



New York State Education Department

Renewal Site Visit Report 2019-2020

Rosalyn Yalow Charter School

**Visit Date: October 10, 2019 – October 11, 2019
Date of Report: January 8, 2020**

[Charter School Office](#)
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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Charter School Summary¹

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of Charter School | Rosalyn Yalow Charter School |
| Board Chair | Miguel Balbuena |
| District of location | NYC CSD 9 |
| Opening Date | 09/01/2015 |
| Charter Terms | 09/01/2015 – 06/30/2020 |
| Current Term Authorized Grades/ Approved Enrollment | K-Grade 5/536 students |
| Proposed Renewal Term Authorized Grades/ Proposed Approved Enrollment | K-Grade 5/536 students |
| Comprehensive Management Service Provider | None |
| Facilities | 116 E. 169th Street, Bronx, New York 10452 |

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

The Performance Framework, which is part of the oversight plan included in the Charter Agreement for each school, outlines 10 Performance Framework benchmarks in three key areas of charter school performance:

- Educational Success
- Organizational Soundness
- Faithfulness to Charter and Law

Observational findings from the review of the renewal application, supporting data, and the site visit will

Summary of Findings

- RYCS is in year five of operation and serves students in K through Grade 5. During its current charter term, the school is rated in the following manner: exceeding one benchmark, meeting six benchmarks, approaching two benchmarks, and falling far below one rating. Tcw 3..003j/TT0 55

In mathematics, the school outperformed NYC CSD 9 in each subgroup in 2017

scope and sequences and unit plans every summer, for alignment with NYSLS, state test expectations, school-selected assessments, and school-developed supplemental instruction. As indicated in the school leadership and teacher focus groups, adjustments are made when needed, and scope/sequences and unit plans for each subject are shared with teachers for their input during August professional development. Eighty six percent of RYCS teachers surveyed by NYSED CSO strongly agree or agree that the school uses a documented curriculum aligned to NYSLS.

- **Indicator b:** RYCS's renewal application states that teachers review and comment on the scope and sequences and unit plans that are reviewed and revised by school instructional leaders in the summer. Teachers then use these materials to develop lesson plans, using a

noted. As noted earlier, teachers are provided with revised scope and sequences in August professional development and given opportunity to make further refinements with instructional leaders.

2. **Element: *Instruction:***

- **Indicator a:** According to comments made in the NYSED CSO teacher survey and the teacher focus group, RYCS staff has a general common understanding of high-quality instruction. In open-ended survey comments, teachers mentioned high expectations; building on prior knowledge; use of prompts to stimulate higher level thinking; a blend of whole class, small group, and independent work at attainable levels for all students; and use of formative assessment to plan instruction. Teachers and school leaders in focus group meetings referenced low student/teacher ratios which permit targeted adult support; frequent/flexible instructional grouping; scaffolding using materials (manipulatives, vocabulary cues); and early and increasingly intensive intervention by the RtI team as elements of high-quality instruction at RYCS. The site visit team observed 19 classrooms, including three chess and one fencing classes. In most classrooms, teacher teams were observed using questioning, classwork, observations, or individual conferences to check for understanding and give feedback to students. Students were grouped for differentiated instruction in many observed classrooms (depending on the point in the lesson when the observation occurred) and were observed working independently or in pairs at differentiated learning stations in several classrooms.
- **Indicator b:** The RYCS renewal application discusses how its instructional model promotes student engagement with all students through flexible small group instruction based on student skill levels or interest and experiential learning in science, arts, fencing, and chess. Specific strategies that promote student engagement observed by the site visit team were checks for understanding, open-ended questions, combinations of guided instruction and independent work, and teaching to student needs. The co-teaching model supports student engagement through low student/teacher ratios and flexible approaches to team teaching. As one teacher commented in the NYSED CSO teacher survey: "During lessons, students are divided into small groups with one teacher in order to maximize engagement and to target the specific academic needs of each student." In all 19 classrooms, site visit team members found that students were engaged in learning activities. In four classrooms, a few students were not engaged for a portion of the observation period, either because they didn't seem to be on-

determine learning trends, re-teaching needs, and instructional areas to be improved. The data is disaggregated for special student populations, including retained and accelerated students, chronically absent students, and students with skills in the bottom third of the cohort. As discussed in the school leadership and teacher focus groups, grade level teams use

with behavior plans). Devereux Students Strengths Assessment-mini (DESSA-mini) was piloted last spring and is being used in all classrooms in the current year.

operations, adding that information is often not received by all families. Examples include timely information about the 2019-2020 school calendar and schedule, classroom

3. Element: ***Social-Emotional Supports:***

- **Indicator a:** RYCS is refining its systems of support for the social-emotional needs of its students. The teacher social worker co-teaching model in K-2 classrooms, this year's addition of a school-based full-time licensed social worker, supportive deans of students at each site, and establishment of a board social-emotional committee to oversee school programs are systemic supports for student needs. In 2018-2019, the school engaged in a study/professional development collaboration with Mosaic Mental Health and Bank Street College of Education Center for Emotionally Responsive Practice to develop a common understanding of child development, intervention, and preventive practices to decrease stress and student outbursts. Sixteen professional development days, incorporating webinars, were included in this project. According to board minutes, the board minutes are available at [https://www.rycs.org/~/media/RYCS/Board%20Minutes/2018-2019/2018-2019-07-10-Board-Minutes.pdf](#).

Benchmark 5: Financial Management

The school operates in a fiscally sound manner with realistic budgets pursuant to a long-range financial plan, appropriate

Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance

The board of trustees provides competent stewardship and oversight of the

citations from the CSO about record-keeping, training, succession planning, compliance with authorizer expectations, and oversight of school leadership, the RYCS board has focused on improving its oversight capability. In the board focus group, the board chair mentioned that the board's immediate next steps are to complete the draft evaluations of its school leaders, to complete a board self-evaluation using BoardOnTrack, to review the information collected via the school's new social-emotional assessment tool, and to consider policy revisions.

executive director has "general supervision over the activities of the school not delegated to the principal." In addition to overseeing areas indicated on the organizational chart and leading school facility planning, he provides the "vision" for the chess and fencing programs and evaluates their fidelity to program goals. Based on comments in NYSED CSO teacher and parent surveys and focus

This is a large operations team, even considering dual school sites, and indicates possible redundancy. Financial/payroll services are contracted out, but all preprocessing is completed by RYCS's internal operations team. The executive director and director of operations jointly oversee financial processes. Outside consultants provide staff coaching, training, and performance review (renewal application, p. 28). When the site visit team requested clarification regarding the size of the operations team, the leadership response was vague ("attendance, buses, school food, registration for fencing/chess"). According to board minutes, the finance committee expressed concern in April 2019 that the school is "administratively top heavy" and "as a board, we need to ask ourselves do we need more leadership or more teachers." The fiscal implications of the large number of non-instructional personnel is a concern. The board projects a mid-renewal term budget shortfall.

2. Element: *Professional Climate*

- **Indicator a:** At the time of the site visit, the board and leadership team report 12 vacancies on the instructional side and one operations vacancy. The school reports that it is seeking to hire one social worker-teacher, four co-teachers, four additional RtI staff (special education, reading, ENL), and three "reserve" teachers. School leadership states that all social worker/teachers are currently working toward teacher certification. In addition, the principal is working with existing instructional staff to increase compliance with certification requirements. Chess and fencing instructors participate in professional development to support classroom management.
- **Indicator b:** The renewal application, teacher focus group, and NYSED CSO teacher survey describe collaboration opportunities through monthly data team meetings, weekly grade level team meetings, RtI meetings ("regularly"), staff meetings one or two times a month, daily informal planning among co-teachers, and email communication. Eighty-six percent of surveyed teachers strongly agree/agree with the statement: "Faculty members frequently collaborate on matters of curriculum and instruction."
- **Indicator c:** The principal leads instructional staff hiring, coaching, evaluation, and professional development. The renewal application states that teachers have 40 days of professional development throughout the school year (20 days prior to the start of school and an additional 20 during the school year). Professional development at RYCS appears to focus on collaborative planning meetings with the principal, content specialists, grade level team, data team, and RtI team members. The renewal application does not provide details about how professional development needs are assessed, how professional topics and providers are selected, and how professional development is evaluated. In the 2018-2019 NYCDOE School Quality Guide, 93% of teachers say that their professional development experiences have been sustained and coherent.
- **Indicator d:** Ninety-seven percent of NYSED-surveyed teachers strongly agree/agree that RYCS has systems in place to monitor and evaluate teacher instruction. Teachers are evaluated formally (twice a year) and informally (varying frequency), using the Danielson Framework. Evaluations are conducted by the principal and administrative team members. Teachers comment that feedback is always provided by evaluators, in writing and in face-to-face discussion. Several teachers commented in the NYSED CSO teacher survey that they feel the deans and the content specialists are not adequately qualified to evaluate their instructional performance.
- **Indicator e:** Eighty-one percent of teachers strongly agree/agree that RYCS has systems in place to solicit staff feedback. Examples include frequent anonymous surveys, a suggestion box, collaborative staff meetings, and conversations with the principal. Several teachers commented on the principal's availability and receptiveness to discuss teacher concerns and needs.

3. Element: *Contractual Relationships*: Not Applicable.

8. Family Involvement—partially implemented. The renewal application (p.19) states that “we begin by conducting home visits to each new student to build a relationship and welcome them into the school community . . .

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.

Finding: Meets

| <i>Element</i> | <i>Indicators</i> |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>Targets are met</i> | a. The school maintains sufficient enrollment demand for the school to meet or come close to meeting the enrollment plan outlined in the charter. |
| 2. <i>Targets are not met</i> | a. The school is making regular and significant annual progress toward meeting the targets. b. The school has implemented extensive recruitment strategies and program services to attract and retain students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible for free and reduced priced lunch. Strategies include, but are not limited to: outreach to parents and families in the surrounding communities, widely publicizing the lottery for such school, efforts to academically support these students, and enrollment policy revisions, such as employing a weighted lottery or enrollment preference, to increase the proportion of enrolled students from the three priority populations. c. The school has implemented a systematic process for evaluating recruitment and outreach strategies and program services for each of the three categories of students, and makes strategic improvements as needed. |

Summative Evidence for Benchmark 9:

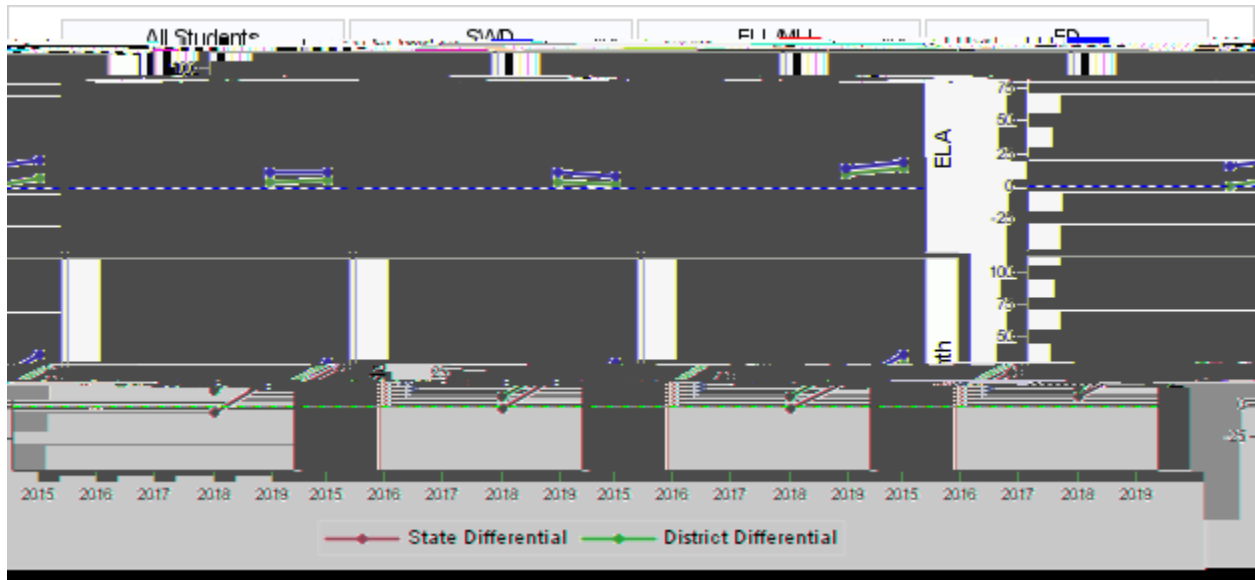
1. Element: *Targets are met*

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- **Indicator b:** The executive director leads the school's outreach and recruitment efforts and monitors the school's ongoing compliance with NYS charter school enrollment expectations. According to the renewal application, outreach strategies include presentations at local day care centers and prekindergarten programs serving students with IEPs. The school offers a K-1 self-contained special education class to accommodate the needs of incoming students with IEPs requiring such a setting.
- **Indicator c:** According to the renewal application and leadership and board focus groups, the executive director manages the outreach and recruitment efforts for the school, and the principal is responsible for academic and social-emotional programming for special populations. The executive director monitors the effectiveness of outreach and recruitment strategies to assure compliance with enrollment targets. The school leadership and the board review disaggregated academic outcomes and monitor the quality of the instructional program for special populations accordingly.

See Attachment 1 for data tables and additional information.

Figure 1: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency State and District Differentials Over Time



*See NOTES (1), (2), (3), and (6) below.

Table 2: Elementary/Middle School Assessment Proficiency Outcomes: Charter School, District, and NYS

| | Rosalyn Yalow CS | NYC CSD 9 | Differential to District | NYS | Differential to NYS | Rosalyn Yalow CS | NYC CSD 9 | Differential to District | NYS | Differential to NYS |
|------|------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----|---------------------|------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----|---------------------|
| 2017 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2018 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2019 | | | | | | | | | | |

*See NOTES (1), (2), (3), (6), and (7) below.

2.b.iii. Aggregate Grade Level Proficiency: See Table 2 below.

Table 3: Aggregate Grade Level Proficiency

| | | ELA | | | | | Math | | | | |
|---------|-----------|------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----|---------------------|------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----|---------------------|
| | | Rosalyn Yalow CS | NYC CSD 9 | Differential to District | NYS | Differential to NYS | Rosalyn Yalow CS | NYC CSD 9 | Differential to District | NYS | Differential to NYS |
| Grade 3 | 2017-2018 | 51% | 35% | +16 | 51% | 0 | 49% | 37% | +12 | 54% | -5 |
| | 2018-2019 | 56% | 39% | +17 | 52% | +4 | 71% | 36% | +35 | 55% | +16 |
| Grade 4 | 2018-2019 | 60% | 35% | +25 | 48% | +12 | 77% | 32% | +45 | 50% | +27 |

*See NOTES (1), (6), and (7) below.

Indicator 3: High School Outcomes

(Not applicable to this charter school.)

Benchmark 9:

Table 4: Student Demographics

| | SWD | | | ELL/MLL | | | ED | | |
|-----------|------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| | Rosalyn Yalow CS | NYC CSD 9 | Differential to District | Rosalyn Yalow CS | NYC CSD 9 | Differential to District | Rosalyn Yalow CS | NYC CSD 9 | Differential to District |
| 2015-2016 | 14% | 20% | -6 | 21% | 28% | -7 | 91% | 92% | -1 |
| 2016-2017 | 15% | 21% | -6 | 18% | 28% | -10 | 94% | 93% | +1 |
| 2017-2018 | 19% | 23% | -4 | 26% | 29% | -3 | 95% | 95% | 0 |
| 2018-2019 | 18% | 24% | -6 | 29% | 30% | -1 | 94% | 95% | -1 |

*See NOTES (2) and (6) below.

Table 5: Student Retention – Aggregate and Subgroups

| | All Students | | | SWD | | | ELL/MLL | | | ED | | |
|-----------|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| | Rosalyn Yalow Charter School | NYC CSD 9 | Differential to District | Rosalyn Yalow Charter School | NYC CSD 9 | Differential to District | Rosalyn Yalow Charter School | NYC CSD 9 | Differential to District | Rosalyn Yalow Charter School | NYC CSD 9 | Differential to District |
| 2016-2017 | 74% | 80% | -6 | 52% | 77% | -25 | 67% | 84% | -17 | 74% | 80% | -6 |
| 2017-2018 | 86% | 82% | +4 | 86% | 82% | +4 | 80% | 84% | -4 | 87% | 82% | +5 |
| 2018-2019 | 81% | 82% | -1 | 69% | 83% | -14 | 77% | 84% | -7 | 81% | 82% | -1 |

*See NOTES (2) and (6) below.

***NOTES:**

- (1) Data in the table above represents tested students who scored proficiently (level 3 or above) on the NYS ELA and/or math assessment.
- (2) For the students with disabilities and the ELL/MLL subgroups, both current and former members of the subgroups have been combined.
- (3) Pursuant to NYSED business rules, the data was suppressed for subgroups containing <5 students and the subgroup category may not be included for the metric.
- (4) Data in the table above represents students who passed the Annual Regents or equivalents (score of 65 or better).
- (5) The 4- and 5-year graduation rates reported are as of August. The 6-year graduation rates are as of June.
- (6) Data in the table above represents a comparison between those grades served in the charter school to only those same grades in the district.
- (7) A "." in any table indicates that the data was suppressed, no student sat for the exam, or the exam was not given.
- (8) Data in the table above represents tested students who either maintained a proficient score from one year to the next or students whose proficiency level increased from one year to the next (a proficient score is level 3 or 4).
- (9) Data in the table above represents students within their respective subgroups who have passed three out of the five Annual Regents and Regents Common Core Examinations (score of 65 or better) or equivalents.
- (10) Data in the table above represents the percentage of students from the original 9th grade cohort who persisted within the same school to a 4-year graduation (includes August graduates).

| | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grades Served | - | K-1 | K-2 | K-3 | K-4 |
| Maximum Chartered Grades Served | - | K-5 | K-5 | K-5 | K-5 |
| Chartered Enrollment | - | 202 | 249 | 374 | 456 |
| Maximum Chartered Enrollment | - | 536 | 536 | 536 | 536 |
| Actual Enrollment | - | 210 | 247 | 371 | 425 |

ASSETS

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Current Assets | | | | | |
| Cash and Cash Equivalents | - | 165,501 | 1,029,970 | 1,644,895 | 2,678,678 |
| Grants and Contracts Receivable | - | 687,961 | 218,932 | 252,307 | 126,331 |
| Prepaid Expenses | - | 51,215 | 145,601 | 281,043 | 348,014 |
| Other Current Assets | - | - | 23,070 | 7,406 | 836 |
| Total Current Assets | - | 904,677 | 1,417,573 | 2,185,651 | 3,153,859 |
| Non-Current Assets | | | | | |
| Property, Building and Equipment, net | - | 254,279 | 306,460 | 320,178 | 310,249 |
| Restricted Cash | - | - | 50,000 | 75,000 | 75,017 |
| Security Deposits | - | 23,070 | - | 405,690 | 391,570 |
| Other Non-Current Assets | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total Non - Current Assets | - | 277,349 | 356,460 | 800,868 | 776,836 |
| Total Assets | - | 1,182,026 | 1,774,033 | 2,986,519 | 3,930,695 |

LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| Current Liabilities | | | | | |
| Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses | - | 52,003 | 84,974 | 132,143 | 177,917 |
| Accrued Payroll and Payroll Taxes | - | 50,453 | 173,968 | 239,755 | 358,167 |
| Due to Related Parties | - | - | - | - | - |
| Refundable Advances | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other Current Liabilities | - | 12,142 | 14,027 | 12,163 | 21,339 |
