Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Proposal to Establish
Truxton Academy Charter School

October 12, 2018

Charter Schools Institute
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Executive Summary


The Truxton Academy Charter School, Inc. education corporation intends to operate one school to be located in a private facility in Homer Central School District (the “district”). The proposed school will open in August 2019 with 68 students in Kindergarten — 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade and ultimately serve 141 students in Kindergarten – 6\textsuperscript{th} grade during its first charter term. Truxton Academy will admit new students and fill all seats that become available through attrition in all grades throughout the school year.

The Institute finds that the proposal for Truxton Academy rigorously demonstrates the criteria detailed in the Institute’s 2018 RFP, which are consistent with the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the “Act”).

Based on the proposal, as amended, and the foregoing:

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the proposal to establish the **Truxton Academy Charter School**.
Findings

Based on the comprehensive review of the proposal and interviews of the applicant and the proposed education corporation board of trustees, the Institute makes the following findings.

1. The charter school described in the proposal meets the requirements of Article 56 of the New York Education Law and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations as reflected in (among other things):

   - the inclusion of appropriate policies and procedures for the provision of services and programs for students with disabilities and English language learners ("ELLs");
   - the required policies for addressing the issues related to student discipline, personnel matters, and health services;
   - an admissions policy that complies with the Act and federal law;
   - the inclusion of the proposed by-laws for the operation of the education corporation’s board of trustees; and,
   - the inclusion of an analysis of the projected fiscal and programmatic impact of the school on surrounding public and private schools.

2. The applicant has demonstrated the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner as reflected in (among other things):

   - the provision of an educational program that meets or exceeds the state performance standards;
   - the articulation of a culture of self-evaluation and accountability at both the administrative and board level;
   - the student achievement goals articulated by the applicant;
   - an appropriate roster of educational personnel;
   - a sound mission statement;
   - a comprehensive assessment plan;
   - the provision of sound start-up, first-year, and five-year budget plans;
   - a plan to acquire comprehensive general liability insurance to include any vehicles, employees, and property;
   - evidence of adequate community support for, and interest in, the charter school sufficient to allow the school to reach its anticipated enrollment;
   - the inclusion of descriptions of programmatic and independent fiscal audits, with fiscal audits occurring at least annually;
   - the inclusion of a school calendar and school day schedule that provide at least as much instruction time during the school year as required of other public schools; and,
   - the inclusion of methods and strategies for serving students with disabilities in compliance with federal laws and regulations.

3. Granting the proposal is likely to: a) improve student learning and achievement; and, b) materially further the purposes of the Act. This finding is supported by (among other things):

   - a strong commitment to serving its rural population by providing a rigorous, relevant academic program, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
(“STEM”) with an agricultural and environmental focus;
• extended learning opportunities with 450 minutes of English language arts (“ELA”), 300
  minutes of mathematics, 225 minutes of science, 120 minutes of applied
  mathematics/STEM lessons, and 225 of history/geography each week;
• an approach to school culture and discipline that intentionally builds students’ social and
  emotional skills and involves their families and communities;
• the inclusion of a robust professional development program for instructional staff prior
  the start of each school year and throughout the year; and,
• a deep and demonstrated commitment by local community partners, who provide
  instructional guidance and fora for project-based learning.

4. The proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as
   prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, of students with disabilities, ELLs, and students who are
   eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch (“FRPL”) program as
   required by Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(i).

5. The applicant has conducted public outreach for the school, in conformity with a thorough
   and meaningful public review process prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, to solicit community
   input regarding the proposed charter school and to address comments received from the
   impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students in
   conformity with Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(ii).

6. The Institute has determined that the proposal rigorously demonstrates the criteria and best
   satisfies the objectives contained within the RFP, and, therefore, is a “qualified application”
   within the meaning of Education Law § 2852(9-a)(d) that should be submitted to the New
   York State Board of Regents (the “Board of Regents”) for approval.

   The Institute developed the RFP “in a manner that facilitate[d] a thoughtful review of charter school
   applications, consider[ed] the demand for charter schools by the community, and s[ought] to locate
   charter schools in a region or regions where there may be a lack of alternatives and access to
   charter schools would provide new alternatives within the local public education system that would
   offer the greatest educational benefit to students,” in accordance with Education Law § 2852(9-
   a)(b). The Institute also posted the draft RFP for public comment and responded to same.

   The Institute conducted a rigorous evaluation of the proposal under consideration including
   academic and fiscal soundness, and legal reviews. In addition, the Institute engaged independent
   consultants to evaluate the academic, fiscal, and organizational soundness of the school based on
   the criteria set forth in the RFP. Pursuant to its protocols, the Institute, as well as Trustee Joseph
   Bellock, Chairman of the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee, conducted interviews with
   the applicant, the proposed board of trustees, and key Truxton Academy leadership.
**Background and Description**

Truxton Academy aims to provide an educational choice of excellence, relevance, and innovative learning for elementary students from rural and migrant families in Truxton, NY and adjacent communities. Rural poverty, physical isolation, and the lack of educational variety limit families’ ability to choose an alternative to the local public schools, where in 2016-17, approximately 30% of students achieved proficiency on New York state assessments in ELA and mathematics (please see Appendix A for additional information on performance in the district).

As detailed below, the founding team intends to respond to these challenges by, among other means, implementing an agriculturally and environmentally focused STEM program. The school will base its academic program on the *Core Knowledge Curriculum Series*. Notably, Truxton Academy plans to leverage its rural location to offer authentic project-based learning experiences in the school’s rural learning lab and surrounding wilderness.

**Mission, Philosophy and Key Design Elements**

The Truxton Academy mission is as follows:

> Truxton Academy Charter School will cultivate an enthusiasm for learning through a project-based curriculum that celebrates our rural life, environmental stewardship, and agricultural heritage. Integrating real world, student-centered learning, we will plant a strong foundation for future academic success.

All programming at Truxton Academy is founded on the following key design elements:

- **Project-based learning.** Truxton Academy will implement a hands-on approach to provide students with opportunities for research, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and self-management skills. Committed partnerships with local agri-businesses will provide locally relevant, authentic fora for classroom projects. Project-based instruction will also take advantage of the school’s rural life lab, an Americans with Disabilities Act-accessible barn/classroom facility and garden area where students will learn and practice animal husbandry and agrarian science.

- **STEM with an agricultural and environmental focus.** Via STEM, Truxton Academy will emphasize creative thinking and problem-solving in engaging, collaborative team settings. STEM units will utilize the forests and habitats surrounding the school to generate interest, motivation and enthusiasm. Classrooms will also partner with local agri-businesses to provide place-based agricultural and environmental learning activities.

- **Elementary Spanish curriculum.** Truxton Academy recognizes the opportunity to provide and prioritize the exposure of a foreign language beginning in Kindergarten, which mirrors early bilingual language development in other countries around the world. The founding team selected Spanish as it is the most common second language used in the surrounding rural area, and it is the first language of some members of the community.
• **School family culture.** Truxton Academy will build a safe and respectful culture for students, staff, and families to establish a strong foundation for future academic success. The Conscious Discipline approach will support a positive social-emotional climate and provide opportunities for parent education. The founding group’s intentional and ongoing community engagement efforts will be the foundation for including parents in the school community.

**Calendar and Schedule**

Truxton Academy will offer an extended school day and year with 192 days of instruction, over nine days more than traditional district schools. The first day of instruction for the 2019-20 school year will be on or around August 26, 2019 and the last day will be on or around June 24, 2020. Subsequent school years will follow a similar calendar. The standard school day will begin each morning at 8:15 A.M. and end at 3:15 P.M. with an extended day remedial support and enrichment from 3:15-4:15 P.M. Truxton Academy will provide students with over 1,100 hours of instruction each year, an increase of more than 20% over the state minimum of 900 hours mandated by Education Law § 2851(2)(n) and 8 NYCRR § 175.5 for 1st – 6th grade and provided at the majority of schools within the district.

**Academic Program**

Truxton Academy will use the *Core Knowledge Curriculum Series* ("Core Knowledge") as a framework for the school’s instructional program in core academic areas: ELA, mathematics, science, history/geography, and the arts. *Core Knowledge* is a widely implemented commercial curriculum comprising a systematic syllabus of topics and subtopics in language arts, world history, American history, geography, visual arts, music, mathematics, and science that balances the development of academic skills with a prescription for subject area content knowledge.

The goal at Truxton Academy is for students to learn by doing. To that end, instructional methods at Truxton will encompass hands-on and project-based learning tasks intended to develop students’ investigation, inquiry, and innovation skills. Project-based learning is an educational approach in which students work on a single project for an extended period of time ranging from several days to an entire semester. Projects require students to solve a real world problem by utilizing skills that span core subject areas. Hands-on and project-based learning activities at Truxton Academy will encompass topics related to STEM, agriculture, and business. Enhancing students’ experiential learning opportunities is the establishment of a rural life lab, barn/classroom facility and garden area where students will learn and practice animal husbandry and agrarian science.

The school intends to implement its academic program as follows:

• **ELA (Reading and Writing)**

  Truxton Academy will offer students over 450 minutes of ELA instruction each week, 80 minutes of which dedicated to a writing lab. Teachers will provide instruction in reading and writing in tandem as students’ skills develop. The school will use the *Core Knowledge Language Arts* ("CKLA") program to ensure a strong, sequential curricular design that encompasses literacy strands aligned to state standards. The Kindergarten – 3rd grade CKLA curriculum focuses on basic reading skills such as decoding and fluency while the 4th – 6th grade curriculum
incorporates more complex texts. In addition to phonics and spelling instruction, instructional staff will thoughtfully weave literature about agriculture and the environment, the relevance of science and mathematics to these areas, and Spanish culture into the reading and writing program.

- **STEM**
  Truxton Academy will offer students 300 minutes of mathematics instruction each week, 225 minutes of science, and 120 minutes of applied mathematics/STEM lessons. The Core Knowledge Curriculum Series will define the mathematics topics while the school relies on EngageNY mathematics modules for primary instruction during the initial years of operation. Teachers will integrate and reinforce mathematics skills via project-based learning in which opportunities for discovery and problem solving are an integral part of project design. Core Knowledge/Science and the Next Generation Science Standards will serve as the framework for the science program. Science instruction will utilize several STEM and rural-focused resources including Project Lead the Way; Project WILD; Food, Land and People; and, National Agriculture in the Classroom.

- **History & Geography**
  Truxton Academy will offer students 225 minutes of instruction in history and geography each week. The Core Knowledge History and Geography framework will ensure vertical alignment across grades and allow teachers to embed the study of Central New York and supplement with local resources. Moreover, the school intends to integrate history and geography into ELA and literacy activities in order to reinforce students’ skills in these areas and emphasis the interdisciplinary nature of the content areas.

- **Technology & Library**
  As Truxton Academy’s proposed rural student population has limited internet access in their homes, the school will prepare all students for the responsible use of the Internet as well as the skills needed to explore, confirm, and transfer information. The school intends to accomplish this by providing opportunities for students to access the internet and integrating the use of technology into classroom lessons on a regular basis.

- **Spanish**
  Truxton Academy, recognizing the critical age spans for language learning, will implement a Spanish language curriculum in order to leverage elementary students’ natural predisposition for language acquisition. Hopkins Public Schools’ Foreign Language in the Elementary School Spanish scope and sequence focused on language proficiency, content knowledge, and cultural knowledge will guide the school’s instruction.

- **Music, Art, Drama, and Dance**
  Truxton Academy will offer students 180 minutes of arts in the humanities, guided by Core Knowledge Art and Core Knowledge Music. Through these programs, students will have the opportunity to both engage in the arts by painting, drawing, singing, and dancing and gain exposure to celebrated examples of fine art such as fine paintings and great music.

- **Physical Education**
  Truxton Academy will offer students 225 minutes of fitness and health instruction each week based on the Project Adventure framework, a nonprofit organization that promotes experiential
learning. In addition to traditional physical education activities, students will have opportunities for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, gardening, maintaining domestic animal areas, simple construction, orienteering, and other physical activities appropriate for age and ability.

**School Culture and Discipline**

Truxton Academy’s founders recognize that the success of the school’s academic program will depend on creating and maintaining a safe and strong school culture for students, staff, and families. Truxton Academy’s approach to discipline will be based on Conscious Discipline, a positive, skill-based classroom management program that helps educators and students develop the capacity to resolve conflicts, enhance brain development, support self-regulation, and build respectful relationships with themselves, peers, parents, and each other.

Truxton Academy will launch the school year with a matrix of expectations for student behavior, supported by Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (“PBIS”). The school will strengthen the parent-student-teacher triad via multiple methods including events (e.g., monthly family nights, field trips), communication practices (e.g., handbook, website), and volunteer opportunities (e.g., rural life lab).

**Organizational Capacity**

Truxton Academy will establish a lean administrative structure, sufficient for its small student population and designed to ensure viability in the small rural school. The head of school will provide external and internal leadership and serve as the school’s operational, financial, and school culture leader. The student achievement coordinator, who will report to the head of school, will serve as the primary instructional leader. In the opening year, the student achievement coordinator will support and oversee the instructional staff, including a special education teacher, 0.5 full time equivalent (“FTE”) ELL teacher, and 0.5 FTE educational technology/media specialist. Year 1’s instructional staff of 7.5 FTE will grow to 13 FTE in Year 5. The school’s community of supporters (including local professors, board members, and community partners), who have already demonstrated their commitment to the school, will strengthen its instructional capacity.

**Governance**

The proposed by-laws of Truxton Academy indicate that the education corporation board will consist of no fewer than six and no more than nine voting members. The proposed initial members of the board of trustees are set forth below.

1. **Lucinda Denkenberger (Proposed Chair)**
   Ms. Denkenberger is a retired school teacher with 26 years of experience in numerous elementary school models including a no-walls open school, and the creation of a K-6 multi-age program. She earned her bachelor of arts from SUNY Oswego and her permanent teaching certificate from SUNY Cortland. Ms. Dekenerger has resided in rural Truxton for the past 40 years.
2. **K. Jeanetta Laudermilk (Proposed Vice-Chair)**
Ms. Laudermilk manages a local beef farm that involves youth in agriculture. Her community leadership includes the Cooperative Extension 4-H board membership, Boy Scout assistant leader, 4-H club leader, CRI alternate representative, and president of Truxton Alumni and Community Supporters, Inc. Jeanetta is a fourth generation Truxton resident.

3. **Krysta Austen (Proposed Treasurer)**
Ms. Austen is the owner of Lil' Sprouts Daycare. She earned her bachelor of arts degree in mathematics from SUNY Cortland while working with local homeschooled students in mathematics, science, and music to keep them current with New York State mandates. In addition to active involvement in local church and community events, she participated in the Student and Community Association at Hartnett Elementary in the Homer Central School District for five years.

4. **Beth Shiner Klein, Ed. D. (Proposed Trustee)**
Dr. Klein is a professor in the childhood/early childhood education department at SUNY Cortland. In addition to teaching courses in elementary science education and environmental studies, she co-directs the Teacher Professional Development Network of Central New York and has provided over 100 presentations and workshops in science, technology, and environmental education. Prior to teaching at the college level, Dr. Klein was an elementary and middle school teacher, park ranger, and environmental educator. Within the community, she is co-founder and board president of the community group Sustainable Cortland. Dr. Klein received a doctor of education in science education from the University of Virginia, a master of science in education in reading from East Stroudsburg University and a bachelor of science in environmental and elementary education from Slippery Rock University.

5. **Korinne L’Hommedieu (Proposed Trustee)**
Ms. L’Hommedieu has over 30 years of accounting experience and is the division accounting manager for a materials testing laboratory. A third generation Truxton resident, she served as a town councilperson on the Truxton Town Board for three years, is a founding member of the Truxton Community Spirit, and served as a financial trustee for St. Patrick Catholic Church of Truxton. Ms. L’Hommedieu and her husband own and operate the Hiawatha Inn in Truxton. She holds a bachelor of science degree in accounting from LeMoyne College.

6. **Elaine Sturges (Proposed Trustee)**
Ms. Sturges is a naturalist and Project WILD facilitator who has provided leadership, collaboration, and training to natural resource agencies, university faculty, and classroom teachers in New York, Colorado, and Wyoming. In addition to teaching in public, private, and charter schools, she was a faculty member at the University of Wyoming in curriculum and instruction at the Science-Math Teaching Center. Ms. Sturges holds a master of science degree in child development and early childhood education from Cornell University, a bachelor of arts degree in elementary education from the University of Wyoming, and a bachelor of science degree in environmental interpretation from Colorado State University.

7. **John Tillotson, Ph.D. (Proposed Trustee)**
Dr. Tillotson is an associate professor of science education and chair of the department of science teaching in the College of Arts and Sciences at Syracuse University. He currently serves as the director of the college science teaching doctoral program. His research interests include
STEM teaching and learning in high-needs rural schools, and he has been awarded more than $5 million in grant funding to support his research from the National Science Foundation, the New York State Education Department, and various private foundations. Dr. Tillotson’s prior leadership roles include president of the Marathon, NY Central School District board of education, president of the Association for Science Teacher Education, executive director of the National Association for Research in Science Teaching. He is currently the research division director for the National Science Teachers Association. Dr. Tillotson holds a Ph.D. in science education and a master of science in chemistry from the University of Iowa, and a bachelor of science in chemistry and secondary education from SUNY Cortland.

8. **Stuart Young (Proposed Trustee)**
Mr. Young is the chief executive officer of East River Dairy, LLC, a Truxton dairy farm. He has served for many years as president of Cortland Bulk Milk Cooperative, a milk marketing cooperative serving 70 farmer members in nine counties of Central New York. He has also been on the board of First National Bank of Cortland, Alliance Bank, the Homer Town Planning Board, and the Homer Board of Assessment Review. For several years, he served as a 4-H Club leader and on the board of the local agricultural youth fair. Mr. Young is a graduate of Truxton Central School and Cornell University.

9. **Thomas Brown (Proposed Trustee)**
Mr. Brown is a physician’s assistant, with a master of science in physician assistant studies and a bachelor of arts in biology from Syracuse University. His extensive community service includes health, youth, and civic engagement. He was elected to the Truxton Town Council for 2015-16. Since 2015 he has been a member of the Tompkins County Health Consortium executive board, and since 2016 he has served on the Truxton Town Recreation and Youth Committee.

**Facilities**

The proposed education corporation has indicated that it has already secured an existing school building for the proposed school. Members of the local community formed the Truxton Alumni and Community Supporters, Inc. and donated the funds to purchase a recently closed elementary school in which the proposed education corporation will lease space. This facility, which is located within the Homer Central School District, is centrally located to the five surrounding districts: Cortland City School District; Tully Central School District; Fabius-Pompey Central School District; DeRuyter Central School District; and, McGraw Central School District. The Institute reserves the right to review all proposed facilities in accordance with the charter agreement.

**Fiscal Impact**

The largest fiscal impact of Truxton Academy will be on the district of location, the Homer Central School District (the “district”), is summarized below with the projected number of students.
The chart above reflects the applicant’s expectation regarding the number of students of the total Year 1 (68) and Year 5 (141) enrollment who will reside in the district. The Institute finds that the fiscal impact of the proposed school on the district, public charter, public district and nonpublic schools in the same geographic area will be minimal. In the event that the school opens with a slightly larger enrollment in the district, the Institute has determined that the fiscal impact of the proposed school on the district, public charter, public district and nonpublic schools in the same geographic area will also be minimal. As a conservative measure, the Institute calculated the other district revenue affecting the local district to be a higher limit, resulting in the fiscal impact reflected above to be a maximum projection.

The applicant expects the remaining enrollment to come chiefly from the Cortland City School district, 25 students in Year 1 and in 55 Year 5, with very small numbers of students coming from the remaining districts listed under “Facilities,” above. The Institute assessed the fiscal impact on the Cortland City School District and finds the impact will be minimal.

The Institute reviewed the school’s proposed start-up and fiscal plans and supporting evidence for each year of the proposed charter term. The Institute finds the budgets and fiscal plans are sound and that sufficient start-up funds will be available to the new charter school.

**Notification and Public Comments**

The Institute notified the district as well as public and private schools in the same geographic area of the proposed school about receipt of the proposal, and the proposal was posted on the Institute’s website for public review. The district held a public hearing pertaining to the proposal on September 10, 2018 and provided a summary of public comments, as well as its own comments to the Institute, which have been compiled in Appendix C along with a summary of independent public comments submitted directly to the Institute. The Institute carefully reviews and considers all public comments received prior to finalizing its recommendation.

**Preference Scoring**

Education Law § 2852(9-a)(c) requires authorizers to establish and apply preference criteria to applications meeting both statute and authorizer standards. The purpose of the criteria is to
prioritize proposals in the event that the number of proposals meeting the SUNY Trustees’ requirements exceeds the maximum number of charters to be issued or issued in New York City. The RFP identified the minimum eligibility requirements and preference criteria required by Education Law § 2852(9-a), as described in greater detail below. The Truxton Academy proposal met the eligibility requirements, as evidenced by the following:

- the proposal was sufficiently complete, i.e., it included a Transmittal Sheet, Proposal Summary and responses to all RFP requests as prescribed by the Institute;
- the proposal included a viable plan to meet the enrollment and retention targets established by the SUNY Trustees for students with disabilities, ELLs, and students who are eligible to participate in the FRPL program (as detailed in Request No. 15); and,
- the proposal provided evidence of public outreach that conforms to the Act and the process prescribed by the SUNY Trustees for the purpose of soliciting and incorporating community input regarding the proposed charter school and its academic program (as detailed in Request No. 3).

As the Truxton Academy proposal submission met the eligibility criteria, the Institute’s evaluation continued with a full review of the proposal, an interview of the founding team and members of the proposed board of trustees, and requests for clarification and/or amendments to the proposal. The review process then continued with an evaluation of the proposal in relation to the 10 Preference Criteria contained in the RFP for which proposals can earn credit as described in the RFP’s Preference Scoring Guidance. In the event of a tie for the last charter, both proposals will be rejected unless one applicant agrees to withdraw his or her proposal for consideration in a subsequent RFP. The preference criteria, which in addition to eligibility criteria and the overall high standards established by the SUNY Trustees, include the demonstration of the following in compliance with Education Law §§ 2852(9-a)(c)(i)-(viii):

- increasing student achievement and decreasing student achievement gaps in reading/language arts and mathematics;
- increasing high school graduation rates and focusing on serving specific high school student populations including, but not limited to, students at risk of not obtaining a high school diploma, re-enrolled high school drop-outs, and students with academic skills below grade level;
- focusing on the academic achievement of middle school students and preparing them for a successful transition to high school;
- utilizing high-quality assessments designed to measure a student's knowledge, understanding of, and ability to apply critical concepts through the use of a variety of item types and formats;
- increasing the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness;
- partnering with low performing public schools in the area to share best educational practices and innovations;
- demonstrating the management and leadership techniques necessary to overcome initial start-up problems to establish a thriving, financially viable charter school; and,
- demonstrating the support of the school district in which the proposed charter school will be located and the intent to establish an ongoing relationship with such school district.
The proposed school earned a score of 27.5 preference points out of a total of 45. Based on this score and the other information and findings set forth herein, the Institute recommends that the SUNY trustees approve the proposal to establish the Truxton Academy Charter School, which will not exceed the statutory limit in Education Law § 2852(9)(a). Assuming the Board of Regents does not issue any charters prior, 101 charters are available for schools to be established outside of New York City.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on its review and findings, the Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the proposal to establish the **Truxton Academy Charter School** education corporation and approve its authority to operate one school of the same name to open in August 2019.
## Homer Schools Demographics 2016-17

### Race/Ethnicity

- **White**: 93.5%
- **Hispanic or Latino**: 3.2%
- **Multiracial**: 2.9%
- **Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other P.**: 0.2%
- **Black or African American**: 0.1%
- **American Indian or Alaska Native**: 0.1%

### At-Risk Subgroups

- **Economically Disadvantaged**: 50.6%
- **English Language Learners**: 1.0%
- **Students With Disabilities**: 9.2%

### Total Enrollment K-6:

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<td>Total</td>
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<td>English Language Learners</td>
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<td>Students With Disabilities</td>
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## Homer Schools ELA and Math Proficiency 2016-17

### Grade 3 ELA

- **All Students**: 27.7%
- **Economically Disadvantaged**: 14.9%
- **English Language Learner**: 4.4%
- **Students with Disabilities**: 2.0%

### Grade 4 ELA

- **All Students**: 32.8%
- **Economically Disadvantaged**: 22.3%
- **English Language Learner**: 31.5%
- **Students with Disabilities**: 27.1%

### Grade 5 ELA

- **All Students**: 29.0%
- **Economically Disadvantaged**: 20.0%
- **English Language Learner**: 32.8%
- **Students with Disabilities**: 27.1%

### Grade 6 ELA

- **All Students**: 22.3%
- **Economically Disadvantaged**: 16.1%
- **English Language Learner**: 31.5%
- **Students with Disabilities**: 27.1%

### Grade 7 ELA

- **All Students**: 22.3%
- **Economically Disadvantaged**: 16.1%
- **English Language Learner**: 31.5%
- **Students with Disabilities**: 27.1%

### Grade 8 ELA

- **All Students**: 27.1%
- **Economically Disadvantaged**: 19.2%
- **English Language Learner**: 4.4%
- **Students with Disabilities**: 2.0%

### Grade 3 Math

- **All Students**: 36.9%
- **Economically Disadvantaged**: 24.4%
- **English Language Learner**: 23.5%
- **Students with Disabilities**: 13.7%

### Grade 4 Math

- **All Students**: 28.7%
- **Economically Disadvantaged**: 23.5%
- **English Language Learner**: 23.5%
- **Students with Disabilities**: 13.7%

### Grade 5 Math

- **All Students**: 38.9%
- **Economically Disadvantaged**: 24.4%
- **English Language Learner**: 23.5%
- **Students with Disabilities**: 13.7%

### Grade 6 Math

- **All Students**: 24.4%
- **Economically Disadvantaged**: 19.2%
- **English Language Learner**: 19.2%
- **Students with Disabilities**: 2.0%

### Grade 7 Math

- **All Students**: 19.2%
- **Economically Disadvantaged**: 14.9%
- **English Language Learner**: 4.4%
- **Students with Disabilities**: 2.0%

### Grade 8 Math

- **All Students**: 13.7%
- **Economically Disadvantaged**: 14.9%
- **English Language Learner**: 4.4%
- **Students with Disabilities**: 2.0%
### APPENDIX B

**Truxton Academy Charter School**  
**Basic Identification Information**

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On or about July 17, 2018, in accordance with Education Law § 2857(1), the Institute notified the Homer Central School District as well as public and private schools in the same geographic area of the proposed school about receipt of the proposal to establish the Truxton Academy Charter School. The notice reminded the district that the New York State Commissioner of Education’s regulations require the school district to hold a public hearing within 30 days of the notice for each new charter application. A redacted copy of the Truxton Academy proposal was also posted on the Institute’s website for public review at: http://www.newyorkcharters.org/request-for-proposals/2018-request-for-proposals-round-2-fall-cycle/truxton-academy-charter-school-2/.

The district held a public hearing pertaining to the proposal on September 10, 2018 and provided a transcript of comments from the hearing to the Institute. Approximately 60 people spoke at the hearing. About 50 of the attendees indicated their support for the application, citing a need in the community for an innovative academic program in this rural district that encourages student interest in agriculture. The approximately 10 individuals who spoke in opposition to the school primarily cited concerns about the financial impact of the proposed school on existing schools in the district as well as a lack of need as reasons for their opposition.

The Institute received direct independent comments both in support of and in opposition to the proposed school. Supporters consistently cited the school’s unique agricultural model and community-based approach as reasons why they would like to see the school established in their community. Additionally, many supporters noted the low achievement levels in the school’s proposed district of location, where 27% and 13% of 8th grade students earned proficient scores on the 2017 ELA and mathematics state assessments, respectively. Among the numerous support letters and emails the Institute received was one from Sandra Price, Cortland County Legislator from the 14th District, who voiced her strong support for the school’s model and its founding group.

The Institute also received approximately 18 letters and emails in opposition to the proposed school including from the superintendents of the Homer Central School District (attached below), the district of location, as well as the Cortland City School District and DeRuyter Central School District, from which the proposed school would likely draw most of the balance of its students, and from Jolene DiBrango, executive vice president of New York State United Teachers (“NYSUT”). The Institute also received approximately 140 postcards prepared by the Homer Teachers Association from community members opposed to the school. Opponents primarily cite financial issues as the reason for their concern; many worry that the school will have a significant negative impact on existing district schools and/or will result in an increase in the community’s school taxes. Some opponents also cite the closing of the Marion Hartnett Elementary School in 2016, which the Homer Central School District Board of Education voted to close due to financial problems resulting from
under-enrollment, arguing it indicates the community’s current population cannot sustain an additional elementary school.