

# New York State Education Department

## *Renewal Site Visit Report* *2018-2019*

**New York City Montessori Charter School**

**Visit Date:**

# CONTENTS

- SCHOOL DESCRIPTION ..... 2
- METHODOLOGY ..... 4
- BENCHMARK ANALYSIS ..... 6
  - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ..... 8
  - BENCHMARK 1: STUDENT PERFORMANCE ..... 9
  - BENCHMARK 2: TEACHING AND LEARNING ..... 13
  - BENCHMARK 3: CULTURE, CLIMATE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ..... 16
  - BENCHMARK 4: FINANCIAL CONDITION ..... 18
  - BENCHMARK 5: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ..... 20
  - BENCHMARK 6: BOARD OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNANCE ..... 21
  - BENCHMARK 7: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY ..... 23
  - BENCHMARK 8: MISSION AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS ..... 25
  - BENCHMARK 9: ENROLLMENT, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION ..... 26
  - BENCHMARK 10: LEGAL COMPLIANCE ..... 28

# SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

## Charter School Summary<sup>1</sup>

<b>Name of Charter School</b>	New York City Montessori Charter School
<b>Board Chair</b>	Rory Cohen
<b>District of location</b>	NYC CSD 7
<b>Opening Date</b>	Fall 2012
<b>Charter Terms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x December 14, 2011 - June 30, 2016</li> <li>x July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2019</li> </ul>
<b>Current Term Authorized Grades/ Approved Enrollment</b>	K - Grade 5 / 294 students
<b>Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/ Proposed Approved Enrollment</b>	K - Grade 5 / 294 students
<b>Comprehensive Management Service Provider</b>	None
<b>Facilities</b>	423 East 138 <sup>th</sup> Street, Bronx– Private Space
<b>Mission Statement</b>	The New York City Montessori Charter School empower children to be critical thinkers creative problem solvers with strong social skills so that they can succeed in their world and continue to learn in their pursuit of higher education as they prepare for careers needed in the 21st Century
<b>Key Design Elements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Differentiated instruction</li> <li>x Individual work plans</li> <li>x Specially designed materials</li> <li>x Prepared environment</li> <li>x Independence and the freedom and ability to make choices</li> <li>x Time and practice</li> <li>x Peer modeling and teacher scaffolding</li> <li>x Content related instructional strategies</li> <li>x Montessori philosophy</li> </ul>
<b>Requested Revisions</b>	None

**Noteworthy:** New York City Montessori Charter School (NYCMCS) is the first charter Montessori school in New York State. One third of its students are classified as students with disabilities and students

## Renewal Outcomes

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

- x **Full-Term Renewal:** A school's charter may be renewed for the maximum term of five years. For a school to be eligible for a full-term renewal, during the current charter term the school must have compiled a strong and compelling record of meeting or exceeding Benchmark 1, and at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all other performance benchmarks in the Framework.
  
- x **Short-Term Renewal:** A school's charter may be renewed for a shorter term, typically of three years. As discussed above, the Regents will place an even greater emphasis on student performance for schools applying for their second or subsequent renewal, which is consistent with the greater time that a school has been in operation and the corresponding increase in the quantity and quality of student achievement data that the school has generated. In order for a school to be eligible for short-term renewal, a school must either:
  - (a) have compiled a mixed or limited record of meeting Benchmark 1, but at the time of the renewal analysis, have met substantially all of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework which will likely result in the school's being able to meet Benchmark 1 with the additional time that short-term renewal permits, **or**
  - (b) have compiled an overall record of meeting Benchmark 1, but falls far below meeting one or more of the other performance benchmarks in the Framework.
  
- x **Non-Renewal:** A school's charter will not be renewed if the school does n

## SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

### Current Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2016 to 2017	Year 2 2017-2018	Year 3 2018-2019
Grade Configuration	K-Grade 5	K-Grade 5	K-Grade 5
Total Approved Enrollment	294	294	294

### Proposed Renewal Term Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2019 to 2020	Year 2 2020 to 2021	Year 3 2021 to 2022
Grade Configuration	K-Grade 5	K-Grade 5	K-Grade 5
Total Approved Enrollment	294	294	294

## METHODOLOGY

A two-day renewal site visit was conducted at New York City Montessori Charter School on 10/24 - 25, 2018. The CSO team conducted interviews with the board of trustees, school leadership team, teachers, and parents. In cooperation with school leadership, the team also administered an anonymous online survey to teachers.

The team conducted over 20 classroom observations in kindergarten - Grade 5. The observations were approximately 10-15 minutes in length. Team members recorded observations on the Classroom Observation Worksheet and used the Classroom Observation Rubric to guide their reviews.

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

- x **Renewal Application**
- x **Academic data**
- x **Renewal Site Visit Workbook**
- x **Current organizational chart**
- x **A master school schedule**
- x **Map of school with room numbers and teacher names**
- x **Board materials (roster, minutes, and strategic plan, if applicable)**
- x **Board self-evaluation processes and documents**

- x Student/family handbook
- x Staff handbook and personnel policies
- x A list of major assessments
- x Teacher and administrator evaluation processes
- x Interventions offered at the school
- x School-conducted surveys of teachers, parents, and/or student



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

Performance Benchmark		Level
<b>Educational Success</b>	<p><b>Benchmark 1: Student Performance:</b> The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward proficiency, proficiency and high school graduation. At all grade levels and all assessments, scoring proficiently means achieving a performance level of 3 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).</p>	<b>Approaches</b>
	<p><b>Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning:</b> School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that lead to students' well-being, improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLS) for all students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decision-</p>	

## *Summary of Findings*

- x The NYCMCS is in its seventh year of operation and serves students in kindergarten to Grade 5. During its current charter term, the school is rated in the following manner: meeting six benchmarks, approaching three, and falling far below one. Additional details regarding those ratings are provided below.
  
- x During its previous charter renewal evaluation, NYCMCS met only two of the Performance Framework benchmarks and received Falls Far Below in benchmarks 1 and 2, for Educational Success. Since its renewal, the school has implemented a more rigorous, academically focused approach in an effort to improve student outcomes and meet the Performance Framework benchmarks. With the changes in academic programming, there has been staff turnover; remaining and new staff members demonstrated a commitment to the success of students and fulfilling the mission of the school. School leadership has stabilized under the current principal and the governing board has grown to add capacity. Additional details regarding those ratings are provided below.
  
- x **Areas of Strengths:** Site visit team members observed a strong and positive school culture and high-quality instructional practices based on the Montessori principle of a “prepared

### Benchmark 1: Student Performance

The school has met or exceeded achievement indicators for academic trends toward proficiency, proficiency and high school graduation. At all grade levels and all assessments, scoring proficiently means achieving a performance level of 3 or higher (high school Regents and Common Core Regents exam score of 65 or higher).

#### Finding: Approaches

- x NYCMCS currently serves pre-kindergarten through Grade 5.
- x NYCMCS is based on the Montessori model: differentiated instruction, specially designed learning materials, mixed-age groups, letting the student determine his/her pace to achieve mastery.
- x NYCMCS implements the Montessori practices with greatest fidelity in the preK program and kindergarten-Grade 2. For Grades 3-5, single grade classrooms were created and the curriculum has been aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) with the Montessori philosophy infusing instruction.
- x Teachers are subject-based departmentalized



Table 2: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes by Subgroup

Subject	School Year	<i>Students with Disabilities (Variance to the district of location)</i>	<i>ELL/MLL (Variance to the district of location)</i>	<i>Economically Disadvantaged (Variance to the district of location)</i>
	2014-2015	0% (-5)	0% (-11)	4% (-9)

ELA



## Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

School leaders have systems in place designed to cultivate shared accountability and high expectations and that lead to student well-being, improved academic outcomes, and educational success. The school has rigorous and coherent curriculum and assessments that are aligned to the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLS) students. Teachers engage in strategic practices and decisionmaking in order to address the gap between what students know and need to learn so that all students experience consistent high levels of engagement, thinking and achievement.

### Finding: Approaches

Element

Indicators

#### 1. Curriculum



The various instructional methods and group settings are used to support NYCMCS population of SWDs and ELLs/MLLs which has steadily increased to 32% and 23% respectively. The school leadership is working to effectively identify the needs of SWDs and ELLs/MLLs and has provided targeted staff training on delivering appropriate supports. The ELL/MLL instructor, who ha.083 (aff)16t..2 (a)-3.3 2CTJ0 Tc 0 Tw ( )0.8 (d{o)-9.6



## **2. Family Engagement and Communication**

On the 2018 NYCDOE School Quality Parent and Teacher Survey, 90% of staff and parent respondents felt

#### Benchmark 4: Financial Condition

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

#### Finding: Falls Far Below

#### Important Notes:

- x The key financial indicators used to evaluate this benchmark will be presented within a separate fiscal dashboard instrument that will provide context for the school's performance on each of the metrics, outline the specific targets for each metric, and also provide additional subsidiary detail on each calculation.
- x Unless otherwise indicated, financial data is derived from the school's annual independently audited financial statements.

<b>1. Near-Term Indicators:</b>	
1a.	Current Ratio
1b.	Unrestricted Days Cash
1c.	Enrollment Variance
1d.	Composite Score
<b>2. Sustainability Indicators:</b>	
2a.	Total Margin
2b.	Debt to Asset Ratio
2cf2	

## New York City Montessori Charter School

### Benchmark 5: Financial Management

The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a financial plan, appropriate internal controls and procedures, and in accordance with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.

**Finding: Meets**

### **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

The building and grounds committee is actively working with school leadership to stabilize the long-term viability of the school's facility.





**Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements**

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

**Finding:**

**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



