February 25, 2020

Joseph W. Belluck  
Eric Corngold  
Robert Duffy  
Edward Spiro  
Dr. Merryl H. Tisch  

SUNY Charter School Committee  
% SUNY Charter Schools Institute  
SUNY Plaza  
353 Broadway  
Albany, NY 12246

Dear Mr. Belluck, Mr. Corngold, Mr. Duffy, Mr. Spiro, and Dr. Tisch:

Heketi Community Charter School is a progressive dual language-based school situated in the South Bronx. Having opened in 2012, Heketi is a standalone school unaffiliated with any charter management or for-profit organization and has been proud to be the only bilingual education charter school in SUNY’s portfolio. Over its three year short-term renewal, Heketi has made considerable progress in implementing a dual-language, dual-immersion program that inherently requires more time to take hold and translate to sustained academic achievement and growth. As demonstrated by our year over year overall growth and most recent outperformance of Community School District 7, Heketi had made those strides and is poised in a new five year term to become an exemplary bilingual education model for the public school and charter school sectors.

However, the SUNY Charter Schools Institute threatens our existence because of fundamental misconceptions about bilingual education and impatience about the additional time needed to fully mature, as the expectation that students acquire English language or Spanish language skills within one year, much less have an expectation to exceed state standards in content areas that is unrealistic.

Moreover, the Institute’s current review and report is an example of its flawed renewal process, in which:

- student academic growth is disregarded;
- a comparison of student academic growth and performance with that of similarly situated SUNY charter schools who have been granted renewals is ignored;
- a review of recent non-renewed schools marks glaring contrasts where only incredibly low performing schools are closed; and
- specialized programs, particularly those addressing the social-emotional needs of students and their families, the needs of English learners, and a dual language program, are marginalized.

Given the Institute’s non-renewal decision that Heketi received just two weeks ago to cease operations ending this year, the incredibly short timeframe for families to find new schools, students and families, who are vulnerable (96.3% living in poverty) will be irreparably harmed.

Request for Specific Terms
To this end, we submit our petition, seeking reconsideration of our five year renewal via an opportunity to present our case before your Committee. Specifically, we also request that the Committee, at its discretion, appoint a sub-committee on its behalf, to allow the testimony of experts in bilingual education, or request the appearance of SUNY or NYSED staff with subject matter expertise in dual-language programs to help guide the Committee’s decision-making.
To assure the Committee’s thoughtful consideration of our petition, Heketi has opted against a lengthy line-by-line rebuttal of the Institute’s Recommendation Report. Instead, we at Heketi will focus our energies on:

- Illustrating the significant inconsistencies in the Institute’s process and renewal recommendations vis-a-vis other charters in its portfolio;
- Demonstrating the Institute’s lack of understanding of Heketi’s approach to instruction, culture, and even of dual-language programs themselves, all of which Heketi has been implementing with faithful adherence to the State Education Department’s Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework; and
- Raising important questions, given the political environment, about the Institute’s support of independent, standalone charter schools, most of whom require more time to develop and innovate as viable alternatives to no excuse school models that are not a fit for the families that schools like Heketi serve.

In keeping with the spirit of the New York State Charter Schools Act of 1998, which was rendered law to create incubators of innovation for underserved families on the margin like the students Heketi serves, all we ask is more time to implement our framework, especially in the shift in the charter school landscape in favor of replications and Next Generation Learning Standards.

**Student Academic Growth**
The Institute’s renewal report indicates that student performance growth is lacking when, in fact, the data reveal that not only is consistent growth evident, but Heketi has outperformed Community School District 7 significantly. Heketi, SUNY’s only dual language school, over the last two years, has more than doubled district growth for ELA and demonstrated nine times the district growth for mathematics. Presented with an opportunity to address the Committee, Heketi can dive with more detail to describe the gains that the Institute has considered insufficient for renewal.

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Similarly Situated SUNY Charter Schools Granted Renewals**
While Heketi was issued a non-renewal notice, at least four SUNY authorized charter schools with weaker academic growth and performance lower than the districts in which they are located have been granted five year renewal terms. Many of these schools also had performance either decrease or incrementally grow in both ELA and Math in the three years preceding their renewal determination.

In fact, of charter schools in their second term, Heketi is one of only two SUNY-authorized elementary/middle charter schools to post double-digit overall growth in both ELA (15 points) and Math (18 points) in the three
years preceding its renewal. The only other charter, Middle Village Prep, received a full five year renewal in February 2018. Heketi received a non-renewal recommendation.

Of charters less than a decade old, Heketi also has the strongest overall Grades 3-8 math gains of all SUNY schools during that same three years pre-renewal, gains which in 2018-19 bested CSD 7 by 19 points.

### ELA Proficiency and Performance against School District by Charters Reauthorized since 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number of Years in Operation</th>
<th>Year renewed for 5 year term</th>
<th>ELA proficiency (difference from district)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heketi Community CS (CSD 7)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Non-renewal</td>
<td>16% (+5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn Dreams CS (CSD 22)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2/13/18</td>
<td>25% (-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Concourse Academy CS (CSD 8)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10/18/18</td>
<td>43% (-24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Leadership CS (CSD 7)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4/24/18</td>
<td>40% (+29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Village Prep CS (CSD 24)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4/24/18</td>
<td>37% (+4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn Excelsior CS (CSD 16)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2/13/18</td>
<td>16% (+1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coney Island Prep CS (CSD 21)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2/13/18</td>
<td>26% (-16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pave Academy CS (CSD 15)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2/13/18</td>
<td>24% (-19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Prep CS for Young Men (Rochester)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2/13/18</td>
<td>6% (-1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Math Proficiency and Performance against School District by Charters Reauthorized since 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number of Years in Operation</th>
<th>Year renewed for 5 year term</th>
<th>Math proficiency (difference from district)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heketi Community CS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Non-renewal</td>
<td>48% (+34)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above data demonstrates a clear inconsistently applied set of standards within the Institute’s renewal process. As charters mature into their third and subsequent terms as seen above, their growth accelerates. Heketi overall has demonstrated this capacity, having not posted a single year of academic performance that was below CSD 7 while also rebounding from a leadership change with positive growth exceeding the district in this current short term.

Non-Renewal Recommendation Inconsistent with Prior Non-Renewals
When comparing Heketi’s non-renewal recommendation with others, the findings are inconsistent at best. Based on a review of public notices in the past 5 years, only 3 schools have received non-renewal recommendations from the Institute, all of whom were not based in New York City or represented the bilingual needs of students Heketi serves: Oracle Charter School in Buffalo and the single gender Brighter Choice Charter Middle Schools for Boys and the other for Girls in Albany. The former was a high school that served the city of Buffalo for nearly fifteen years.

In the cases of the latter, Brighter Choice Charter Middle Schools, double-digit decreases in student performance to single digits meeting state standards in both content areas appears to on face justify closure. Over the three years before the end of its term, both schools posted double-digit decreases against their district counterparts.

Heketi’s academic performance, both in real numbers and in comparison to its district is nowhere near the struggles that faced Brighter Choice, which still operates elementary schools in Albany with NYSED.

### ELA and Math Proficiency and Performance against School District of Non-Renewed Charters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Date of Non-Renewal</th>
<th>ELA proficiency (Difference from district)</th>
<th>Math proficiency (Difference from district)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn Dreams CS</td>
<td>2/13/18</td>
<td>41% (-1)</td>
<td>37% (+4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Concourse Academy CS</td>
<td>10/18/18</td>
<td>53% (+30)</td>
<td>43% (+21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Leadership CS</td>
<td>4/24/18</td>
<td>56% (+42)</td>
<td>60% (+44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Village Prep CS</td>
<td>4/24/18</td>
<td>58% (+18)</td>
<td>47% (+6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn Excelsior CS</td>
<td>2/13/18</td>
<td>19% (+3)</td>
<td>27% (+6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coney Island Prep CS</td>
<td>2/13/18</td>
<td>41% (-8)</td>
<td>39% (-11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pave Academy CS</td>
<td>2/13/18</td>
<td>41% (-8)</td>
<td>41% (-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Prep CS for Young Men</td>
<td>2/13/18</td>
<td>3% (-4)</td>
<td>4% (-3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Heketi’s Strengths

Data from the NYC Charter Schools Center indicates that Heketi students performed at 45% proficiency in mathematics compared to 26% proficiency in CSD 7 in 2018-19. This is 19% above the district. Further, in the same year, Heketi students performed 6% higher than CSD 7 in ELA (37% vs. 31% proficient). Students eligible for free and reduced lunch at Heketi substantially outperformed students in CSD 7. In mathematics, low income students outperformed their CSD 7 counterparts by 46% (72% vs. 26% proficient) and by 19% in ELA (49% vs. 30% proficient).

Other subgroups, such as English learners and students with disabilities, also outperformed Heketi’s local school district. In mathematics, Heketi ELLs scored at 36% proficiency while CSD 7 students performed at 13% proficient. ELLs at Heketi also outperformed their district in ELA (10% vs. 8%). Similarly, students with disabilities performed at 9% above the district in math (20% vs. 11%) while scoring 2% below the district in ELA. Hispanic students at Heketi attained scores above CSD 7 in both math and ELA, scoring 20% above the district in math (47% vs. 27%) and 7% in ELA (37% vs. 31%).

### Unique Needs of English Learners and Dual Language Programs

The Institute’s non-renewal decision demonstrates a lack of understanding of dual language programs, a lack of knowledge about the needs of students in a dual language program and outright discrimination against dual language charter schools. 19.1% of Heketi students are English learners. Ongoing studies indicate that English learners need between 5-7 years to attain proficiency in academic English (Hakuta, K., Butler, Y.G., & Witt, D. (2000); Cummins (1979; in press).

In CSI’s non-renewal determination, Heketi is criticized for instructional practice in which teachers provide instruction in Spanish while students respond in English. This criticism is directly contrary to the translanguaging theory (Ricardo Otheguy and Ofelia García: “Translanguaging in Dual Language Bilingual

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Education: A Blueprint for Planning Units of Study”),\(^2\) which is promoted by the New York State Education Department and challenges traditional bilingualism theories where languages are strictly separated. Strict language allotment policies do not reflect how emergent bilinguals have one dynamic repertoire of linguistic features. Translanguaging is the deliberate deployment, negotiation and leveraging of bilinguals’ full linguistic repertoire. Every learner brings their own translanguaging space to every language learning environment. The use of translanguaging is essential in a dual language program where students must develop strong bilingual identities that are not truncated or valued differently.

Furthermore, Heketi employs a dual-immersion approach in our dual language program. In curricular units that are taught in both languages under this model, instruction is delivered 50% in each of the two target languages -- English and Spanish. During one half of the unit, when content is taught in one language, we utilize best practices to ensure comprehensible input, such as strong visuals, total physical response (TPR), Thinking Maps and realia/manipulatives. These practices help solidify concepts and big ideas in one language. Those concepts are then “bridged” over into the other target language and new vocabulary in the second language is attached to the bridged content. As such, this approach requires significant time to calcify improved results in students. A Stanford study has noted directly the lower-than-demanded performance as a normal byproduct of Heketi’s innovation, before it can expect to see the robust growth Heketi demonstrated in 2018-19:

After controlling for student background, and other factors, the researchers uncovered differences in students’ short- and long-term academic growth. At the end of second grade, the ELA scores of students enrolled in dual immersion programs were significantly lower than the scores of those enrolled in English immersion programs. However, as these students progressed through school, those in dual immersion and transitional bilingual began to outperform their peers enrolled in English immersion. Test score growth rates of students in DI (dual immersion) programs also “far out-pace[d]” those of language learners in other programs.\(^3\)

Thomas and Collier (2002) show in this graph that English-language learners in two-way dual-language, or dual-immersion dual-language, programs, have similar reading proficiency in English as other English-language learners in different programs. However, these same students outperform all other English-language learners in different programs from the 6th grade and on -- including native English speakers.

Because Heketi is currently a K-5 school, our placement of a significant tranche of our graduates into middle schools with bilingual education programs has yielded positive achievement results for those schools, where our alumni are on honor roll and even spoke directly about how Heketi impacted their trajectories to the Institute’s Director Susie Miller Carelo at its January 28, 2020 meeting with Heketi families.

Social-Emotional Needs: Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework (CR-SE)\textsuperscript{5}

Heketi is doing something different than other district and charter schools and is impacting the lives of its students and their families in positive ways. 96.3\% of Heketi’s students live in poverty and are provided with a unique approach to meet the needs of students living below the poverty line. Heketi employs one social worker per grade to help students and families deal with the trauma associated with living in poverty. Heketi has aligned its programs with the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework, which has been


prioritized by both the NYS Education Department and the NYC Department of Education. Heketi intentionally designed and implemented its school culture to help students who live in poverty and its associated trauma. While all four pillars of the CR-SE framework are enlivened at Heketi, of particular importance is the school’s work under the pillar of providing a welcoming and affirming environment.

Because of this approach to meet students where they are, the Institute’s expected hallmarks of “high expectations and rigorous instruction” that are apparent in no excuses schools that dominate its portfolio - from Achievement First and Uncommon Schools to Success Academies - are insufficient measurements of a strong school culture or a school with high expectations that prioritizes a welcoming and affirming environment and inclusive curriculum and assessment with equal weight. Reviewers cannot presume that physical student motion within a classroom or all students not tracking the speaker to imply and or confirm a school without a plan or culture in place to succeed.

Actually, in its most recent NYC Department of Education School Quality Snapshot, Heketi received a rating of ‘Excellent’ (exceeding expectations) in the areas of student achievement and strong family-community ties. It also received a rating of ‘Good’ (meeting expectations) in all remaining areas (rigorous instruction, collaborative teachers, supportive environment, effective school leadership, and trust). 97% of families responded positively to questions about strong family-community ties. This percentage is higher than respondents from CSD 7 and the city as a whole.

The Heketi school community builds strong rapport and develops positive relationships with students and families. Family concerns are addressed in the family’s preferred language. Supports are in place, such as employing one social worker per grade, to “become a part of the fabric of the school community by organizing proactive community building circles and activities that promote positive relationships among individuals from diverse backgrounds. Heketi includes students, teachers, school staff, leaders, families, and community members in these opportunities” (CR-SE p. 26). School leaders analyze and internalize school culture surveys to “collect diverse stakeholder impressions and experiences” (CR-SE p. 32) that is used to inform their work to provide families with a school in which they are accepted and supported.

The Institute’s Renewal Process
As interwoven through our petition so far, the Institute’s approach to Heketi’s innovative dual-immersion, dual-language model of instruction (pp. 25-26) and approach to culturally responsive sustaining education (pp. 28-29) shows a profound lack of expertise in assessing the merits of the program. The unbending expectation of absolute achievement performance when leading research on bilingual education shows that English Language Learners in dual language settings require additional time represents one facet of the issue. While we can sympathize with our authorizer’s expectation on meeting these goals (albeit at a slower pace given the nature of our program), the reliance on in-classroom metrics largely inapplicable in Heketi’s settings is, in the best possible light, concerning. Its renewal recommendations and live feedback from its site visits show documented criticisms of Heketi’s approach (p. 29-30), where the Institute’s frame for evaluating culture and student engagement relies almost exclusively on a no excuses school model. Heketi’s approach to working with children rests within positive discipline and restorative practices in response to the social-emotional needs presented by many of our students, so witnessing firsthand “students regularly engaging[ in low-level off task behaviors” or teachers not “attempt[ing] to correct misbehavior and continue to teach or circulate” (p. 29) is the norm for some students by design.

Moreover, Heketi’s experience with this short-term renewal process, given its prior experience and its intimate

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knowledge of the process at other peer schools, illustrates an outcome that was potentially preordained for non-renewal from the start, yet established unfair and damaging deadlines that has greatly impaired Heketi’s ability to cogently make our case for renewal, help our students transition to schools that meet their needs if we were to potentially close out our term, and most importantly of all, support our families and students to assure that they receive a deserved, high-quality education in the time we have with them. The following experiences inform our opinion:

- Heketi provided the Institute with four board member candidates for approval in September 2019. All of them have charter school oversight experience and deep connections with Heketi itself. The Institute replied that they would not be approving any board members at the time, further hamstringing Heketi’s efforts to strengthen its governance and implementation of its strategic plan before being made aware of its non-renewal decision months later.
- The Institute began to move the goalposts in terms of expected academic expectations that would lead to renewal. In discussions with Heketi staff on February 2018 and January 2019, the Institute informed Heketi that the school was in jeopardy but could demonstrate growth by increasing NYS ELA and Math test scores by any percentage (Feb 2018) and then by 10%-20% (Jan 2019). Heketi staff were informed that comparative measures were key in determining Heketi’s future. Then, in November, 2019, the tenor and approach related to renewal changed.
- The timeframes to respond to non-renewal have been particularly capricious. Whereas the Institute’s most recent non-renewal with Oracle Charter School had an opportunity to petition the Committee no later than January before its recommended closure date, Heketi has been provided significantly less time before the end of the school year to effectively respond, much less support effective placements for all of its students in schools that would serve them. In this case, Heketi received a non-renewal recommendation on February 11th, given 3 days to respond, and until today, February 25th to submit this petition. In doing so, it provided both Heketi and this Charter Schools Committee insufficient time to present and hear evidence about Heketi’s progress.

Had our achievement data shown such clear evidence of decline as had informed the Institute’s other non-renewals, Heketi would not have submitted this petition.

Equally as troubling to fundamental misconceptions about our model is how the students, families, and staff of Heketi Community Charter School, by virtue of being a standalone, community-based charter school, finds itself in the crosshairs of an apparent charter cap fight. Without the prospect of a lift in the charter cap because of the 2018 elections that ushered in a Democrat-majority state legislature, as has effectively been the case since the charter law’s passage, the maneuvering to open more city-based charters, particularly CMO-managed replications, has migrated from the state legislature to the state authorizers.

This is made ever clear since the Institute recommended thirteen charters for authorization to expend the New York City-based cap by at least six schools, pending NYSED’s approved downstate charter proposals. Of those, all seven charters slated to open first are replications, and only three of the remaining charters awaiting a cap lift are new models. Without the slightest hint of irony, Zeta Charter School has reached out to Heketi repeatedly about a takeover of its space and school long before the recommendation for non-renewal even surfaced. In October and November 2019, Zeta had contacted the Board of Trustees, and then again on December 16, 2019. A month later, the news reported on the Governor's budget plans, which included plans to recycle unused and closed charters to expand the charter sector.7 Supported by Heketi’s experiences while

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under the renewal process then, it is not difficult to infer that despite Heketi’s overall growth, its charter has effectively already been allocated to a potential replication, in direct contravention to the spirit of the Charter Schools Act to spur innovation in public education and serve students on the margin.

While from a vantage point of an authorizer, the Institute can choose to populate its renewal report with pages of data points that it states are outcome-determinative of a non-renewal recommendation, what is required in both the letter and spirit of state law is a wholly different matter:

- Comparisons to performances against other charter schools within district, where nearly all but three are heavily-resourced replications by CMOs and/or charters with over a decade of experience to refine their craft in an environment where there were charters to give. Those three include American Dream Charter School, which is also a dual-language charter that shares similar student achievement performance as it matures its program, and NYC Montessori, an experimental model that like Heketi, does not have the benefit of full rent subsidy for all grades.
- Listing as the first condition for non-renewal in its report (p. 5) a failure of Heketi to meet enrollment and retention targets, when by law (and quoted by the Institute) all charter schools are required to “make good faith efforts” to meet enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners ("ELLS"), and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch ("FRPL") program” and not necessarily face non-renewal for doing so. This statement ignores that Heketi has designed 50% of all of its classes to accommodate ICT and 12:1:1 students and that Heketi serves both sets of those students with disabilities. Moreover, Heketi has documented its good faith efforts to outreach all of its populations.
- Calling to task Heketi’s lower enrollment as an issue for sustained growth, when: 1) Heketi’s enrollment is well within required 20% collared minimums; 2) the Institute has approved the siting of 3 replication K-5 charter schools within a 1 mile radius in the past 3 years and another within several blocks of Heketi 2 years before that; and 3) those charters, and not Heketi, have benefited fully from the rent subsidy.

The outsize effect of the Institute’s clear and obvious preference for proliferating CMO-managed schools in literally the same space as Heketi, as noted above, while in addition not supporting efforts to level the playing field with expanding rent subsidies to all of Heketi’s grade levels (a fact that persists in any charter school that has opened in private space before the changes to the charter law nearly 6 years ago) has practically prevented schools such as Heketi from more quickly achieving the results than its more heavily-resourced peers and thus rendering them keenly vulnerable to non-renewal. These structural challenges of less funding and a crowded market, combined with the innovative nature of standalone schools like Heketi, creates the undeniable temptation to inexplicably close schools that have shown year over year academic growth for schools with better “results,” even though those results-based schools would not capably serve the needs of Heketi students. Heketi appears to be the first charter school in recent memory to be non-renewed in this light.

Thus, from its perch, the Institute fails to see the profound community nexus that Heketi has created, and whose community is threatened by closure. Almost a dozen staff members were born and raised within blocks of Heketi. Without busing, the students attend from a small swath of CSD 7. Heketi is the only bilingual education program in SUNY’s portfolio, and one in District 7 with a profound emphasis on the social and emotional learning and culturally responsive education that the community needs. As you will undoubtedly hear from our families in the news, in print, and from our elected representatives over the coming days, all Heketi seeks is additional time to overcome the structural challenges and allow our approach demonstrate the continued growth over a five year term that will be accepted gratefully with conditions.
Heketi’s Reasonable, Feasible and Achievable Plans for its Next Charter Term

As the Institute did not provide a line of text in its report (p. 47) commenting on Heketi’s reflections and strategies for its next charter term, we felt it critical for the Committee to know of Heketi’s strategic plan, developed in the past four months to address all of the gaps noted in its report. Instead of a summary of points and approaches available in our renewal application which we can detail before the committee, Heketi proposes the following guarantees to which it will hold itself accountable under a five year term with conditions. Should Heketi not meet these benchmarks after three years of its term, we will voluntarily relinquish our charter:

1. Continuous improvement on the New York State Assessments in ELA and mathematics, outperforming our local school district (CSD 7), New York City, and New York State. Given the transition this upcoming school year to Next Generation Learning Standards and the expected concomitant re-establishment of achievement baselines, Heketi proposes the following benchmarks for overall performance:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020-21</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021-22</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022-23</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023-24</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2024-25</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Continuous improvement on internal assessments administered each trimester in grades kindergarten through grade 5, including the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment in reading; and the DESSA (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment to measure SEL student health)
3. LAS Links en Español assessment administered to measure increasing proficiency in Spanish for students who have been Heketi students for five consecutive years
4. A revamped Board of Trustees with a new member majority within two years that will demonstrate increased capacity for accountability and compliance, measured against a monthly review by designated consultants
5. A continued stable school leadership team committed to student achievement for all Heketi students but particularly for dual-language students

In closing, we note the Institute’s reference to the 2013 CREDO study to buttress its case for non-renewal, where “80% of charter schools with poor performance in their early years fail to produce success in subsequent years.” The Institute, as implied and discussed throughout our petition, actually makes the opposite case. In its own report (p. 4), it also notes that “Substantial improvement over time is largely absent from middle schools, multi-level schools and high schools. Only elementary schools show an upward pattern of growth if they start out in the lower two quintiles. Elementary schools showed a greater tendency than other grade spans to be strong in one subject and weak in the other.” Moreover, the CREDO report only leverages performance data from monolingual schools. With an opportunity to present our case and with the data and research we have already provided in this petition, during the site visits by the Institute, and in our renewal application, we are confident in
establishing a prima facie case for renewal despite the political and other structural headwinds that both inform the Institute’s renewal decision and would prevent other charters from posting the growth that Heketi Community Charter School has made in the past three years.

We kindly anticipate your response.

Respectfully,

David R. Rosas  
School Director

Jamie Knox  
Board Chair

Glory Carrion-Gomes  
Secretary

Edwin Cespedes  
Trustee

AnaMaria Correa  
Trustee

Sarah Kawaling  
Trustee