



*Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor*

**Charter School Annual Site Visit Report  
Charter Schools Accountability and Support  
2011-2012**

**BRONX COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT**

**MARCH 2012**

## **Part 1: Executive Summary**

### **School Overview and History:**

Bronx Community Charter School (Bronx Community) is an elementary school serving approximately 251 students from Kindergarten through fourth grade in the 2011-12 school year.<sup>1</sup> The school is in the fourth year of its first charter term and plans to expand to fifth grade during its current charter term (ending in 2013), with eventual expansion plans through grade eight by adding one grade per year if approved for renewal.<sup>2</sup> It has not stated any plans for replication during its current or next charter term. The school is currently split-sited, with both campuses located in private space in District 10. The school's student body includes 72.8% students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, 4.9% English Language Learners, and 12.8% special education students.<sup>3</sup>

The school reported a low student turnover rate (3.6%) from the beginning of the year through February 29, 2012.<sup>4</sup> There are currently 152 students on its waitlist.<sup>5</sup> The average attendance rate for school year 2011-12 was 95%.<sup>6</sup>

Bronx Community has received only one NYC DOE Progress Report thus far (in 2010-11), for which it earned a C.<sup>7</sup> The school received above average scores on the 2010-11 NYC DOE School Survey in all categories (Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement, Safety and Respect), with 52% of parents and 95% of teachers responding. The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability measures.<sup>8</sup>

Bronx Community Charter School is an independent charter school not associated with a charter management organization (CMO) or other parent organization. The school has had the same two co-directors, Martha Andrews and Sasha Wilson, since its founding.

### **Annual Review Process Overview:**

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) office of Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) conducts an annual site visit of charter schools authorized by the NYC DOE. The site visit is designed to address three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization; and is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations? To ascertain matters of sustainability and strategic planning, we also ask about the school's plans for its next charter term. The visits are conducted by representatives of CSAS and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the school leadership team. Afterward, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators and teachers. Areas of evaluation include, but are not limited to: academic goals and mission; curriculum and instruction; school culture and learning environment; assessment utilization; parent engagement; government structures and organizational design; community support; special populations; and safety and security. The site visit is intended to provide a snapshot of the school and reflects what was observed at the time of the visit.

The following experts participated in the review of this school on March 6, 2012:

- Gabrielle Mosquera, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE CSAS
- Laurie Pendleton, Consultant to NYC DOE CSAS

<sup>1</sup> Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (2/28/12)

<sup>2</sup> NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

<sup>3</sup> NYC DOE ATS system, April 2012; the school's self-reported numbers (2/28/12) are similar to those from the ATS system pull with regard to students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (74%; 186 out of 251) and special education students (11.6%; 29 out of 251), but vary with regard to English Language Learners (9.6%; 24 out of 251)

<sup>4</sup> Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (2/28/12)

<sup>5</sup> Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (2/28/12)

<sup>6</sup> Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (2/28/12)

<sup>7</sup> NYC DOE Progress Report webpage: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm>

<sup>8</sup> New York State Education Department - [www.nysesd.gov](http://www.nysesd.gov)

## Part 2: Findings

### Areas of Strength:

- The school's project-based, hands-on instructional model is evident throughout all grade levels, and its co-teaching structure is being implemented consistently in classrooms.
  - A second grade class was observed constructing bar graphs using the favorite foods of their classmates. Third grade classrooms were working in pairs to create fractions of different sizes and describing the models to each other. A second grade writing workshop focused on creating a persuasive letter based on something students would like to see changed. In this lesson, the teacher shared an engaging model letter and asked students for feedback.
  - The school focuses on teaching students to be deliberate thinkers who defend what they think and support each other in learning. In a third grade classroom students were observed sharing ideas for how to accomplish a task. One student asked another, "Can you help me make this?" Another answered, "Here's an idea for how to do it." A teacher in this same classroom asked a student to explain their procedure for tackling a math problem. At the close of the explanation another student said, "I did it a different way." The teacher helped the class compare both procedures.
  - All of the classroom instruction observed emphasized student reflection. Teachers in multiple classrooms asked students to share their thinking with their classmates. When a wrong answer was shared in a fourth grade math class, the teacher asked the student to rethink his steps to see where he might have gone wrong.
  - Strong expectations for both academics and behavior are delivered through a supportive environment. Observed redirection of student behavior was instructional and the tone of delivery was one of respect. Clear expectations for behavior were shared and reinforced with students through such teacher comments as, "What are learners doing now?" "Please explain to me what your job is right now," "How can I help you?" and "Excellent choice!"
  - Co-teachers share the instructional weight equally and with intention. In the fourth grade writing class, one teacher was observed supporting individuals as they worked on their writing assignment while another was meeting with a small group of students. In the second grade classroom, the teachers conferred with each other to make decisions about how best to adjust the lesson to the needs of the students. The Kindergarten classroom had a small group of students out of the room working on science exploration with a teaching assistant while the co-teachers held small group instruction and conducted individual assessments.
- The school has increased its focus on using data intentionally to increase support of targeted students.
  - The school assesses all students using Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) and this year added Words Their Way at grades K-2 and Fountas and Pinnell at grades 3-4 three times a year. This data is then analyzed by the school's leadership, teaching teams and literacy specialists to determine how to best meet the needs of both individual students and grade levels. The co-directors meet biweekly with teachers to lead discussions about student growth, create student growth plans, and track student progress. School leaders also coordinate the work of the learning specialists as well as special education and ELL support.
  - Based on research from the Teachers College at Columbia University, the school recalibrated its definition of "on grade level" for its self-created internal assessments, leading to more students being identified as performing below grade level than in previous years. However, both the school leaders and the teachers feel this move has resulted in a clearer understanding of the challenges facing their students. The school prepared a document for parents that clearly explains the change in

- assessments and helps parents understand their student's current level of learning as well as their goals.
- Teachers interviewed report there is a lot more data available this year and the electronic collection method is helpful. One teacher noted that data "provides a clear picture of where students are and I find it useful and teacher friendly." Another added that the data tools are helpful and not burdensome.
  - The school has undertaken a thoughtful plan in response to state assessment data from 2011. All students in the 3rd and 4th grades took practice reading and math tests in early November and again in January. The teachers helped students understand the structure of the test and questioning strategies. Teachers have also worked with the literacy and math specialists to create lessons focused on specific skills found on the assessment. Practice tests show growth from November to January. On the third grade multiple-choice math, 50% of students scored a 3 or 4 in January compared to 16% in November. On the ELA for 3rd grade, 40% of students scored a 3 or 4, compared to 34% in November. The 4th grade results are not as strong as the 3rd grade. The 4th grade math practice test shows 28% receiving a 3 or 4 which is lower than last year's actual exam results for this cohort. In response, the school used this test data to identify a group of students in the approaching category. This group has been receiving intensive instruction during the test preparation period as well as additional targeted support. 44% of 4th graders scored a 3 or 4 in ELA compared to 30% on the spring assessment.
- The school has cultivated a strong professional learning community with a focus on improving instruction and meeting the needs of all students.
    - The school's co-directors are instructionally knowledgeable and teachers report both leaders provide tailored and meaningful feedback to them aligned with the school's mission. The co-directors observe each teacher three times a year and provide extensive written feedback. Teacher evaluations are collaborative and focus on the improvement of teaching and learning. There appears to be a great deal of trust between teachers and administrators. Teachers interviewed shared that they appreciate the feedback they receive and find it helpful in improving their practice. The co-directors provide consistent messages about expectations to teaching teams.
    - Teachers have ample time to meet to analyze data, plan lessons, and discuss student growth. These meetings are supported by one of the co-directors. One teacher reported she feels they are getting better and better at academic support meetings where they target individual students and create concrete goals for improvement.
    - Interviewed teachers reported that Professional Development is thoughtfully planned and meets their needs. A current focus of PD has been the Common Core standards. Teachers are in the process of exploring what "Response to Literature" looks like across the grade levels. The teachers described a recent PD on how to improve feedback to students which resulted in the use of a Google document to collect ideas. Interviewed teachers find such structures to be very supportive and improve communication throughout the school.
    - The school attempts to internally promote by hiring student teachers as full-time teachers after they complete their placement, and additionally provides a two week pre-service training in August. According to school leaders, both of these practices are intended to ensure the continuation of the mission and common expectations.
  - The school has clear structures in place to encourage open communication with families.
    - The school provides narrative student Progress Reports to parents three times a year at parent-teacher conferences. These reports are aligned with Common Core measures and provide extensive information on the work habits, strengths, interests, and goals for each student. These conferences are spread out over the year and have different foci; the fall conference concentrates on student development and goal-setting, while the March and June conferences cover academic progress. Teachers interviewed

- also reported increased informal parent communication this year around goal-setting and classroom practices.
- This year the school identified students who could be retained much earlier than before and began communicating this to parents in January. Communication included both a phone call and a letter describing the specific areas challenging each student (e.g., reading level, sight word bank, decoding). School leaders report that this specificity has helped differentiate each retention conversation and set progress goals, and that parents have been largely receptive this.
  - The school holds a community event each month to encourage connection among its parents, who come from a variety of different neighborhoods. School leaders stated that Bronx Community's Parent Association meets regularly and collaborates with them on ideas for events.
- The school's operations have continued to run smoothly this year despite new challenges presented by the school being split-sited this year, with grades K-2 in one site and grades 3-4 in an annex site several blocks away.
    - School leaders made several intentional changes to accommodate the split-siting, the foremost of which was dividing their own supervisory duties. (Sasha Wilson oversees grades K-2 at the main site and Martha Andrews oversees grades 3-4 at the annex.) School leaders have also placed adequate numbers of support staff in each location and divided the schedules of instructional specialists and specials teachers between each building. Additionally, the school day begins and ends with all grades together at the main site, and the school uses All-School Study and All-School Sing to further unify the grades.
    - School leaders report that Bronx Community is in excellent financial health. As of December 31, 2011 the school had close to \$2 million in net assets. They have designed a new building they plan to move into after the start of the 2012-2013 school year. According to school leaders, a Board representative visits the building site every two weeks, and the school's annex lease will be paid for by its new landlord until the new building is ready for move-in.

#### **Areas of Growth:**

- The school should continue to refine instructional practice to advance learning outcomes. Its first year NYS Assessment results, while at only one grade, were below both district and city averages in ELA and in Math.
  - In third grade, 29.4% of students scored a Level 3 or above on the 2011 ELA assessment, compared to 37.7% of district third graders and 48.1% of citywide third graders.
  - Additionally, 35.3% of third graders scored a Level 3 or above on the 2011 Math assessment, compared to 45.6% of district third graders and 54.8% of citywide third graders.
- The school should continue to refine the use of data by using current assessment practices and resulting data to project growth on New York State assessments and to make mid-course corrections when the data are not showing positive trends.
  - The school reports substantial growth on student assessment data from fall to winter of this school:
    - In first grade, fall reading assessment data showed 30% of students meeting or exceeding grade level expectations. According to winter results, this number has risen to 54%.
    - Similar growth has been seen in second grade, with fall results showing 36% of students at or above grade level and 52% at reading level on winter assessments.
    - The percentage of third grade students at grade level grew from 30% to 48%. Data for the fourth grade comparison was not yet available at the time of the visit.

- Although this growth is significant, the school should compare results on internal assessments to same student results on the NYS assessments, where appropriate, to establish validity of internal assessments and expand use as a predictor and value as a diagnostic for targeting instruction.
  - As data collects over time, longitudinal analysis can be done to determine what proficiency scores on second or first grade correlate to success on third grade state assessments.
- The school's move to the Rediker Student information System in the 2011-2012 school year is an opportunity to develop systems for tracking student data, viewing longitudinal progress and comparing subgroup performance. The school is encouraged to use this system to track and analyze data about student growth from year to year.
- Several teachers interviewed stated that although time is currently set aside around assessments to analyze and use data, they wish they had even more time to collaborate.
- The school should continue to enact measures to be in full compliance with the 2010 amended Charter Schools Act as it relates to recruitment and retention of Special Education students, students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, and ELL students. The school's proportions of two of these high-needs groups is strong, with the percentages of students eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch (72.8%) and Special Education students (12.8%) are comparable or close to comparable to those of the District 10 (75.2% for Free or Reduced Price Lunch; 16.7%, for Special Education).<sup>9</sup>
  - However, Bronx Community's ELL population currently comprises 4.9% of its overall student population, which is significantly lower than the 21.2% average ELL population of District 10.<sup>10</sup> The school is encouraged to continue documenting both its outreach to new ELL students and considering new strategies if ELL enrollment doesn't improve or improves only marginally, as well as monitoring the academic progress made among current ELLs.

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<sup>9</sup> NYC DOE ATS System, April 2012

<sup>10</sup> NYC DOE ATS System, April 2012

## Part 3: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

### The CSAS Accountability Framework

To help NYC DOE authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the NYC DOE's Charter Schools Accountability and Support team (CSAS) has developed an Accountability Framework build around four essential questions for charter school renewal:

1. Is the school an academic success?
2. Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?
3. Is the school compliant with its charter and all applicable law and regulations?
4. What are the school's plans for its next charter term?

### 1. Is the School an Academic Success?

#### 1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

Schools that are academic successes have many of the characteristics below:

- Meet absolute performance goals established in school charter
- Meet student progress goals established in school charter
- Are closing the achievement gap for at risk students, including special needs and ELL students
- Are surpassing performance of DOE identified peer-schools
- Are surpassing performance district and city proficiency or better averages
- Are meeting other rigorous academic and non-academic goals as stated in school's charter

Evidence for success might include, but not be limited to, the following depending on school configurations:

- Grades 3-8 NYS ELA Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 3-8 NYS Math Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 4 and 8 NYS Science Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 8-12 NYS Regent Exam Results
- When applicable, NYSSAA or other approved alternate assessments results
- HS 4- and 6-Year Graduation Rates (absolute and progress, overall, for at-risk student populations)
- Grades 8-12 College Readiness Credit Accumulation
- Percentage of Students Applying to and Being Admitted to College
- Percentage of Students Taking AP Courses and/or Percentage of Students Passing AP Courses
- Results on state accountability measures
- Charter School Academic and Non-Academic Goals
- NYC Progress Reports

#### 1b. Mission and Academic Goals

Schools with successful missions and goals have many of the characteristics below:

- Have an animating mission statement that staff, students and community embrace
- Set ambitious academic and non-academic goals that entire school community knows and embraces
- Have processes for regular monitoring and reporting on progress toward school goals
- Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring

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Evidence for successful missions and goals might include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Mission statement, charter, external documents (parent and family handbooks, school website, etc.)
- Annual reports, school improvement plans, leadership board reports
- Board agendas and minutes
- Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction surveys
- Parent association meeting agendas and minutes
- Participation at parent-teacher conferences, school advocacy events, participation in academic goal related programs
- Stakeholder (board, parents, staff, students, etc.) interviews

## 1c. Responsive Education Program

Schools with successful education programs have many of the characteristics below:

- Are self-reflective and examine practice based on outcomes against goals
- Have well-thought out curricular programs that are aligned with NYS learning outcomes as described by state standards and the new Common Core Curriculum.
- Use instructional models and resources consistent with school mission and that are flexible in addressing the needs of all learners
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- Implement a coherent and effective interim assessment system (e.g., use of formative, interim, and summative assessment data) for monitoring progress, predicting performance, and adjusting instruction
- Have an effective process for supporting improved classroom instruction, including frequent observation and feedback
- Use a defined process for evaluating curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals
- Have school calendars and day schedules that provide the time necessary to deliver on the school's mission and academic goals

Evidence for successful education programs, in addition to positive results, may include, but not be limited to, many of the following:

- Instructional planning documents (alignments, scope and sequences, curriculum maps, unit and lesson plans, etc)
- Student/teacher schedules
- Classroom observations
- Student Intervention / Response to Intervention program description and resources
- Special Education/ELL progress monitoring documentation
- Interim assessment results
- Student and teacher portfolios
- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation
- Professional development plans and resources
- School calendar and daily schedules
- DOE School Surveys and internal school satisfaction surveys
- Instructional leader and staff interviews

## **1d. Learning Environment**

Schools with successful learning environments have many of the characteristics below:

- Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best efforts
- Use a comprehensive approach to student management, including positive behavioral expectations and a clear discipline policy to build and sustain a safe, orderly, and supportive classroom environment
- Provide for safe, respectful, efficient transitions, hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.
- Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and supported
- Provide opportunities for students to actively engage in their own learning and in the life of the school
- Have a plan with formal or informal structures or programs in place that provide students opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens (for example: a character education, citizenship, or community involvement or service program)

Evidence for successful learning environments may include, but not be limited to, many of the following:

- School mission and articulated values
- School calendar and class schedules
- Student management plan (code of conduct, school values, discipline policy, positive incentive system, etc.)
- Student attendance and retention rates
- Student discipline data (referral, suspension, expulsion)
- DOE School Survey student results
- DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results
- Parent complaint/concern information
- Internal satisfaction survey results
- Leadership, staff, and, if appropriate, student interviews
- Classroom observations
- Scheduled student engagement opportunities (e.g., student advisory, internships, student government, student led conferences, peer tutoring, peer mediation, etc.)

## **2. Is the School a Fiscally Sound, Viable Organization?**

### **2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design**

Schools with successful governance and organizational design structures have many of the characteristics below:

- Have a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations, with clear lines of accountability for the Board, school leadership and all staff
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate officers, committees, and a purposeful blend of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter
- Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly but not limited to open-meeting laws and conflict of interest regulations, and is fully compliant with its Board approved by-laws (number of meetings, quorum, posting of calendar, agenda and minutes)
- Have a defined process for Board reflection on effectiveness, assessing developing needs, and plan

- for professional growth
- Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time and despite circumstance
  - Implements a school leadership structure that is aligned with charter and that is sufficient to fulfill school's mission and achieve its accountability goals and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer
  - If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization is identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees
  - Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
  - Implements a process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's staff that is clearly defined in staff handbook
  - Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers, including both formal and informal observations

Evidence for school governance and organizational design may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, calendar of meetings, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Board resources for evaluating school leadership and staff, including rubric/performance metrics
- Board resources for self-reflection and professional growth
- Board development plan
- Board interviews
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar
- Professional development plan for leadership staff
- School leadership and staff interviews

## **2b. School Climate and Community Engagement**

Schools with a sustaining school climate and engaged parent and community support have many of the characteristics below:

- Create and maintain a healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered, and aligned with school mission and values
- Implement flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- Encourage professional conversations about effective performance and quality instruction among staff, through, for example, such means as regular and periodic teaming (grade level teams, data days, etc.) and peer observations
- Have systems in place to evaluate professional development effectiveness and provide ongoing support for school-wide and individual initiatives
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Engage parents actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- Develop strong community-based partnerships who support and advocate for the school

- Have a clear procedure for parents and staff to express concerns to school leadership and the Board, as appropriate, including a clearly articulated escalation path to authorizer

Evidence for school climate and community engagement may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- DOE School Survey satisfaction parent, teacher, and, if appropriate student results
- Internal satisfaction surveys
- Staff handbook
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- School Professional Development Plan and staff feedback on professional development events
- Resources for evaluations and observations, scheduled opportunities for professional collaboration, staff feedback on professional development events
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent/Student Handbook
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)

## 2c. Financial and Operational Health

Schools that are responsible stewards of public funds and effective, sustaining organizations have many of the characteristics below:

- Consistently meet student enrollment and retention targets
- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, as school leadership and Board levels, in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to short- and long-term decision-making
- Have clearly established policies and procedures for overall fiscal and operational health of the school (onboarding of all new staff, record-keeping, processing requests of HR services, application and enrollment calls, visitors, volunteers, etc.)
- Maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Receive consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, have strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school design and academic program
- Ensure a safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage

Evidence for a financially sound, viable organization may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School budget, P&Ls, and monthly/quarterly cash-flow reports
- Financial leader(s) job description, resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Financial audits
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships
- Operational policies and procedures, including training resources
- Staff turnover and retention records
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- School safety plan
- Appropriate insurance documents

### **3. Is the School in Compliance with its Charter and All Applicable Law and Regulations?**

#### **3a. Approved Charter and Agreement**

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

- Implemented the key features of their charter as described in the original charter and, if appropriate, as modified in approved revisions to their charter, including but not limited to mission, academic program, school organization, grade configuration, enrollment, goals, etc.
- Ensure that up-to-date charter is available on request to staff, parents, and school community
- Implemented comprehensive academic, behavioral, oversight, management, and operational policies and procedures that are substantially aligned with the charter and the school's stated mission and vision

Evidence for a school's compliance with the terms of its charter and charter agreement may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Authorized charter and signed agreement
- Charter revision request approval and documentation
- School mission
- School policies and procedures
- Annual Site Visit reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership, Board, staff and community interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

#### **3b. Applicable Federal and State Law**

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting

- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location<sup>11</sup> or are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages for enrollment and retention
- Implement school policies related to student discipline and promotion and retention that are fully compliant with laws and regulations related to students with disabilities and due process regulations
- Conduct an independently verified fair and open lottery and manage with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employ instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and certification requirements

Evidence for compliance with applicable federal and state law may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School reporting documents
- School's Annual Report
- Student recruitment plan and resources
- Student management policies and promotion and retention policies
- Family/Student handbook
- Student discipline records
- Parent complaint/grievance records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Demographic data (school, district, and other as appropriate)
- Staff roster, fingerprint clearance for all staff, certification status of all instructional staff

### **3c. Applicable Regulations**

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

- Safe and secure facilities with no significant compliance concerns with applicable regulations
- Consistently clean annual audits, up-to-date escrow accounts, and have completed all other financial reporting as required
- Boards that meet requirements for size, meeting frequency, public notice, applicable open-meeting and conflict of interest regulations, as well as complying with NYC DOE CSAS's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members.
- Informed NYC DOE CSAS, and where required, received CSAS approval for changes in significant partnerships, such as dropping/replacing a management organization
- Effectively engaged parent associations

Evidence for compliance with applicable regulations may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School or building safety plan; appropriate inspection documents
- Annual audits, escrow accounts, other financial reporting documents
- Board roster, calendar, agenda and minutes, conflict of interest documents, notification of changes/approval of new member request documents
- Charter revision requests, revised or new contracts
- Parent association calendar of meetings, identified officers, parent association agenda and minutes, parent satisfaction survey results
- Interviews with Board, staff, parents, students or others, as appropriate

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<sup>11</sup> School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

## **4. What Are the School's Plans for its Next Charter Term?**

### **4a. School Expansion or Model Replication**

In anticipation of a new charter term schools may be considering various growth options: replication, expansion to new grades or increased enrollment or altering their model in some significant way. Successful schools generally have processes for:

- Conducting needs/opportunity assessments
- Forming Board and leadership committees or subcommittees to investigate options, develop action plans, ensure capacity and resources are aligned, etc.
- Engaging school community in articulating charter revisions (or a new charter in cases of replication) to address the proposed growth plans
- Ensuring that the final proposal is ambitious but realistic in its plans
- Creating a well-reasoned and documented prospective for the school's new charter term and, if applicable, a new charter proposal (for replication)

Evidence for likely success in planning for school growth in a new charter term may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Charter (replication) Application
- Leadership and Board interviews

### **4b. Organizational Sustainability**

Successful schools consistently perform despite change. While there is no single path for ensuring sustainability, successful schools often have the following features:

- School anticipates organizational opportunities/needs and plans for resource development (human resource policies for growing your own talent, for example, or fundraising or budget management to take care of anticipated capital needs and to mitigate risks for the unexpected, or board development to bring new talent or specific needs-based expertise to the school)

Evidence for organizational sustainability may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organization chart
- Staff rosters
- Staff handbook
- Leadership and staff interviews
- Budget

#### **4c. School or Model Improvements**

Successful schools are thoughtful about the continued appropriateness of school design features and elements of their models. They:

- Review performance carefully and even if they don't make major changes through expansion or replication, they are careful to adjust elements to ensure continued and improved success.
- Develop plans to improve the school learning environment, including improving their facilities to expand program offerings and/or developing new partnerships to further the school's mission.

Evidence for successful improvements to a school's program or model may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) with partners or important vendors

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