appear.⁴¹ A school need only meet one pathway to be deemed as having met its SY 2022 – 23 charter goals. The following table summarizes the pathways applicable to Academy of Hope PCS.

SY 2022 – 23 Goal Attainment Pathways	
Pathway	How to Meet the Pathway
A: Individually Negotiated Goals	NA ⁴²
B: Transitional Goals	For each applicable transitional goals data measure (excluding nationally normed growth assessments): Meet or exceed the state average (sector average when state is unavailable) <u>OR</u> demonstrate improvement compared to SY 2021 – 22 baseline data.
C: Growth	For school-selected, nationally normed growth assessment: Meet or exceed publisher growth criteria on both English language arts (ELA)/reading and math subject tests compared to the publisher national performance rates <u>OR</u> demonstrate improvement compared to SY 2021 – 22 baseline data.
D: Office of the State Superintendent of	NA ⁴³

⁴⁰ See Academy of Hope PCS's SY 2018 – 19 PMF in Appendix F. See a complete summary of Academy of Hope PCS's SY 2022 – 23 academic performance data in Appendix G.

⁴¹ DC PCSB first examined whether a campus met or exceeded the state or sector average, or demonstrated improvement from SY 2021 – 22 on each transitional goals measure (Pathway B). If not, DC PCSB examined whether the campus's nationally normed growth assessment met or exceeded publisher growth criteria or demonstrated improvement from SY 2021 – 22 (Pathway C). If not, DC PCSB compared the campus's score on OSSE's accountability system to the 40.0% target (Pathway D). For details, see pages 2 – 3 of the *Charter Goals Policy* here: <https://bit.ly/4cpui81>.

⁴² Pathway A only applies to LEAs with individually negotiated goals in their charter agreement.

⁴³ OSSE does not evaluate AE schools under its accountability system.

SY 2022 – 23 Goal Attainment Pathways	
Pathway	How to Meet the Pathway
Education's (OSSE's) Accountability System	

In SY 2022 – 23, Academy of Hope PCS met Pathway B by exceeding the sector average in all four transitional goals measures. See below for details about Academy of Hope PCS's performance on Pathway B.

Charter Goals Policy Pathway B – Transitional Goals

For schools serving AE students, transitional goals measures include, to the extent available:

- Earned High-Level Certification: The percentage of students who earned industry-recognized career and technical education certifications;
- Earned Secondary Credential: The percentage of eligible students who earned a GED or NEDP credential;
- GED Subject Test Achievement: The percentage of eligible students who pass individual GED subject tests as they work toward achieving the GED credential; and
- Persistence: The percentage of students who stay at an AE school long enough to complete a single cycle of instruction.

The chart below shows the school's overall performance on each applicable transitional goals measure, and whether the rate met the comparative target. The chart below indicates that Academy of Hope PCS exceeded the sector average in all four measures.

Meet or Exceed State/Sector Average (Pathway B)			
Measure	SY 2021 – 22 Comparative Average ⁴⁴	SY 2022 – 23 School Performance	
	Sector	n-size	Rate
Earned High-Level Certification	64.3	17	94.1
Earned Secondary Credential	69.4	50	80.0
GED Subject Test Achievement	78.8	170	85.9
Persistence	52.9	938	68.8

⁴⁴ Per the *Charter Goals Policy*, SY 2022 – 23 outcomes are compared to SY 2021 – 22 state and sector data.

SECTION TWO: COMPLIANCE WITH CHARTER AND APPLICABLE LAWS

Per the SRA, when reviewing a charter, DC PCSB must determine whether a school has "committed a 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."⁴⁵ The SRA contains a non-exhaustive list of applicable laws, which DC PCSB monitors in its annual compliance reviews. Since SY 2018 – 19, Academy of Hope PCS has been compliant with all applicable laws as captured in DC PCSB's compliance reviews.⁴⁶

DC PCSB also monitors schools' compliance with the procurement requirements in the SRA and supports OSSE, as the state education agency, in its monitoring of compliance with federal laws pertaining to special education students.

The remainder of this section examines the school's compliance with procurement requirements and special education laws over the review period.

Procurement Contract Compliance

D.C. Code § 38-1802.04(c)(1) requires DC charter schools to use a competitive bidding process for any procurement contract valued at \$25,000 or more. Within three days of awarding such a contract, schools must submit to DC PCSB all bids received, the contractor selected, and the rationale for which the contractor was selected. To ensure compliance with this law, DC PCSB requires schools to report key contract information specifying any qualifying procurement contract that the school has executed.⁴⁷

During fiscal year (FY) 2019, DC PCSB found Academy of Hope PCS properly reported 11 procurement contract packages, but it received two Early Warning Notices for failure to report complete procurement contract packages in a timely manner.

During FY 2020, Academy of Hope PCS did not report any procurement contract packages.

During FY 2021, the school reported 14 procurement contract packages. The school did not receive any Early Warning Notices for failure to report complete procurement contract packages in a timely manner.

⁴⁵ D.C. Code § 38-1802.12(a)(3).

⁴⁶ See Academy of Hope PCS's Compliance Review Reports, Appendices H1 – H5.

⁴⁷ In July 2018, DC PCSB began implementing a new *Procurement Contract Submission and Conflict of Interest Policy*, which includes more robust and comprehensive oversight processes around procurement contracts. Schools, in turn, were expected to adjust their internal processes over time to ensure higher levels of compliance with procurement contract reporting requirements.

During FY 2022, the school reported 31 procurement contract packages. The school did not receive any Early Warning Notices for failure to report complete contract packages in a timely manner.

During FY 2023, the school reported 20 procurement contract packages. The school did not receive any Early Warning Notices for failure to report complete contract packages in a timely manner.

Currently, DC PCSB has no major concerns about the LEA's compliance with procurement contract submission requirements. DC PCSB will continue to closely monitor the school's compliance to ensure Academy of Hope PCS reports all procurement contracts in adherence with the *Procurement Contract Submission and Conflict of Interest Policy*.

Special Education Compliance and Performance

AE public charter schools are required to comply with all laws regarding students with disabilities, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA),⁴⁸ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973,⁴⁹ and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.⁵⁰ Under the IDEA, an AE program may “opt in” or “opt out” of accepting IDEA funding. If a school accepts IDEA funding, it must provide special education services as required by IDEA to adult students (ages 18 through 21) with qualifying disabilities. If a school chooses not to accept these funds, it is not responsible for providing these services under IDEA and is not monitored for compliance.

Since its first year of operation, Academy of Hope PCS has opted out of receiving IDEA funds. Therefore, OSSE does not hold the school accountable to its special education monitoring and compliance requirements.

⁴⁸ 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 *et seq.* See 20 U.S.C. § 1413(a)(5).

⁴⁹ 29 U.S.C. § 794.

⁵⁰ 42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.*

SECTION THREE: FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY⁵¹

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

- has engaged in a pattern of nonadherence to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP);
- has engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement; and/or
- is no longer economically viable.⁵²

DC PCSB collectively and holistically assessed the school's financial performance and condition by reviewing:

- the school's audited financial statements for FY 2019 through FY 2023;
- the school's unaudited financial statements for FY 2024;
- the school's annual budget for FY 2024; and
- DC PCSB's Financial Analysis Report (FAR) of Academy of Hope PCS for FY 2019 through FY 2022.⁵³

Summary of Findings⁵⁴

The school has demonstrated adequate fiscal performance during the review period. Its financial audits confirm 1) the school's financial statements comply with GAAP, 2) the school has adequate internal accounting controls, and 3) the school is financially solvent and able to pay its outstanding obligations if the school's charter were to be revoked or not renewed. The school is economically viable and has not engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement.

Strengths and Deficiencies

- Most of the school's key performance indicators in the five-year period between FY 2019 and FY 2023 were above the floor, indicating strong financial performance, robust liquidity, and healthy sustainability. The FY 2021 stabilization funding provided the school with gap funding for the shortfall in enrollment due to the COVID-19 pandemic and helped the school to increase its liquidity.
- The FY 2022 below-target change in net assets margin is not a cause for concern, as it is mainly due to increased expenses related to the return to in-person learning and increased enrollment. In FY 2023, the school's net assets increased as the school right-sized its resources in the aftermath of the pandemic and experienced a significant enrollment surge.

⁵¹ Each percentage in Section Three of this report has been rounded to the nearest whole percentage.

⁵² See D.C. Code § 38-1802.13(b).

⁵³ See Academy of Hope PCS's FAR Reports, Appendices I1 – I4.

⁵⁴ See Financial Definitions in Appendix J for more information about financial terms and indicators used in this report.

Key for Finance Data	
Comparison to FAR Benchmarks	What This Means in the Following Tables
Within target range	Generally strong financial position
Outside of target range	Possibly imminent financial concerns; operations may not be adequately managed, sustainable, and/or economically viable; closer monitoring warranted

Key Measures and Comparisons

Enrollment and Operations

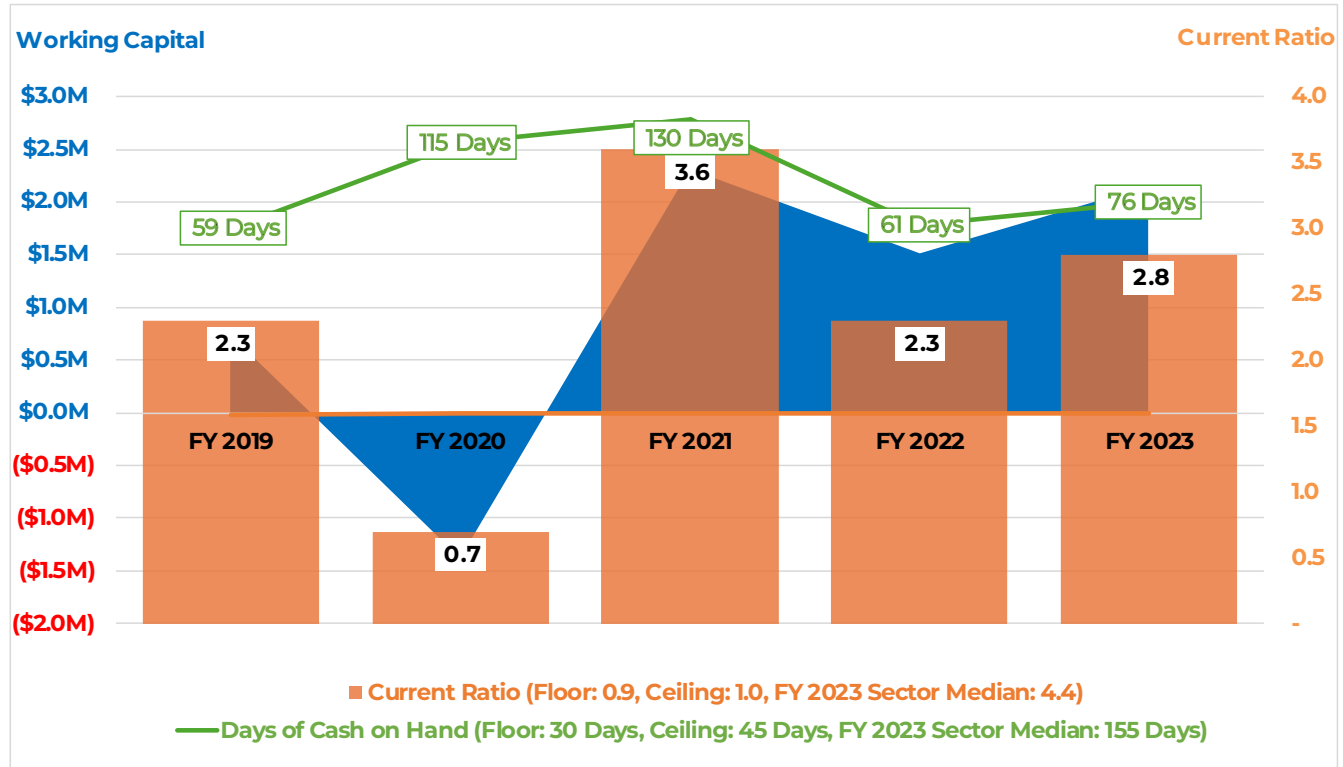
As reflected in the school's Enrollment, Operations, and Working Capital chart in the FY 2022 FAR,⁵⁵ the school's financial performance was healthy in the four-year period from FY 2019 through FY 2022, with cumulative \$3.3M positive changes in net assets from FY 2019 through FY 2021, and a \$0.7M negative change in net assets in FY 2022. In FY 2023, the school returned to a \$0.7M positive change in net assets. The school's enrollment during the five-year period increased every year, except for FY 2021 when enrollment decreased by 25%, mainly driven by the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on adult enrollment. Enrollment increased in FY 2022 with the return to in-person learning and reached 652 students in FY 2023.

The school was able to maintain its positive change in net assets in FY 2021, despite the enrollment decrease, mainly due to the \$2.1M additional Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF) FY 2021 stabilization funding offered to adult schools. Of the additional UPSFF funding, the school received \$1.6M and \$0.5M for general education and facility funding, respectively, which was calculated as the difference between the projected and actual enrollment multiplied by the respective UPSFF weight. In FY 2022, the school's negative change in net assets was not a cause for concern. It was primarily due to increased personnel salaries and benefits and direct student expenses to right-size its resources in response to the enrollment growth and return to in-person learning in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the -7% change in net assets margin in FY 2022 is not a cause for concern, as the school improved its financial sustainability in the five-year period. This is evidenced by its \$3.0M (130%) net assets increase from \$2.3M at fiscal year-end (FYE) 2019 to \$5.3M at FYE 2023 and primary reserve ratio increase from 0.3 at FYE 2019 to 0.5 at FYE 2023.

⁵⁵ See the school's Enrollment, Operations, and Working Capital chart on the first page of Academy of Hope PCS's FY 2022 FAR Report, Appendix 14.

Liquidity

The following chart provides a visual representation of some of the LEA's most significant liquidity indicators from FY 2019 to FY 2023, including working capital, current ratio, and days of cash on hand.



The school demonstrated healthy liquidity during the five-year period. Days of cash on hand at FYE 2019 through FYE 2023 ranged between 59 days and 130 days, averaging 88 days. This was below the 145-day average sector median for the same period, but consistently exceeded the 45-day target. The current ratio at FYE 2019 through FYE 2023 exceeded the 1.0 target, remaining between 2.3 and 3.6, except for the 0.7 current ratio at FYE 2020. This is not a cause for concern, as the decline was due to a \$4.1M loan ballooning in April 2021 that was refinanced in March 2021 to a longer-term loan. The new loan reflects a more favorable interest rate and matures in March 2029. Cash flow from operations margin averaged a healthy 11% over the five-year period, above the 0% target each year except for FY 2022. The negative -4% cash flow from operations margin in FY 2022 and the sharp decrease in days of cash on hand from 130 days at FYE 2021 to 61 days at FYE 2022 is not a cause for concern, as it was mainly due to increased expenses for the return to in-person learning in the aftermath of the pandemic and to leasehold improvements.

Facilities and Occupancy

The school's expenses for its facilities as a percentage of total DC facilities funding recognized from FY 2019 through FY 2023 ranged from 56% to 81%, below the FY 2023 126% sector median. The school spent, on average, 14% of its total operating expenses on occupancy expenses during the five-year period, close to the 16% average sector median for the same period.

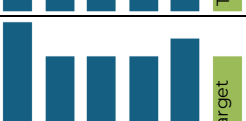
Occupancy Expenses as a Percentage of Facilities Revenue⁵⁶	
FY 2023	
Academy of Hope PCS	67%
Sector Median	126%

The school subleases its facility located at 421 Alabama Avenue SE, with expiration in January 2035. The school agreed to complete \$1.8M in renovations from FY 2019 through FY 2027 and receive yearly rent abatements from FY 2019 through FY 2027. At FYE 2023, the school completed \$1.4M in renovations, mostly financed through its cash flow from operating activities, and management expects to complete the project by FYE 2027. Additionally, the school owns its facility located at 2315 18th Place NE. Occupancy expenses increased by \$0.5M (50%) from FY 2021 to FY 2022 due to the increased rent, leasehold improvements amortization, and contracted building services with the return to in-person learning.

⁵⁶ In the table, the school's percentage cell is shaded red if above the sector median (less desirable) and shaded green if below 100% (more desirable).

Operations Performance and Sustainability and Selected Key Ratios

The following table reflects some elements and key financial indicators of the LEA's operations performance, debt burden, and sustainability, such as operating revenues and expenses, net assets, change in net assets margin, debt ratio, and primary reserve ratio.

Fiscal Year	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2023 Target	FY 2023 Sector Median	Multiyear Trend
Operating Revenues	\$7.4M	\$9.7M	\$8.9M	\$10.0M	\$12.2M	NA	NA	
Operating Expenses	\$7.0M	\$7.8M	\$7.9M	\$10.6M	\$11.5M	NA	NA	
Operating Revenues per Student	\$15,948	\$20,198	\$24,826	\$18,507	\$18,637	NA	\$31,151	
Operating Expenses per Student	\$15,239	\$16,163	\$21,974	\$19,716	\$17,590	NA	\$29,707	
Salaries and Benefits as a % of Operating Expenses	61%	65%	66%	57%	58%	NA	62%	
Change in Net Assets Margin*	4%	20%	11%	-7%	6%	>= 0%	4%	
Net Assets	\$2.3M	\$4.3M	\$5.3M	\$4.6M	\$5.3M	NA	NA	
Primary Reserve Ratio*	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.4	0.5	>= 0.2	0.6	
Debt Ratio**	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	<= 0.5	0.6	

* Higher is better

** Lower is better

The school maintained its financial sustainability through its consistently above-target primary reserve ratio from FYE 2019 through FYE 2023. In the same five-year period, the debt ratio rose above the 0.5 target as of FYE 2019 and FYE 2023 but remained below the 0.9 floor. This is not a cause for concern, as the increase above the 0.5 target from FYE 2022 to FYE 2023 is mainly due to the accounting changes related to the implementation of the new lease accounting standards. Additionally, the school reflects healthy liquidity indicators. The \$2.1M working capital at FYE 2023 is more than sufficient to service the school's yearly debt maturities in upcoming fiscal years. The school expects to be able to refinance its expected \$2.7M balloon payment in March 2029 if it maintains its current financial health.

Audit Findings

The school's annual independent auditor's reports for FY 2019 through FY 2023 reflected unmodified opinions and no audit findings on the school's financial reporting internal controls or Single Audits, except for a significant deficiency identified in the school's FY 2021 and FY 2022 Single Audit regarding the school's procurement suspension and debarment compliance. By FY 2023, the school had strengthened its procurement processes, thus remediating the prior years' repeated audit finding.