



TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Angelique Johnson-Dingle *Angelique Johnson-Dingle*
SUBJECT: Revision to Charters Authorized by the Board of Regents
DATE: May 4, 2023
AUTHORIZATION(S): *Bell...*

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Board of Regents approve the revision recommendation for the following charter school authorized by the Board of Regents?

Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts (Add a summer school program beginning in the 2023–2024 school year)

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute.

Proposed Handling

This issue will come before the P-12 Education Committee and for recommendation to the Full Board for action at the May 2023 meeting.

Procedural History

The New York State Education Department (the Department) made the revision recommendation being presented to the Board of Regents for approval as required by Article 56 of the Education Law.

Background Information

The Board of Regents and the Department are bound by law, regulation, and Regents-endorsed internal policies regarding the criteria that can be considered in decision-making pertaining to the authorization of new charter schools, charter school renewals, and charter school revisions. Detailed information on these laws, regulations, and Regents-endorsed internal policies can be found in the Appendix.

Related Regents Items

Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts

December 2013: [Initial Charter](#)

(<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1213p12a2%5B1%5D.pdf>)

June 2014: [Relocation Revision](#)

(<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/614p12a3.pdf>)

March 2019: [First Renewal](#)

(<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/419p12a1.pdf>)

March 2021: [Second Renewal](#)

(<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/321p12a6revised.pdf>)

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents take the following action:

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that: (1) the **Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts** meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations; (2) the charter school can demonstrate the ability to operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) granting the request to amend the charter is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in subdivision two of Section twenty-eight hundred fifty of Article 56 of the Education Law; and (4) granting the request to amend the charter will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school, and the Board of Regents, therefore, approves the charter revision for **Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts** and amends the provisional charter accordingly.

Timetable for Implementation

The Board of Regents action for the above-named charter school will become effective immediately.

Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts

In accordance with Education Law, Article 56, the **New York State Education Department (NYSED)** recommends that this charter school be permitted to revise its charter to add a summer school program beginning in the 2023–2024 school year.

Table 1: Charter School Summary

Name of Charter School	Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts
Board Chair	Ann Seigler
District of Location	Greece Central School District ¹
Initial Commencement of Instruction	Fall 2014
Current Term Authorized Grades /Approved Enrollment	K - Grade 6 / 506 students
Facilities	299 Kirk Road, Rochester New York 14612 - Private Space
Mission Statement	<i>Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts provides children with an enriched and rigorous education through the humanities and arts integration leading to success in college, careers, and life.</i>
Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time: Block scheduling, longer days, more days • A Disposition for Learning – Habits of Mind • A focus on Language and Literacy; Speech and Language Support for All Learners • A Focus on Numeracy and Eight Mathematical Practices • Arts instruction and integration • Character Education • Child and Family Support
Recommended Material Revisions	Add a summer school program beginning in the 2023-2024 school year.

¹ Two percent of all students residing in this district attend charter schools.

Table 2: Current Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2021 to 2022	Year 2 2022 to 2023	Year 3 2023 to 2024
Grade Configuration	K - Grade 6	K - Grade 6	K - Grade 6
Total Approved Enrollment	506	506	506

Rationale for Revision Recommendation

NYSED recommends that the Board of Regents approve the revision described above in the **Issue for Decision** section for the following reasons.

In December 2013, the Board of Regents approved and chartered the Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts (“RACSA” or “the school”) in the Rochester City School District. In June 2014, the Board of Regents approved a move to the Greece Central School District, effective for the 2014-2015 school year. The school’s educational program focuses on cross-curricular arts integration, structured literacy instruction, and a whole-brain teaching (WBT) approach. The curriculum is taught through thematic units and students participate in a daily “Academic Collaboration and Enrichment (ACE)” block of targeted instruction to meet their individual needs for remediation or acceleration. The school is fully implementing the mission, key design elements, education program, and organizational plan set forth in the charter.

The school’s trustees request that the Board of Regents approve a material revision to the school’s charter to allow the school to add a summer school program beginning in the 2023-2024 school year.

The requested revision will have no bearing on the number of students being served by this charter school, which will not change, nor will it impact the number of charters available for issuance in New York City or the State.

This revision would allow the school to operate a summer enrichment program as needed for students who require additional instruction and interventions. For example, in summer 2023, the school plans to invite 100 students in Grades 1-4 to participate based on internal assessment results and SWD or ELL status. The full-day program will last for three weeks in July and will be staffed with classroom teachers, art teachers, special education teachers, ELL teachers, an administrator, a social-emotional/behavior support specialist, kitchen staff, and custodial staff. The concept is supported by a representative group of school stakeholders. In its request, the school indicates that it was issued a notice of deficiency in the 2021-2022 school year for its academic performance in math and ELA. The summer school program is one strategy identified to overcome this designation.

Approving this revision request will result in a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school because it will eliminate the “summer slide” experienced by many students in Grades 1-4. Approving this revision request is likely to improve student learning and achievement because it provides the school with the opportunity to ensure continuity of learning for 100 of its students through more time on task and opportunities for remediation and enrichment for the neediest students as well as additional support for foundational skills improvement and consistent social-emotional support.

Performance Framework Ratings:

At the time of the May 2022 mid-term site visit, the Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts was rated on each of the 10 NYSED Charter School Performance Framework Benchmarks as follows. At that time, the school was meeting seven out of the 10 benchmarks set forth in the NYSED Charter School Performance Framework.

**2019 Charter School Performance Framework Benchmark Ratings
Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts**

2019 Performance Benchmark		Level
Educational Success	<p>Benchmark 1: Student Performance: The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic proficiency, trends toward proficiency, similar schools, college and career readiness, and high school graduation, if applicable. Proficiency at the elementary/middle school level shall be defined as achieving a performance level of 3 or higher on Grade 3-8 state assessments in ELA, math, and science. At the high school level, passing shall be defined as obtaining a Regents exam score of 65 or higher.</p> <p>Note: Due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the data used to formulate this rating has not been updated since the administration of the state 3-8 math and ELA Assessments in SY 2018-2019. Therefore, this rating does not reflect the efficacy of the school's academic program in SY 2019-2020 through the current academic year which is reflected in the Benchmark 2 and 3 ratings.</p>	Falls Far Below
	<p>Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning: School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations that lead to students' well-being, improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school implements research-based practices and has a rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to New York State Learning Standards for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-making in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistently high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement.</p>	Meets
	<p>Benchmark 3: Culture, Climate, and Student and Family Engagement: The school has systems in place to support students' social and emotional health and to provide a positive, safe, and respectful learning environment that prepares all students for college and careers. Families, community members, and school staff work together to share in the responsibility for student academic progress and social-emotional growth and well-being. Families and students are satisfied with the school's academics and the overall leadership and management of the school.</p>	Meets
Organizational Soundness	<p>Benchmark 4: Financial Condition: The school is in a sound and stable financial condition as evidenced by performance on key financial indicators.</p>	Meets
	<p>Benchmark 5: Financial Management: The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a long-range financial plan, appropriate internal controls and procedures, and in accordance with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.</p>	Meets
	<p>Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance: The board of trustees provides competent stewardship and oversight of the school while maintaining policies, establishing performance goals, and implementing systems to ensure academic success, organizational viability, board effectiveness, and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.</p>	Approaches
	<p>Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity: The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure, and clearly delineated roles for staff, management, and board members. The school has systems and protocols that allow for the successful implementation, evaluation, and improvement of its academic program and operations.</p>	Meets
Faithfulness to Charter & Law	<p>Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements: The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</p>	Meets
	<p>Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention: The school is meeting or making annual progress toward meeting the enrollment plan outlined in its charter and its enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced priced lunch program; or has demonstrated that it has made extensive good faith efforts to attract, recruit, and retain such students. High schools are meeting persistence rates commensurate with the NYSED target.</p>	Approaches
	<p>Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance: The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.</p>	Meets

Summary of Public Comment

The required public hearing was held by the Greece Central School District on February 7, 2023. Eight people attended, and eight spoke. Two were in favor of the revision and six were opposed.

For all charter school revisions, the school was required to conduct extensive community engagement prior to submitting the revision request. The school provided evidence of community support for this revision recommendation through the following.

- The school presented the concept to the school improvement team for feedback from its staff and parent members during the planning stage. It was also shared with the diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging Committee for broader stakeholder input from staff, parents, board members, and community representatives regarding equitable opportunities for all students.

APPENDIX
Laws, Regulations, and Regents-endorsed Internal Policies Applicable to
Board of Regents-Authorized Charter School Revisions

Statutory requirements pertaining to Board of Regents charter school decision-making are enumerated in Article 56 of the Education Law. This section of the law sets forth the purpose of charter schools to:

- (a) Improve student learning and achievement;
- (b) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at risk of academic failure;
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators, and other school personnel;
- (e) Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and
- (f) Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

Criteria regarding the evaluation of charter schools, including for revision decisions, are set forth in Section 2852(2) of the Education Law:

- (a) Does the charter school described in the application meet the requirements set out in applicable laws, rules, and regulations?;
- (b) Does the charter school demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner?;
- (c) Will approving the charter school action make it likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the law?; and
- (d) In a school district where the total enrollment of resident students attending charter schools in the base year is greater than five percent of the total public school enrollment of the school district in the base year (i) would grant the application have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school or (ii) did the school district in which the charter school will be located consent to such application?

Performance Framework

The Board of Regents Charter School Performance Framework, which is part of the Board of Regents Charter School Renewal Policy and the Oversight Plan included in the Charter Agreement for each school, outlines three key areas of charter school performance: (1) Educational Success; (2) Organizational Soundness; and (3) Faithfulness to Charter and Law. The Charter School Performance Framework sets forth ten performance benchmarks in these three areas. The Charter School Performance Framework is designed to focus on performance outcomes, preserve operational autonomy, and facilitate transparent feedback to schools. It aligns with the Department's ongoing accountability and effectiveness work under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and holds charter schools accountable to standards set forth in the Education Law while providing the Regents with discretion. Generally, charter schools are required to demonstrate performance outcomes that exceed those of traditional public schools.

The Department considers evidence related to all ten performance benchmark areas of the Charter School Performance Framework when making recommendations to the Regents concerning charter revisions. However, student academic performance is of paramount importance when evaluating each school (See [§ 8 NYCRR 119.7](https://www.nysed.gov/charter-schools/charter-school-regulations-1197) (<https://www.nysed.gov/charter-schools/charter-school-regulations-1197>)). The recommendations in this document were made after a full due-diligence process over the charter term as set forth in the [NYSED Charter School Monitoring Plan](http://www.nysed.gov/charter-schools/oversight-plan-board-regents-authorized-charter-schools) (<http://www.nysed.gov/charter-schools/oversight-plan-board-regents-authorized-charter-schools>), including review of the information presented by the schools in their application for each revision; specific fiscal reviews; desk audits; comprehensive analysis of achievement data; and consideration of public comment.