

# Iowa State Board of Education

## Executive Summary

June 18, 2026

**Agenda Item:** Hamburg Charter High School Renewal Performance Report

**State Board Goal:** Goal 5

**State Board Role/Authority:** Per Iowa Code section 256E.10, the Iowa State Board of Education is responsible for monitoring each charter school's performance and compliance to determine whether the school's contract should be renewed up to and not to exceed five years.

**Presenter(s):** Tina Wahlert, Division Administrator  
Division of PK-12 Learning

Barbara Ohlund, Executive Officer  
Division of PK-12 Learning

**Attachment(s):** One

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the State Board approve Hamburg Charter High School's Renewal Performance Report.

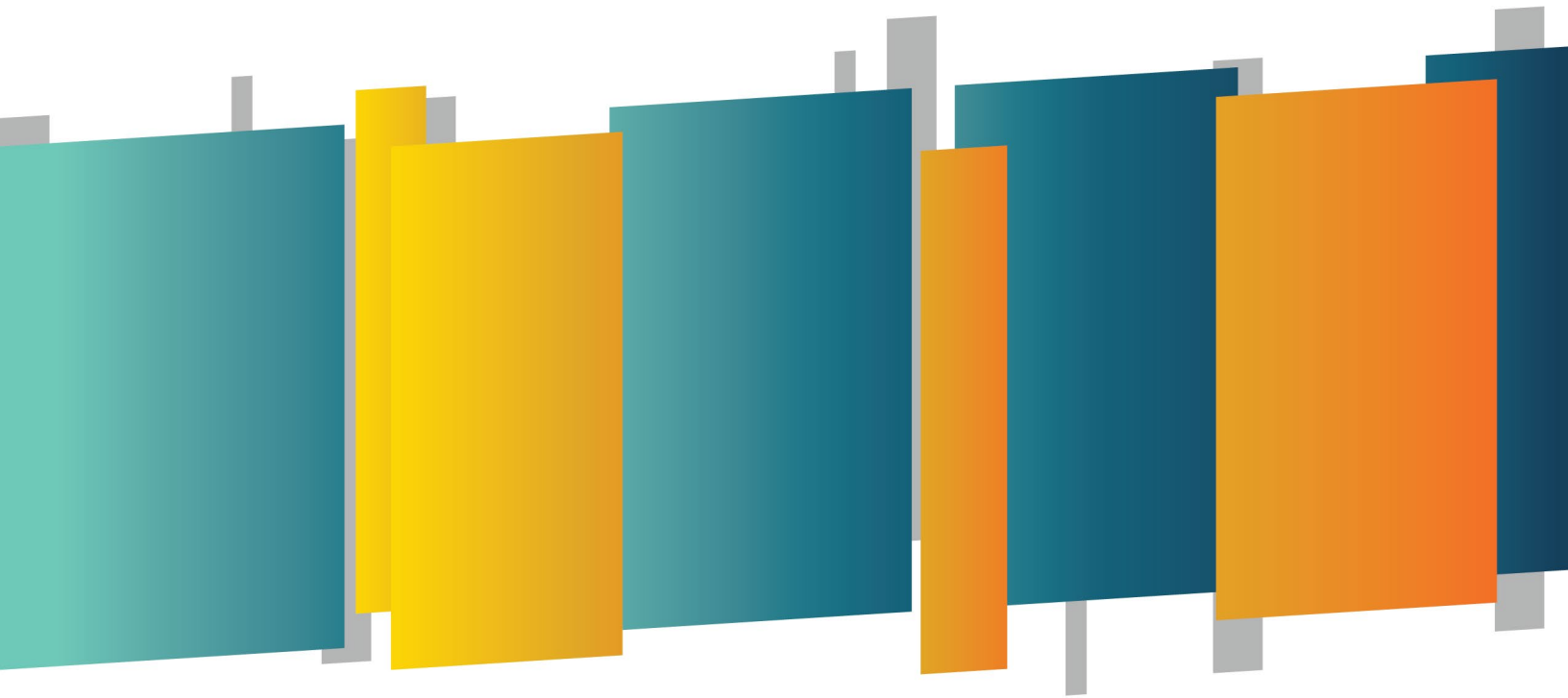
**Background:** Pursuant to Iowa Code section 256E.10, the State Board is required to issue the renewal performance report and renewal application guidance annually by June 30 to charter schools whose contracts will expire during the following school budget year. The charter school is then provided 60 days to respond to the report and submit any corrections or clarifications.

The required report synthesizes the school's performance data and identifies any concerns. The renewal performance report is organized into four main categories: (1) Academic Performance, (2) Operations and Governance Performance, (3) Finance Performance and (4) Supplemental Data.

# Hamburg Charter High School Renewal Performance Report

A report issued by the Iowa State Board of Education

June 18, 2026



State of Iowa  
Department of Education  
Grimes State Office Building  
400 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

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# Hamburg Charter High School

**Location:** Hamburg Community School District

**Grades:** 9-12

**Education Service Provider:** N/A

## Required Actions

- Submit identified missing documentation to the Iowa Department of Education (Department) Charter School Team.
- Update all school facilities to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements, including designated accessible parking and entrance signage.
- Submit narrative addressing repeated audit findings, why they were experienced and remediation plans.

**Table 1: Performance Assessment Scores**

Category	Percent
Academics	70%
Operations and Governance	87%
Finance	70%
Supplemental Data	100%
Overall Performance	78%

## Continuous Improvement Recommendations

- Prioritize transitional support for students entering college-level coursework for the first time.
- Develop new or revised charter-specific goals, including chronic absenteeism support.
- Evaluate instructional rigor and alignment with Iowa Academic Standards.
- Provide professional development on high-leverage instruction for students with disabilities.
- Implement further measures to distinguish school board and charter governing board business.
- Continue current practice related to licensure certification and governing board recruitment.

**Table 2: Performance Assessment Scoring Summary**

Level	% points earned	Performance Description
5	90-100%	This level indicates one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School data is exceeding expectation.</li> <li>• Document review and school visit results identify no corrective actions.</li> <li>• Performance is at low risk and limited concern.</li> </ul>
4	80-89%	This level indicates one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School data is meeting expectation.</li> <li>• Document review and school visit results identify no or limited minor corrective actions.</li> <li>• Performance is at low risk and limited concern.</li> </ul>
3	70-79%	This level indicates one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School data is slightly below expectation.</li> <li>• Document review and school visit results identify corrective and/or continuous improvement actions that need response over time.</li> <li>• Performance is at slight risk and concern.</li> </ul>
2	60-69%	This level indicates one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School data is below expectation.</li> <li>• Document review and school visit results identify substantial corrective actions that need immediate and ongoing response.</li> <li>• Performance is at moderate risk and concern.</li> </ul>
1	<59%	This level indicates one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School data is significantly below expectation.</li> <li>• Document review and school visit results identify critical corrective actions that need immediate response.</li> <li>• Performance is at high risk and substantial concern.</li> </ul>

# Introduction

Under Iowa Code section 256E.10, the Iowa State Board of Education (State Board) determines whether a charter contract should be renewed for up to five years based on evidence of school performance under the charter contract, including academic, operations and governance and financial performance. This evidence is gathered through the performance assessment and site visit process and culminates in individual charter Renewal Performance Reports issued by the State Board on June 30 for each charter up for renewal. Schools submit a charter response, including a response to required and recommended actions, additional evidence of achievements, improvements and proposed plans for the next contract term within 60 days of receiving the report. Next, schools submit a Charter Renewal Application, including their charter response, by October 1. Upon receipt of the application, the State Board has 60 days, or until December 1, to issue a final renewal decision by formal resolution, including the rationale for approval, conditional renewal or revocation. High-performing schools in full compliance may qualify for expedited renewal.

The charter school renewal process provides a comprehensive evaluation of a school’s performance, integrating quantitative data, qualitative observations and stakeholder perspectives. The six steps are detailed in **Table 3. Renewal Process Timeline**.

**Table 3: Renewal Process Timeline**

Step 1 Performance Assessment	Step 2 Site Visit	Step 3 State Board Renewal Report	Step 4 Charter Response	Step 5 Charter Renewal Application	Step 6 State Board Decision
March	April	May-June (6/30)	July-August (8/30)	September- October (10/1)	November- December (12/1)
<b>Purpose:</b> Evaluate the school’s academic, operational, and financial performance to identify strengths, concerns, and areas for improvement that inform renewal decisions.	<b>Purpose:</b> Gather qualitative evidence and assess how the school implements its mission and operations in practice.	<b>Purpose:</b> Synthesize performance assessment data and site visit findings into a clear review of strengths, concerns, and key evidence for renewal decision-making.	<b>Purpose:</b> Require the school to submit a written response addressing its individual Renewal Performance Report issued by the State Board.	<b>Purpose:</b> Require the school to submit a renewal application that includes its response to the individual Renewal Performance Report issued by the State Board.	<b>Purpose:</b> Determine whether to renew, renew with corrective action, or revoke the charter contract based on the evidence presented.

**Note:** The charter school renewal process doesn’t replace other compliance monitoring, review or accountability processes at the Department.

The Department renewal process team is responsible for reviewing performance assessment data, identifying areas of inquiry for the site visit process, participating in site visits and reviewing and revising the Renewal Performance Report prior to its presentation to the State Board. **Table 4: Renewal Process Team Members** identifies the Department personnel involved in the charter renewal process and their respective roles and responsibilities.

**Table 4: Renewal Process Team Members**

DOE Member	Position	Division
Tom Bredfield	Education Program Consultant	School Improvement
Kassandra Cline	Bureau Chief School Business Operations	Chief of Staff
Stephanie Edler	Administrative Consultant	School Business Operations
Eric Heitz	Administrative Consultant	School Improvement
Donna Sump McClain	Education Program Consultant	Evaluation, Instruction and Services
Kyle Morin	Administrative Consultant	School Improvement
Barbara Ohlund	Executive Officer 4	PK-12 Learning Division
Stacie Stokes	Education Program Consultant	School Improvement

## Renewal Performance Report Structure

The performance assessment is organized into four main categories:

1. Academic Performance
2. Operations and Governance Performance
3. Finance Performance
4. Supplemental Data

The following are the results (Background, Key Points, Strengths, Compliance Corrective Actions, Recommendations for Continuous Improvement) for each category of the performance assessment reviewed during the renewal process.

# Academic Performance

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## Background

This section includes review of the school's current Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) designation on its Iowa School Performance Profile, the attainment of their charter-specific goals, information from classroom observations conducted during the school visit and findings from focus group interviews with students, prospective students, leadership, instructional staff, support staff, the governing board and parents.

Hamburg Charter High School was established in response to the community's loss of its local high school and now serves students across southwest Iowa. The school's mission is to increase regional high school graduation rates through a nontraditional model focused on career skill development, student support and transition to full-time employment. Students may graduate with a professional trade certification or an associate degree. To support this instructional model, students spend three days each week in competency-based, trade-focused programming and two days in traditional academic coursework. Highlights of the charter school include:

- **Apprenticeships:** Students participate in summer apprenticeships to learn additional skills.
- **Coursework in the Trades:** Students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of different work-based learning pathways, which include welding, automotive, graphic design, elementary education, culinary arts and nursing.
- **Multiple Options:** Students are able to attain both an associate degree and a trade credential while in high school.
- **Family-Oriented Environment:** The school fosters a strong connection with the local community and its families.

## Academic Key Points

- Charter Goal Achievement: 100% (8/8 goals met, FY26).
- Individualized supports increasing postsecondary attainment, including apprenticeship and career and technical education (CTE) instruction.
- Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) English Language Arts (ELA) Growth above state average.
- *Iowa School Performance Profile Ranking: **Acceptable***

## Strengths

Annual report data indicate that the charter school has successfully met all eight of its school-specific annual reporting goals. These goals include:

1. Increasing the number of non-Caucasian students from low-income families attaining advanced postsecondary degrees and technical diplomas/certifications.
2. Providing a high school experience that is more rigorous and relevant than a traditional high school by focusing on college and career curriculum.
3. Developing an individualized learning plan (ILP) with each student that allows them to direct and decide their educational path.
4. Providing a year-round school that incorporates apprenticeship programs where students learn valuable skills while earning money.
5. Ensuring all students have an ILP based on their interests and career goals.
6. Decreasing the number of student dropouts in southwest Iowa.
7. Providing a career mentor for each student in the charter school to help guide and aid students.
8. Providing professional development for all staff members on career technical programming and ILPs.

Focus group interviews and classroom observations confirm that the school community is committed to the school mission and vision. Academic programming is highly individualized with flexible scheduling that allows students to pursue college-level and trade pathways simultaneously. Student learning experiences are designed for real-world applications and the development of career and employability skills. An example of these innovations was observed in the culinary classes as the students learned about maintaining safe

workspaces while also extending their learning beyond the classroom by preparing lunches for community members, catering local events and helping run a local cafe.

Trades curriculum benefits from full-day sessions three days a week with the remaining days dedicated to core academic instruction. Juniors and seniors have extended opportunities for independent projects aligned with their postsecondary goals. All students develop and present a portfolio of learning experiences to the governing board, demonstrating their learning throughout their trades development.

Recent Iowa School Performance data indicates an increase in overall total points from 51.97% in FY25 to 57.23% in FY26. Additionally, 100% of the student population participated in the ISASP assessment in both FY24 and FY25. This is slightly above the state average of 99.3%. The FY25 ELA Growth score was 63%, thirteen percentage points above the state average (50%) and approximately 23% above the charter's own FY24 score. Furthermore, the school's 2023–24 four-year graduation rate was 87.5%, less than one percentage point below the state average of 88.27%.

## Compliance Corrective Actions

The school has no compliance corrective actions in this area.

## Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

Hamburg Charter High School's chronic absenteeism rate increased from 17.8% in 2024 (below the state average of 21.63%) to 30.16% in 2025, exceeding the state average of 15.81%.

**Recommendation:** Hamburg Charter High School is encouraged to develop goal(s) and integrate action steps to address chronic absenteeism into next year's improvement planning and provide the Department a quarterly update on the number of students that fall within the guidelines of Chronic Absenteeism Law, Iowa Code section 299.12.

Student focus groups indicated a difficult transition from middle school to the charter high school, as many took college level coursework for the first time in ninth grade. The increase in course rigor and workload volume led to many students reporting a need for more upfront support prior to enrollment.

**Recommendation:** Hamburg Charter High School is encouraged to prioritize the implementation of additional transitional support, including pre-enrollment and ongoing monitoring and scheduled meetings with students.

Data intake revealed that Hamburg Charter High School successfully attained all eight of their existing charter-specific goals, resulting in positive outcomes for Hamburg Charter High School students.

**Recommendation:** Hamburg Charter High School, therefore, is encouraged to use current data sets to develop new or revised charter-specific goals for the upcoming charter term.

Teacher interviews and performance data indicate potential misalignment between the rigor of mathematics instruction provided to students in their trades coursework and the Iowa Academic Standards

**Recommendation:** Hamburg Charter High School, therefore, is encouraged to develop the following processes:

- Build collaborative processes between core academic and trades teachers to build academic connections for the students.
- Evaluate the courses students are taking in mathematics to ensure the courses are aligned and instruction upholds the Iowa Academic Standards.
- Strengthen the rigor and instructional practices in science, mathematics and Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) to better connect academic standards with the trades pathways.
- Review the accommodation practices they offer for students on an individualized education program (IEP) in their trades coursework.

# Operations and Governance Performance

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## Background

This section includes review of the school's submitted artifacts indicating the adoption and implementation of key governance, operational, special education and English learner policies and procedures. The school's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act-Differentiated Accountability (IDEA-DA) designation, student retention rate, classroom observations and focus group interviews with the governing board, leadership, instructional and support staff, parents and students are also represented.

Hamburg Charter High School serves students in grades 9-12. The charter school is overseen by a governing board of five members, with some members also serving on the Hamburg Community School District Board of Education. The governing board adopted bylaws and policies to ensure alignment between operation of the charter school and school district.

The charter school is included in the district-wide Level 1 IDEA-DA designation assigned to Hamburg Community School District. Special education and English learner services are provided in accordance with the school's adopted Service Delivery Plan and Lau Plan. The charter school employs one special education teacher, and the school principal serves as the special education director. At the time of the school visit, there were no students identified as needing English learner instruction.

## Operations and Governance Key Points

- Governance (18/18) and operations (29/34) criteria requirements met
- Policies are aligned and support the school's mission and vision
- Governing board engages in ongoing professional development
- 85% student retention rate
- *IDEA-DA Designation: **Level 1***

## Strengths

Document submissions and school visit interviews indicate that the governing board is compliant with policy requirements. Focus groups reflected strong community and school staff dedication, pride and support of the school's mission and vision, specifically in connecting students to authentic, hands-on trade experiences through extended project-based learning. Local administration provides data to the governing board on an ongoing basis to support progress monitoring and improvement planning, and board members engage in professional learning to remain current on legislative priorities and school board governance best practices.

Operationally, the school's implemented procedures and protocols demonstrated alignment between the school's mission, vision and observed instructional practices. Students highlighted the school's individualized approach to supporting each student in reaching postsecondary aspirations and goals. It was also reported that the school's current structures allowed for flexible exploration of several career fields, supporting all students even if specific pathways haven't been previously identified.

The special education department uses area educational agency (AEA) training to implement the ACHIEVE system and a data-driven push-in model for IEP decisions, supported by a strong partnership with the regional AEA consultant. The district's small size further enhances this support network by facilitating direct, seamless communication with parents regarding individual student needs. This operational structure is mirrored at the leadership level, where the school benefits from a diverse, well-connected relationship between the regular school board and the charter governing board. Furthermore, administrators have cultivated a highly supportive professional culture that actively encourages faculty members to pursue individualized professional development tailored to their instructional needs.

Student retention rates have remained stable across all demographic subgroups. The school's most recent three-year retention data shows an average rate of 85% across all students. This data demonstrates sustainable enrollment, support and community interest in the charter school programming.

## Compliance Corrective Actions

The following corrective actions were identified during the performance assessment process for immediate remediation:

While school visits and focus group interviews confirmed the implementation of student services and other operational procedures, several required documents from Hamburg Charter High School were not received by the established deadline. The school is required to submit this missing documentation.

**Required Action:** Submit the identified documentation to the Department Charter School Team:

- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support process and policy
- Certificate of occupancy
- Special Education Service Delivery Plan and related documentation
  - Identification and referrals
  - IEP and 504 plan development procedures and compliance
  - Accommodations on assessments
  - Special Education discipline procedures
- English Language Learner Compliance: Accommodations on assessments

The school facilities tour conducted during the visit revealed non-compliance within ADA requirements.

**Required Action:** Update school facilities to comply with ADA. This includes:

- Designating accessible parking spaces including at least one accessible van space per facility and posting accessible/directional signage at entrance/exit points for all facilities. Parking spaces must comply with the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design ([ADA Checklist](#)).
- Updating the school's facility infrastructure to meet accessibility standards for ADA compliance.

## Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

Currently there is an overlap in membership and meetings for the boards of Hamburg Community School District and the charter school. Though the members only serving the charter school only participate for charter-specific agenda items, the meetings are held concurrently.

**Recommendation:** Hamburg Charter High School is encouraged to implement the following governing board actions:

- Schedule separate meeting times for the Hamburg Charter High School Governing Board and the Hamburg Community School District Board of Directors to ensure board business and agendas remain distinct.
- Continue to engage the governing board in ongoing professional development specific to both school board governance and charter school management.

School visit observation results also indicated opportunity for deeper learning and implementation of high-impact instruction for all students, but especially students with disabilities.

**Recommendation:** Hamburg Charter High School is encouraged to provide general education teachers, special education teachers, trades instructors and administration with professional development that focuses on the use of high-leverage instructional practices for the students with disabilities. The goal is to increase the engagement of students with disabilities in general education classes.

# Finance Performance

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This section includes review of the results from the school's most recent annual audit, financial performance over the charter term, five-year projected budget and actual student enrollment rates compared to projections. Findings from focus group interviews with school administration and financial officers are also represented.

## Finance Key Points

- The Certified Annual Report, Annual Transportation Report and Special Education Supplement were submitted to the Department timely in FY23, FY24 and FY25.
- The annual audit report was filed timely in FY24 and FY25.
  - The audit report was not filed timely in FY23.
- Annual Fiscal Risk Assessment Ratings
  - FY23 Rating: Requires Review
    - Primary factors: Late filing of fiscal report in 2022, audit findings, material weakness.
    - Secondary factors: Enrollment less than 300, decreased enrollment from prior year and over last three years, net negative open enrollment.
  - FY24 Rating: Requires Review
    - Primary factors: Audit findings, material weakness.
    - Secondary factors: New School Business Officer, enrollment less than 300, decreased enrollment from prior year and over last three years, net negative open enrollment.
  - FY25 Rating: Requires Review
    - Primary factors: Audit findings, material weakness.
    - Secondary factors: Enrollment less than 300, decreased enrollment from prior year and over last three years, net negative open enrollment.

## Compliance Corrective Actions

The following corrective actions were identified during the performance assessment process for immediate remediation:

**Required Action:** Submit a narrative addressing each of the repeat audit findings, including the district's understanding of why the audit findings were experienced and the work being done to address systemic issues and district processes to address each finding.

## Financial Reporting and Audit Findings

### FY25 Audit Findings:

- Segregation of duties
- Financial reporting: Material amounts of receivables, payables and capital asset additions were not recorded in the financial statements
- Expenditures exceeded the certified budget
- Certain minutes were not published timely
- Teacher Salary Supplement was not fully expended in the fiscal year
- Interfund loans that were still outstanding from the prior year

### FY24 Audit Findings:

- Segregation of duties
- Financial reporting: Material amounts of receivables, payables and capital asset additions were not recorded in the financial statements
- Expenditures exceeded the certified budget
- Certain minutes were not published timely
- Teacher Salary Supplement was not fully expended in the fiscal year
- Interfund loans that were still outstanding from the prior year
- Two student activity accounts had deficit balances

### FY23 Audit Findings:

- Segregation of duties
- Financial reporting: Material amounts of receivables, payables and capital asset additions were not recorded in the financial statements
- Disbursements without board approval
- Expenditures exceeded the certified budget
- Certain minutes were not published timely
- Miscoded payroll to Teacher Salary Supplement
  - After corrections were made Teacher Salary Supplement was not fully expended
- Salaries were not published
- Inactive Enterprise Fund: Child Care Fund

### Five-Year Projection

- The school did not provide a projected ending balance from FY26 so the beginning balance of FY27 is unknown.
  - It is unclear how the FY27 beginning balance would change the remainder of the projected values.
- The school is projecting an increasingly positive balance over the five years.
- The school included a \$156,000 grant that is anticipated to be received in each year FY27 to FY31, totaling \$780,000.
  - The district reported \$780,000 in revenue for an anticipated grant.
    - The grant has not been awarded.
    - If the grant is not awarded, the school is projected to be increasingly negative each of the five years.
  - If the district does not receive the grant, the five-year projection changes from an increasingly positive balance to an increasingly negative balance.
  - The district's unspent balance at the end of FY25 is \$2.2 million. The district has committed to supporting the charter high school with the funding received for K-8 students that goes unexpended each year.

**Table 5: Five-Year Projections**

Five-Year Projections	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
Projected Staff	11.16	11.16	11.16	11.16	12.16
Projected Enrollment	62.0	63.0	67.0	64.0	68.0
Total Revenue	\$755,784	\$772,476	\$816,040	\$797,580	\$847,060
Total Expenditures	\$691,200	\$722,910	\$744,421	\$766,147	\$841,199
Net Revenue/Expenditures	\$64,584	\$49,566	\$71,619	\$31,433	\$5,861
Prior Year Surplus/Deficit	Not reported	\$64,584	\$114,150	\$185,769	\$217,202
Remaining Balance	\$64,584	\$114,150	\$185,769	\$217,202	\$223,063

# Supplemental Data

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## Background

This section includes review of the school's current staff retention, properly licensed and endorsed teachers and areas of expertise of the current governing board members.

## Supplemental Data Key Points

- 100% teacher licensure and staff retention
- Board expertise in academics, policy, finance, operations

## Strengths

The governing board includes members with expertise in academic instruction, school operation, school governance and finance. The current board president previously served on the Hamburg Community School District Board of Education prior to his current service on the Hamburg Charter High School Governing Board. Additional board members contribute relevant expertise in career and technical trades and special education practices. Annually, the governing board members engage in ongoing professional development, including training provided by the Iowa Association of School Boards and attendance at professional development conferences.

School visit and data review findings indicate that, over the past three years, all teachers at Hamburg Charter High School have held appropriate endorsements for their assigned subjects. The school has also maintained a stable teaching staff, with a 100% retention rate from FY25 to FY26.

## Compliance Corrective Actions

The school has no compliance corrective actions in this area.

## Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

The charter school is supported by a governing board with extensive and balanced expertise essential to the ongoing operation, improvement and sustainability of the school. Additionally, the current practice of monitoring teacher licensure is effective. Hamburg Charter School retains its staff, further providing stability to its continuous improvement efforts.

**Recommendation:** It is encouraged that school administration continue its effective policies and procedures for verifying staff licensure and certification. The local governing board is encouraged to continue its balanced approach to member recruitment.

# Appendices

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1. [Renewal Process and Performance Assessment Overview](#)
  - A brief description of the full charter school renewal process, including criteria from the adopted performance framework and the corresponding rubric used in the performance assessment
  
2. [Charter Renewal Application Guidance](#)
  - A companion document for charter schools seeking renewal, including guidance on completing the application form and instructions for the formal school response to the Renewal Performance Report issued by the Iowa State Board of Education.