



# CONTENTS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	6
BENCHMARK 1: STUDENT PERFORMANCE.....	7
BENCHMARK 2: TEACHING AND LEARNING.....	8
BENCHMARK 3: CULTURE, CLIMATE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT .....	10
BENCHMARK 4: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS.....	10



2016-2017	K-8	414	409
2015-2016	K-8	414	417
2014-2015	K-8	414	366



A 1-day renewal site visit was conducted at Riverhead Charter School (RCS) on







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

See Appendix A for further information.

Over the three-year charter term, RCS administered the NYS English language arts and mathematics assessments to students in Grades 3-8. The outcomes from these assessments serve as the basis for determination of academic success in absolute proficiency outcomes and comparisons to the state and district of location for all students and subgroups.

Riverhead Charter School was designated *In Good Standing* for the 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017 school years.

RCS analyzed their student performance in comparison with schools with similar characteristics, by looking at the Yonkers School District. According to their analysis, RCS has consistently outperformed Yonkers CSD in both ELA and mathematics, with the exception of the 2013-2014 school year.

RCS's state testing outcomes in grades 3-8 have increased significantly in ELA from 2013 to 2016 and have remained static in math over the past two years. Compared to the NYS average, RCS's schoolwide outcomes in ELA are showing a clear trend line toward the state average, but not showing similar gains in math.

RCS outperformed RCSD in both ELA and mathematics in 2015 and 2016. The school improved in 2016 to outperform the RCSD average in ELA by 13 percentage points and the RCSD average in mathematics by 9 percentage points. Subgroup outcomes for student









investigated within 24 hours.

Classroom environments appeared to be conducive to learning and generally free from disruption. In the observed classrooms, students demonstrated awareness of classroom rules, procedures, and expectations. In most classrooms, team members observed consistent evidence that student-teacher and teacher-student interactions were respectful, and the overall school climate was positive. Team members observed high levels of student engagement across grade levels.

School leadership discussed their continuing family engagement strategies, such as having a food pantry program for families and holding a Family Iron Chef Food Day Cook Off. The school reported their ongoing partnership with the Cornell Cooperative Extension, which collaborates with RCS on the Iron Chef program and a program with RCS students called "Healthy Gardens, Healthy Youth" People's Garden project. RCS ensures staff communication with parents, and along with quarterly report cards, parents can access their child's progress reports through an online Parent Portal. The school reported that they hold parent conferences for parents to discuss any concerns they may have.

The school reported that they address the socio-emotional needs of students experiencing difficulties through ongoing monitoring by the social worker, classroom teachers, and school leaders. The school provides regularly scheduled meeting times for those students to offer appropriate and relevant outlets for any emotional and/or social needs. However, the school did not articulate a system by which they track and monitor the individual socio-emotional progress of the students. The school did create a student survey to give students a space to express themselves anonymously, which provides school-wide data on socio-emotional needs. The school also reported that they disseminate surveys to determine the impact of programs that support student social and emotional health. For example, the school reported that they recently adopted a program for kindergarten through fifth grade that promotes positive relationships between students called the Sanford Harmony Project, with the goal to improve student cooperation, empathy, and mutual respect.

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

RCS appears to be in strong financial condition as evidenced by performance on key indicators derived from the school's independently audited financial statements.

The Charter School Office reviews the financial performance and management of the school.

---

A *composite score* is an overall measure of financial health calculated by the Department's Office of Audit Services. This score is based on a weighting of primary reserves, equity, and net income. A charter school with a score between 1.5 and 3.0 is considered to be in strong financial health. RCS's composite score for 2014-











School leadership reported frequent informal observations as another form of ongoing progress monitoring and feedback mechanism for instructional staff. The executive director/principal, assistant principal, directors of curriculum and instruction are all responsible for conducting walkthrough observations. The school reported that the teacher observation system is modeled after the Danielson Framework for Teaching Rubric. School leadership uses the rubric to assess staff performance annually, and if applicable, the results can determine merit-based pay increase or as grounds to remove ineffective staff members. In the school leader focus group discussed using the NYS HEDI teaching standards of highly effective teachers as a model for their instructional staff.

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

*Element*

*Indicators*

The key design elements proposed for the upcoming charter term include:

1. High Expectations  
RCS has clearly defined and measurable high expectations for academic achievement and strong character. Students, parents, teachers, and staff create and reinforce a culture of achievement and support through a range of formal and informal rewards and consequences for academic performance and behavior.
2. Advisory  
Morning meeting for all students every day. Morning meetings provide the students with opportunity to make a smooth transition into the school day. In addition, it builds community, enhances social skills and supports learning that is occurring in the classroom.
3. Choice & Commitment  
Students, their parents, and the teachers of RCS choose to participate in the program. No one is assigned or forced to attend RCS. Everyone must make and uphold a commitment to the school and to each other to put in the time and effort required to achieve success.
4. Professional Development  
Professional development focuses on using assessment data as a catalyst to improve instruction. A heavy emphasis is placed on differentiation, ensuring all students benefit from teaching and learning.
5. Culture of All Staff  
Culture of the staff places high emphasis on staff members as teachers and learners from each other. Staff share best practices, and share a relentless commitment to high expectations for themselves and others.

but are not limited to: outreach to parents and families in the surrounding communities, widely publicizing the lottery for such school, efforts to academically support these students, and enrollment policy revisions, such as employing a weighted lottery or enrollment preference, to increase the proportion of enrolled students from the three priority populations.

c. The school has implemented a systematic process for evaluating recruitment and outreach strategies and program services for each of the three categories of students, and makes strategic improvements as needed.

Table 1: Student Demographics – Riverhead Charter School Compared to Riverhead Central School District

	Percent of Enrollment			Percent of Enrollment			Percent of Enrollment
	School	CSD	Variance <sup>2</sup>	School	CSD	Variance	School <sup>3</sup>
	Economically Disadvantaged	73%	51%	+22	74%	57%	+17
English Language Learners	20%	18%	+2	22%	21%	+1	36%
Students with Disabilities	12%	14%	-2	7%	14%	-7	11%

The school enrolls a significantly higher percentage of students identified as economically disadvantaged compared to the district of location. RCS's enrollment of English language learners and students with disabilities was on par with the Riverhead School District for the 2014-2015 school year, and also was comparable to the district for enrollment of English language learners in the 2015-2016 school year. While RCS's enrollment of economically disadvantaged students has been consistent over the charter school term, the school reports a significant increase in enrolled English language learners in the 2016-2017 school year. RCS enrolled a smaller percentage of students with disabilities in the 2015-2016 school year than the 2014-2015 school year. However, the school reports that the percentage of students with disabilities has increased again in the 2016-2017 school year.

<sup>2</sup> Variance is defined as the percent of subgroup enrollment between the charter school and the district of location.

<sup>3</sup> Reported by the school; 2015-16 enrollment data has not been publicly released as of the date of this report.

*The school complies with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of its charter.*

Element

Indicators

*RCS, RCSD, and NYS Level Aggregates*

	ELA					Math			
All Students	School	District		NYS	NYS	School	District		NYS
		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	

RCS, RCSD, and NYS Level Aggregates

English Language Learners	ELA					Math				
	School	District		NYS		School	District		NYS	
		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)		District	Delta = (Sch-Dct)	NYS	Delta = (Sch-NYS)
2013-14	11%	2%	+9	3%	+8	21%	4%	+17	12%	+9
2014-15	3%	1%	+2	4%	-1	16%	2%	+14	13%	+3
2015-16	21%	1%	+20	4%	+17	24%	2%	+22	12%	+12