

# THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT  
TAPESTRY CHARTER SCHOOL*

*REPORT DATE: JANUARY 14, 2026*

*VISIT DATE: SEPTEMBER 29 – 30, 2025*



**Charter Schools Institute**  
The State University of New York

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## SCHOOL BACKGROUND

# TAPESTRY CHARTER SCHOOL

65 Great Arrow Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14216 | Grades: 5-12 | Buffalo City School District  
111 Great Arrow Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14216 | Grades: K-4 | Buffalo City School District



### MISSION

To educate and inspire a diverse community of K-12 learners by engaging them in rigorous real-world learning experiences which prioritize intellectual, social and emotional growth.

### TAPESTRY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES<sup>1</sup>

#### CHAIR

Jeremy Hazelton

#### VICE CHAIR

Luanne Firestone

#### TREASURER

Daniel Pyne

#### SECRETARY

Samantha Gaerte

#### TRUSTEES

Alfred J. Wright

Daniel Robertson

Patrick Lewis

Dr. Hilary Lochte

Taylor Hunter

Lynn Seagren Bass

### CURRENT CHARTER INFORMATION

Year Opened: 2001

Serves: Kindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup>

Chartered Enrollment:  
1,090

Charter Expires on:  
July 31, 2026

### FUTURE CHARTER INFORMATION

Serves: Kindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup>

Chartered Enrollment:  
1,126

Charter Expiration  
July 31, 2031

### KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Rigorous academics with real world learning



Ongoing professional development



School culture of caring



Family and community engagement



Student and family support



Shared leadership



1. Source: The Institute's board records at the time of the visit.

"+" : This indicator is generally present.

"-" : This indicator is generally not present.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### FULL-TERM RENEWAL

*The SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) recommends the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Tapestry Charter School (“Tapestry”) for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup> grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal with a projected total enrollment of 1,126 students. The Institute makes this recommendation as Tapestry meets the requirements for renewal set forth in the Policies for Renewal of Not-For-Profit Charter School Education Corporations and Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the “SUNY Renewal Policies”).<sup>2</sup>*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since its previous renewal, Tapestry has demonstrated strong growth and performance compared to the Buffalo City School District. Over the charter term, Tapestry expanded its facility by adding a track and football field, with a focus on building space that would serve as a community hub hosting both Tapestry events and other community sporting events. Following the departure of the previous executive director in 2024-25, the board successfully hired a new executive director in June 2025. The board is setting clear directives to the new leader with a primary goal of improving student academic outcomes. Leaders and the board are mindful of the substantial change management occurring in the final year of the term. Tapestry’s longstanding systems help maintain consistency for students, families, and teachers. For example, the school has an advisory system, referred to as “crew,” to help build community across the school. This culture extends across staff members. The school’s established structures, including crew, help to maintain Tapestry’s strong culture across stakeholder groups during a period of transition.

Tapestry worked during the charter term to establish meaningful partnerships with local higher education institutions to recruit certified teachers and to support teachers in the pathway to certification. Tapestry has a partnership with Canisius College to develop a ‘grow your own’ teacher pathway. The program allows Tapestry high school students to experience opportunities that mirror student teaching and observations at the elementary level. The school also partners with Buffalo State University and University at Buffalo as a professional development school, which allows professors to use Tapestry as a learning site. Both universities partner to provide student teaching candidates and teacher residents to Tapestry.

### FINDINGS & INFORMATION

#### ***Is the school an academic success?***

Tapestry is an academic success having met or come close to meeting its key academic Accountability Plan goals in high school graduation, college preparation, English language arts (“ELA”), and mathematics throughout the charter term. Over the term, leaders focused support on building teachers’ skills in reviewing data through regular grade or content team meetings. Leaders prioritize learning walks to provide feedback to teachers to support improving instruction. Tapestry is an intentionally diverse by design school model, and leaders have built structures to more

<sup>2</sup>. SUNY Renewal Policies (p. 14) are available on the [Institute’s website](#).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

closely monitor the progress of student subgroups. While the school closed some gaps between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students over the charter term, leaders recognize that Tapestry must continue to improve instruction to increase equity in outcomes for all student subgroups in a future charter term. The school demonstrates success in the following ways:

- Tapestry outperformed the district in every year of the term by at least 10 percentage points in ELA and three percentage points in mathematics. Further, the school posted mean growth percentiles that exceeded the target of 50 in both subjects in all years with data suitable for analysis.
- Tapestry demonstrated particularly laudable achievement for its 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in 2024-25. That year, 59% of tested students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficient in ELA and 53% did so in mathematics.
- Notably in 2024-25, 92% of students in the 2021 Cohort graduated after four years, exceeding the most recently available district results by 18 percentage points.

### ***Is the school an effective, viable organization?***

Tapestry is an effective, viable organization. Over the term, the school restructured its team to include a chief operations officer (“COO”) to manage schoolwide operations, finances, and reporting. The school’s board successfully navigated a nationwide search for a new executive director in the fourth year of the charter term. The board continues to closely monitor challenges as they arise and support school-based leaders in effective ways.

### ***Is the school fiscally sound<sup>3</sup>?***

Tapestry is fiscally adequate based on the Institute’s review of the renewal documentation. The education corporation established strong methods of budget creation that consider all departments of the school to develop accurate revenue and expense projections. The education corporation maintained strong enrollment throughout the current charter term. Tapestry’s finance team meets with the board monthly to present an enrollment report and discuss results. The 2024-25 annual financial audit did not present any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. Tapestry maintains a separate bank account with the established amounts for dissolution as required by the charter agreement.

Tapestry demonstrated an adequate financial performance during the current charter term, with net assets of \$7 million and 3 months of cash on hand as of the 2024-25 school year. Within the current charter term, Tapestry completed construction of a track and field on school grounds and made considerable investments in facilities improvements. Given the budget plan presented in the renewal documentation as well as previous years’ enrollment and financial results, the Institute found Tapestry’s proposed future budgets to be reasonable and feasible. The education corporation has maintained adequate teacher-to-student ratios and adjusted when necessary. The board focuses on monitoring the financial needs of the school’s aging facility to ensure Tapestry remains sustainable.

3. The U.S. Department of Education has established fiscal criteria for certain ratios or information with high – medium – low categories, represented in the table as blue – gray – orange. The categories generally correspond to levels of fiscal risk, but must be viewed in the context of each education corporation and the general type or category of school.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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***If the SUNY Trustees renew the school, are the education corporation’s plans for the school reasonable, feasible, and achievable?***

Tapestry’s plans for a future charter term are reasonable, feasible, and achievable. The school plans to implement the same elements of the program that allowed it to meet or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals in the current term. Leaders reflect on current systems to support teachers and consistently adjust support systems to ensure teachers are working to close achievement gaps between different subgroups of the school’s diverse student population. Board members expressed interest in continuing their service in the next term.

The future budget in the renewal documentation contains reasonable revenue and expense projections for the proposed charter term given the history of the education corporation. Tapestry currently owns two private facilities to house its Kindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup> grade programs and will continue to occupy these facilities through the next charter term.

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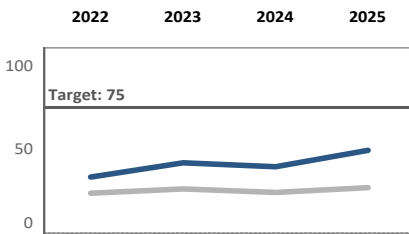
# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

## TAPESTRY CHARTER SCHOOL

Buffalo City School District

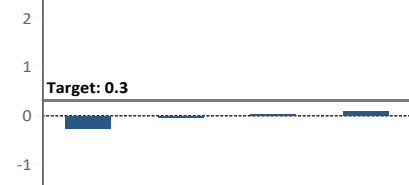
### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

**District Comparison.** The percentage of tested students enrolled in at least their second year at the school performing at or above proficiency in ELA compared to the district.



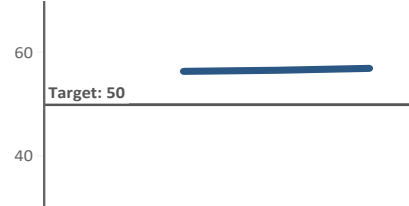
Test Year	Comp Grades	District %	School %
2022	3-8	24	34
2023	3-8	27	42
2024	3-8	25	40
2025	3-8	28	50

**Effect Size.** The chart shows school's effect size compared to its predicted level of performance in ELA according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.



Test Year	Test Grades	ED %	Effect Size
2022	3-8	72.0	-0.27
2023	3-8	68.9	-0.01
2024	3-8	73.6	0.02
2025	3-8	73.8	0.09

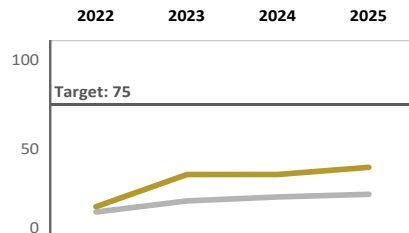
**Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile.** The school's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above target of 50 in ELA.



Test Year	School Mean Growth
2022	N/A
2023	56.5
2024	56.7
2025	57.1

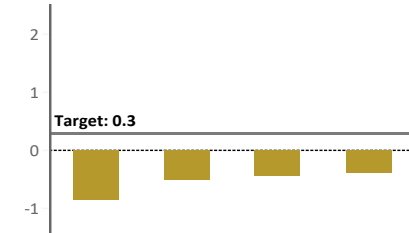
### MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

**District Comparison.** The percentage of tested students enrolled in at least their second year at the school performing at or above proficiency in mathematics compared to the district.



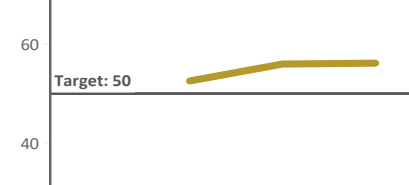
Test Year	Comp Grades	District %	School %
2022	3-8	15	18
2023	3-8	21	36
2024	3-8	24	36
2025	3-8	25	40

**Effect Size.** The chart shows school's effect size compared to its predicted level of performance in mathematics according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.



Test Year	Test Grades	ED %	Effect Size
2022	3-8	71.7	-0.85
2023	3-8	68.8	-0.51
2024	3-8	73.6	-0.44
2025	3-8	73.8	-0.37

**Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile.** The school's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above target of 50 in mathematics.



Test Year	School Mean Growth
2022	N/A
2023	52.7
2024	56.1
2025	56.3



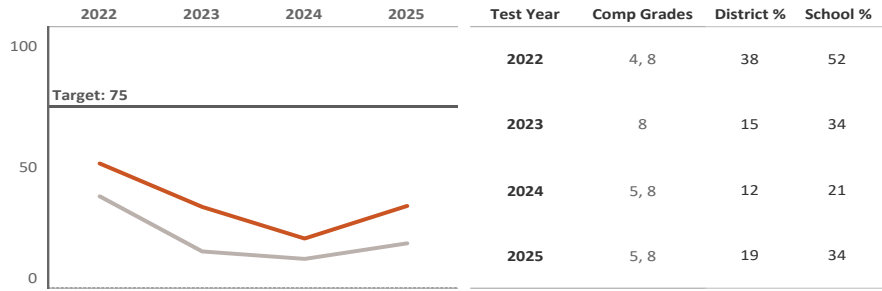
# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

## TAPESTRY CHARTER SCHOOL

Buffalo City School District

### SCIENCE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

Science: Comparative Measure. The percentage of tested students at the school in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in science compared to the district.



Test Year	Comp Grades	District %	School %
2022	4, 8	38	52
2023	8	15	34
2024	5, 8	12	21
2025	5, 8	19	34

### TESTED PERCENTAGES

	2022		2023		2024		2025	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
School Tested Number (N)	436	411	436	425	463	452	481	463
School Tested %	85.8	80.6	87.2	85.2	87.5	85.4	88.9	85.6
District Tested %	82.9	80.4	86.8	86.4	86.1	87.6	86.9	89.0

### PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS\*

	2022		2023		2024		2025	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
Students with Disabilities Tested on State Exam (N)	55	46	54	48	63	60	66	67
School % Proficient on Exam	14.5	15.2	16.7	20.8	22.2	16.7	24.2	31.3
District % Proficient	7.2	5.5	9.0	8.1	9.2	10.4	10.6	11.2

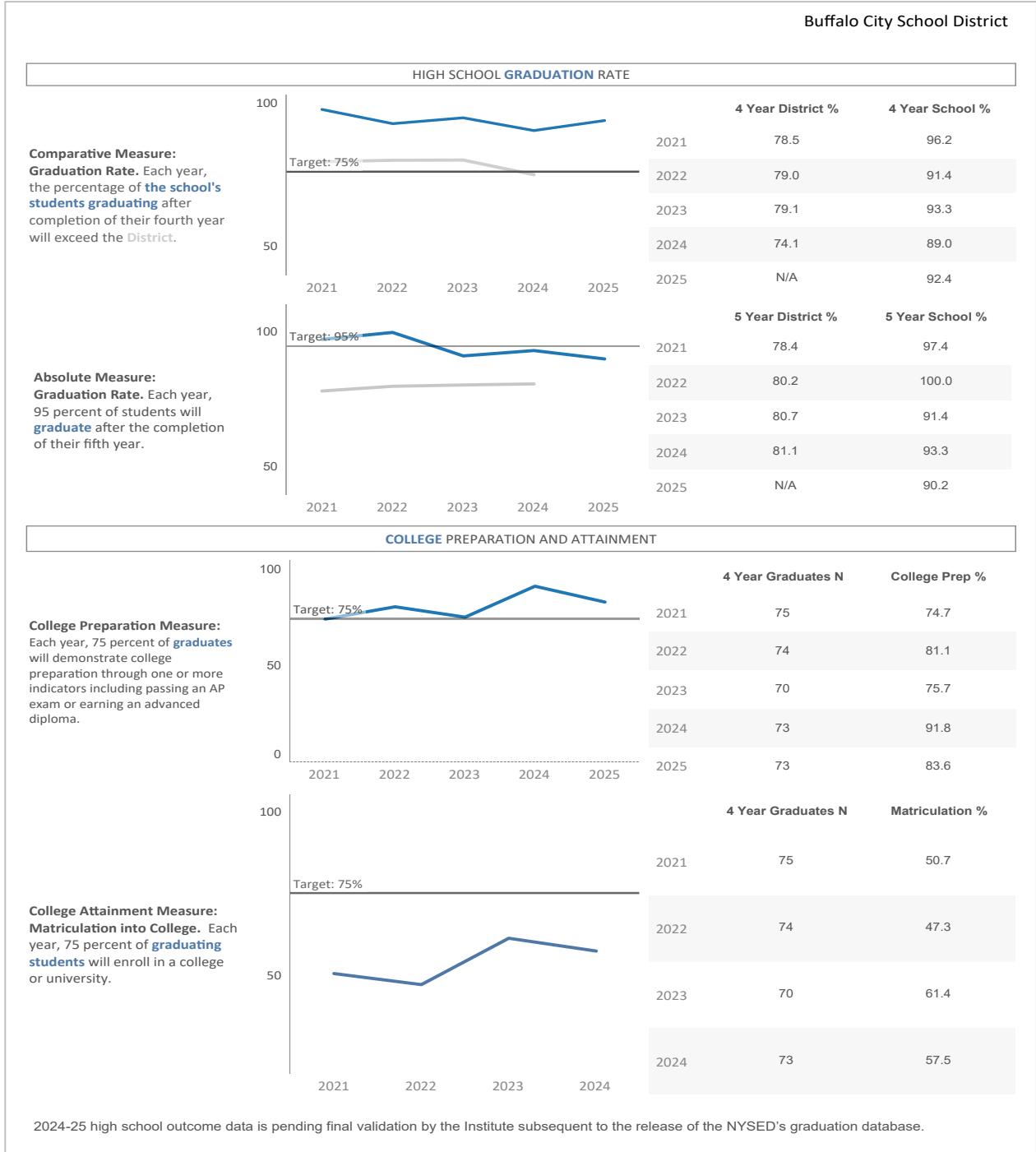
	2022	2023	2024	2025
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam (N)	18	22	21	20
School % Making Progress	22.2	36.4	9.5	20.0

\*Academic outcome data describing the performance of students with disabilities and English language learners ("ELLs") are not tied to separate goals in the charter school's formal Accountability Plan. The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test ("NYSESLAT") is a standardized New York State assessment given annually to students classified as ELLs. Student scores are categorized into five proficiency levels: Entering, Emerging, Transitioning, Expanding, and Commanding (the highest proficiency level). For elementary and middle school students, "Making Progress" is defined as: testing at the Commanding level, or moving up at least one proficiency level from the prior year, or testing at the Expanding level and testing proficient on the NYS ELA exam in that same year. For high school students, "Making Progress" is defined as: testing at the Commanding level, or moving up at least one proficiency level from the prior year. To comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") regulations on reporting education outcome data, the Institute does not report assessment results for groups containing five or fewer students, and indicates such instances with an "s".



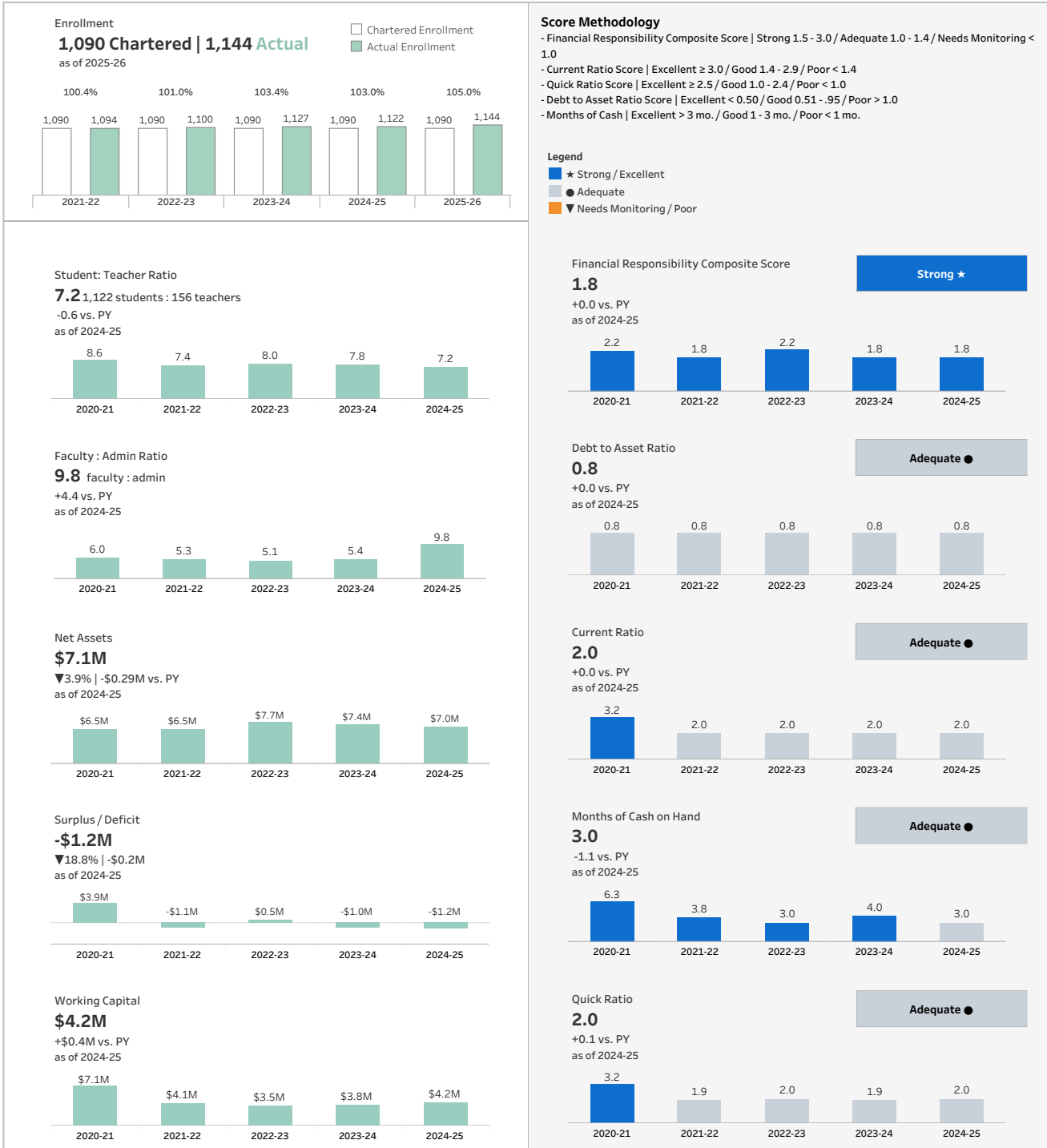
# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

## TAPESTRY CHARTER SCHOOL



# FISCAL DASHBOARD

## TAPESTRY CHARTER SCHOOL



Schools report actual enrollment on a quarterly basis to the Institute, and the actual enrollment for 2025-26 reflects the most recently submitted quarterly submission.

## COMPLIANCE REPORTING



### HAS THE SCHOOL SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLIED WITH APPLICABLE LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS, AND PROVISIONS OF ITS CHARTER?

*The education corporation substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations, and provisions of its charter. During the current charter term, the education corporation demonstrates a clear record of compliance with the terms of its charter including the timely submission of required reporting to the Institute.*

#### **Annual Reports**

The education corporation submitted its annual reports to the Institute and the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) on time, but has not posted all elements of the most recent reports directly on its website on the date of submission as required by the Act. All elements include the August 1<sup>st</sup> submission, the Accountability Plan Progress Report, and the independent financial audit. The Institute will ensure compliance prior to the start of the next charter term.

#### **Open Meetings Law**

While the education corporation appropriately posts the notice, agenda, and minutes for its board meetings, it has not posted the materials under consideration (i.e., resolutions, policies, budgets) at such meetings. The Institute will ensure compliance prior to the start of the next charter term.

#### **Website Postings**

While the education corporation has an appropriate Title IX policy, it has not posted the required materials to its website. The Institute will ensure compliance prior to the start of the next charter term.

#### **Teacher Certification**

The Act allows charter schools to hire up to 15 uncertified lead teachers contingent upon those teachers meeting certain requirements including: two years of Teach for America experience; three years of teaching experience; status as a higher education professor; exceptional experience in a subject; or, teaching science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) or career and technical education courses.

At the time of the renewal review the school employed 91 lead teachers. Of the 91 lead teachers, 13 were uncertified, which is within the allowable limit under the Act. Twelve of the 13 uncertified teachers met the additional criteria under the Act.

## COMMUNITY SATISFACTION & ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

To report on parent satisfaction with the school’s program, the Institute used satisfaction survey data, information gathered from a focus group of parents representing a cross section of students, and data regarding persistence in enrollment.

### ***Parent Survey Data***

The Institute compiled data from the school’s annual family survey. The school conducts at least an annual survey to gauge family satisfaction. In 2024-25, 12% of families responded to the survey. Of those respondents, 86% indicated satisfaction with the school. The Institute recognizes that the low response rate may not be representative of the whole community.

### ***Parent Focus Group***

The Institute asks all schools facing renewal to convene a representative set of parents for a focus group discussion. A representative set includes parents of students in attendance at the school for multiple years, students new to the school, students receiving general education services, students with disabilities, and ELLs.

The nine participants highlighted the clear and consistent communication the school provides as a favorite feature of Tapestry. Families shared they were attracted to the school because of unique activities like student-led conferences and the crew model. Families feel comfortable reaching out to teachers, provide feedback to the school through annual surveys, and appreciate regular updates on student progress. Some participants suggested improvements including more sports programs, more social emotional support for higher grades, and better cultural connections between elementary, middle school, and high school programs.

### ***Public Comments***

In accordance with the Act, the Institute notified the district in which the charter school is located regarding the school’s Application for Charter Renewal. The full text of any written comments received from the district appears below, which also includes a summary of any public comments.

Buffalo Public Schools (“BPS”) held its required hearing on the renewal application for Tapestry on September 16, 2025. The attendees included representatives from BPS, the BPS Board of Education, and Tapestry leaders, staff members, and parents. Tapestry leaders discussed the school’s mission and vision, focus on real world, experiential learning, strong community, and commitment to serving a racially and economically diverse student population. Tapestry also discussed the academic structure and its models to serve ELLs and students with disabilities. The school shared additional information on its academic performance, attendance rates, and financial data. The school expressed interest in partnering with the district in any way possible. Two parents spoke in support of the renewal application, praising the school’s culture, communication, community engagement, and supports. Three school staff members also spoke in support of the renewal application, highlighting their satisfaction with the school, each having been there for 10 or more years, and their appreciation for the school’s strong sense of community and shared

## COMMUNITY SATISFACTION & ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

vision of success. BPS Board of Education members praised the school for its ability to set and achieve goals. BPS board members asked the school about student engagement for minority students, and the school responded that it sees representation of its diverse student body at community events, meetings, and sporting events. Members also asked about the number of students who return to BPS district schools and expressed concern that the school cannot serve students with certain special education settings that the district must accommodate. The school is providing BPS with additional information about teacher and administrator diversity, testing data, suspension rates, and retention rates for students and staff members. No one spoke in opposition.

### **Enrollment and Retention**

Tapestry makes good faith efforts to meet its enrollment and retention targets, and the school is working on strategies to increase enrollment for ELLs and students with disabilities. The school comes close to meeting the enrollment targets for students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students and does not meet the target for ELLs. Although the school's 2024-25 retention rates of economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities do not meet the retention targets, Tapestry's retention rates for the two subgroups are commensurate with the school's overall 2024-25 persistence rate of 87%.

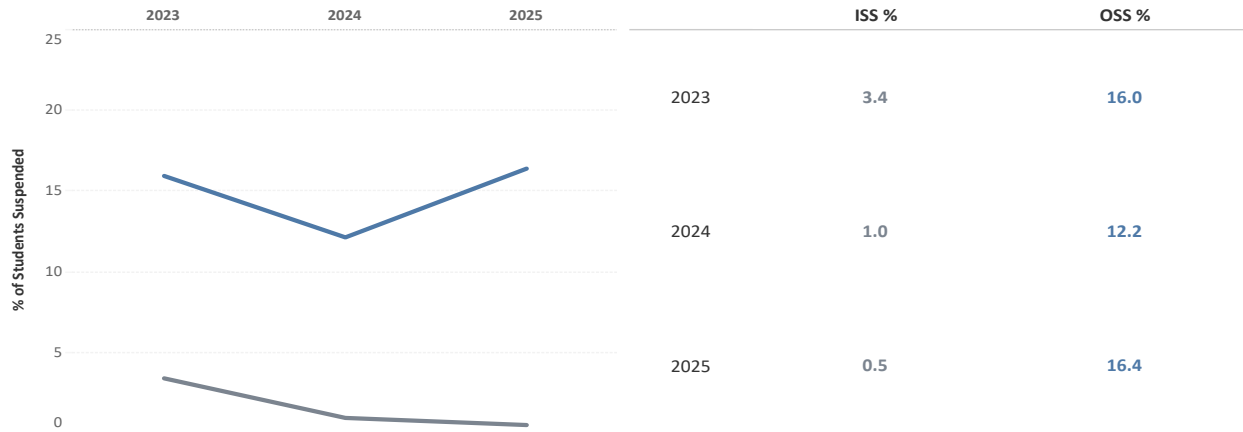
### **Persistence in Enrollment**

An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2024-25, 87% of Tapestry students returned from the previous year. Student persistence data from previous years of the charter term is available in the student demographics section of the report.

*The Institute derived the statistical information on persistence in enrollment from its database. No comparative data from the NYCDOE or the New York State Education Department ("NYSED") is available to the Institute to provide either district or statewide context.*

# COMMUNITY SATISFACTION & ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

## Tapestry Charter School



Data suitable for comparison are not available. The percentage rate shown here is calculated using the method employed by NYCDOE: the total number of students receiving an in school or out of school suspension at any time during the school year is divided by the total enrollment, then multiplied by 100.

**Persistence in Enrollment:** The percentage of students eligible to return from previous year who did return



**Expulsions:** The number of students expelled from the school each year

Year	2023	2024	2025
Expulsions	5	13	5

### Tapestry Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2024-25

		Target %	School %
Enrollment	Economically Disadvantaged	79.7	69.3
	English Language Learners	18.1	2.0
	Students with Disabilities	18.3	13.0
Retention	Economically Disadvantaged	93.2	87.7
	English Language Learners	95.3	94.7
	Students with Disabilities	93.5	86.9

Discipline data above reflect information reported by the education corporation and validated by the Institute. Enrollment and retention data reflect available BEDS day information as reported by the NYSED.



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