BRONX COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

RENEWAL VISIT REPORT

OCTOBER 2012

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:
Bronx Community Charter School is an elementary school currently serving approximately 300 students in Kindergarten through grade 5.[1] The school is under the terms of its first charter and has expanded to K-5 during its current term, which expires on January 14, 2013. If approved for renewal, the school will expand to K-6 in 2013-14 and proposes to expand to K-8 in the next charter term contingent on improved academic results.

Bronx Community Charter School is an independent charter school not associated with a charter management organization (CMO).

Renewal Review Process Overview:
The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team conducts renewal visits of charter schools authorized by the NYC DOE. The renewal visit is designed to address four questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization; is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations; and what are the school's plans for its next charter term? The visits are conducted by representatives of CSAS and may also include the district superintendent and other DOE staff or consultants. The visits last the duration of two to three school days. The renewal visit begins with a meeting with the school leadership team. Afterward, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. They also review academic and operational documents. Additionally, reviewers meet with one or more of the school's Board representatives and speak to a sampling of the school's parents. 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 renewal 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 October 17-18, 2012:
- -Richard Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSAS
- -Gabrielle Mosquera, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE CSAS
- -Kamilah O'Brien, Director of Operations, NYC DOE CSAS
- -Lynnette Aqueron, NYC DOE Division of Students with Disabilities & ELLs
- -Sonia Park, Executive Director, NYC DOE CSAS
- -Laurie Pendleton, Consultant to NYC DOE CSAS

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[1] Self-reported on school's Renewal Application (8/31/12)

Part 2: Findings

Areas of Strength

The school has a clear, coherent academic program and progressive instructional design that is consistent with the charter's vision and mission.

- The school's reading curriculum is based on a balanced literacy approach and uses curriculum units based on the work of Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. There is evidence that the Common Core State Standards are being incorporated into the units, though rigor of this incorporation could improve.
- The school's authentic, project-based, hands-on instructional model is clearly evident. Most instruction observed on the days of the visit incorporated a workshop approach. In a second grade math class students were observed working in pairs and small groups to organize collections and using this information to order numbers. Teachers encouraged students to "show their thinking" and were taking notes on the strategies students were using to solve problems. The students were using appropriate academic vocabulary as well as effective speaking and listening skills in their work groups. Similarly in reading classrooms, teachers encouraged student engagement by using such instructional strategies as "Turn and Talk" and "Thumbs Up If You Know the Answer." During the group discussion, students in this classroom used such language as, "I agree with…" or "I disagree with you because…". They were also able to carry on a discussion on the topic with very little intervention or support from the teacher, indicating that students had internalized discussion protocols and were experienced in having productive partner and group discussions.
- Teachers also provided direct instruction that included opportunities for meaningful student engagement. First grade students were observed practicing counting routines and completing story problems by finding multiple ways to find solutions, and second grade students received a mini-lesson on strategies to follow when reading "tricky words." They were then asked to practice these strategies in their own reading books.
- Strong co-teaching models were observed on the days of the visit. The school has two teachers in each classroom, allowing for a variety of configurations including parallel teaching, alternative teaching, and station teaching. In some classrooms each teacher was leading a smaller group in direct instruction, read aloud, or class discussion. In other classes, one teacher was leading the lesson while the other teacher circulated and provided support and still in other classes, both teachers were supporting students during the workshop portion of the lessons.
- The school's academic schedule allows for intensive small-group work that was observed in most classrooms on the days of the visit.
- The school provides a variety of opportunities for students to develop an "activist mindset." These activities include meeting with local politicians, growing and eating healthy food, learning about the Bronx River Forest, adopting street trees, planting bulbs, organizing a yearly blood drive, collecting Box Tops and registering voters.
- The school's co-directors observe staff both formally and informally using a teacher created list of expectations along with Kim Marshall's teaching rubric and provide both written and verbal feedback. Staff interviewed on the days of the visit said they welcome this feedback from co-directors and coaches and find it helpful.

The school's environment is calm, safe, and respectful and conducive to learning.

- Throughout the school there was evidence of a thoughtful approach to helping students become independent learners through the explanation of clear procedures and routines. Behavioral expectations were posted in all classrooms, as was evident from student-created work outlining expectations for academic studies such as reading workshop and independent reading.
- The school's environment is clean and print-rich, with multiple examples of student work posted both inside and outside classrooms. On the days of the visit, for example, there were multiple examples of student work showing the results of a whole school study on the human body.
- On the days of the visit, teachers often reviewed expectations for both behavior and academic work with students prior to student independent work. Once expectations were established,

students in the majority of classrooms got right to work with a clear sense of purpose. As students worked, teachers provided both academic support and feedback on behavior ensuring students maintained their focus on the task at hand.

- In one observed class the teacher encouraged a student to find evidence in the text that would support his viewpoint, which differed from the teacher's. This type of academic risk-taking is encouraged and supported throughout the classes.
- The school takes a positive approach to student behavior that focuses on teaching the student strategies to manage their own behavior. There were multiple examples of this positive self-talk observed on the days of the visit including uses of a behavior charts, mentor teachers, and check-ins with other staff.
- Students were observed to be on task, and frequently engaged in their learning. During workshop activities, students were encouraged to support the learning of others by providing resources and talking through possible strategies.
- During the student interviews, students shared such school goals as: everyone should learn something every day; everyone should be comfortable with classmates; and everyone has the chance to say what they're thinking.

The school has structures in place to meet the needs of all learners.
- Services for special needs students are being provided in compliance with the student's Individual Education Plans and classroom teachers have copies of the IEPs and are aware of specific accommodations.
- The school implements a Child Study Team to identify and intervene with students who are at risk of not making adequate progress.
- The school has expanded the Targeted Academic Support period used in grades 3 and 4 last year to every grade level this year. During these periods teachers work with students in small groups to address specific skills at their current instructional level. Teaching teams use assessment data to create these groupings.
- This year, the school has added dedicated reading and math intervention teachers who provide pull out services for students who are identified as far below grade level and push-in support during math workshop for students who are approaching grade level.
- The school's Special Education department reports that they a have a good working relationship with the local CSE to support compliance.
- On the day of the visits a variety of ICT models were being used effectively in the classrooms.
- In many classrooms, students were observed using differentiated materials that were tied to the lesson objectives.

The school has a dedicated, reflective, and mission-aligned board, school leadership team and staff.
- The school has benefitted from its continuity of leadership (both-co-directors have been with the schools since its founding; several Board members have also been on the board since the founding, others since 2009) and low staff attrition.
- The school has established a collaborative professional climate. Teachers meet weekly in grade team meetings where they plan lessons, analyze student work, and discuss student progress. Grade teams use "Lab Sites" in which members of the team teach a lesson with support and coaching from either the ELA or Math coaches. The visitation team observed a Lab Site lesson and found teachers received immediate feedback and coaching on the effectiveness of their lesson allowing them to adjust instruction to meet student needs.
- The school has a stable and engaged board that supports school mission, has active committees, meets as scheduled, and provides informed oversight.

The school has strong parent support as evidenced by satisfaction results on NYC DOE School Survey, parent participation in the survey, and attendance and participation at conferences and school social and advocacy events.
- Parent satisfaction on the DOE satisfaction survey has been well above average for all four NYC DOE School Surveys of its first term, 2009-2012, and overall satisfaction (parents and teachers) has

been above or well above average in all four assessed categories. Parent participation has been equal (one year) or above (all other years) city averages.

- The school reports that parents volunteer regularly in classrooms, and several were observed doing so on the days of the visit. The school also reported that parent workshops and other school and family activities are well attended.
- Thrice yearly parent conferences are held during which extensive narrative reports on student's academic and social progress are shared. These reports provide information on the work habits, strengths, interests, and goals for each student and the conferences provide an opportunity for teachers and parents to discuss student growth and to set goals for progress. The school reports nearly 100% participation in parent conferences.

The school is a fiscally sound and viable organization.

- The school has ended each fiscal year with a significant surplus while maintaining a private space, staffing each classroom with two certified teachers, and offering competitive salaries.
- School has clear fiscal policies and procedures and separation of duties as delineated in the school's handbook.
- The school has consistently received clean audits.

Areas of Growth

The school should continue to refine its instructional practice to improve its academic results, demonstrate significant progress toward the academic goals in its charter, and demonstrate greater measurable academic growth for its students.

- The school has had only two years of NYS assessment data so far, grade 3 in 2011 and grade 3 and 4 in 2012 and received an overall C on its 2011 Progress Report and an overall D on its 2012 Progress Report. In both years, the school's Student Progress grade was an F.
- While the overall percentage of students scoring at Level 3 or above increased from 2011 to 2012 in both ELA (+9.6 points) and Math (+11.7 points), a closer look at the results indicated that this increase in proficiency was part of a larger pattern of incremental gains for Bronx Community students. For a subset of those students who scored just below Level 3 in 2011 it was sufficient to move them from just below to at or slightly above 3 in 2012. These overall results, however, were well below the gains registered by peer schools for students at the same performance level at the start of the 2011-12 school year, which led to the F in Student Progress and the overall D in the 2012 PR.
- The school's proficiency levels (students scoring 3 or above) in Math were below district and city averages in both 2011 and 2012. In ELA they were below the district in 2011 and equal to the district in 2012 but below the city in both years.
- All staff and board members interviewed on the days of the visit were frank in their disappointment with the school's performance on state assessments and the school's related performance on the DOE's Progress Report. They are clear about their plans for improving performance through better use of data, adjusting programs as necessary, and adjusting professional development and practice to improve results while leveraging the effective instructional practices and support structures that are well in place and aligned to the school's mission.
- During classroom observations, the consistency of rigor in instruction and tasks varied from lesson to lesson. For example, although reading instruction was typically of a high caliber of delivery, students were often sent to practice the skills learned using texts that were below grade level. In another observed class, the non-fiction text that some groups were working with in small group instruction was challenging but the texts students were using in independent reading were below grade level. Similarly in a Math workshop class observed, the student investigation was real-world involving arrays with the groups engaged in the task, but the challenge level of the task involved low-level math skills and concepts. Methods, frequency and effectiveness of checks for understanding also varied in observed classrooms—this was true when moving from direct

instruction to guided or independent practice and for certain small group independent activities. To ensure resources, tasks and student work contain appropriate rigor, the school should continue its efforts to:

- o align expectations for student work to Common Core State Standards and to provide models, checklists, rubrics, and examples to hold students accountable for work of higher quality.
- o support grade level teams to work together to ensure that the rigor of assessments clearly match the expectations of the Common Core State Standards.
- o use professional development and teacher observations to support teachers in providing academic feedback to students as strong and as supportive as process and behavioral feedback.
- o reflect on instructional practices and determine effective strategies to improve pacing and checks for understanding and ensure that all independent practice has a way to verify and adjust learning as necessary.
- o continue to improve reading proficiency in response to assessment data, for example, the school has added the Wilson Fundations Program and Leveled Literacy to support students who are struggling to make progress and reach grade level.
- o thoughtfully monitor implementation of new instructional support programs and systems such as Dreambox to ensure not only quality implementation but also to measure the effectiveness of these programs.

The school should continue to develop its culture of high expectations and accountability.

- The school is encouraged to create clear goals for student achievement and to track progress towards these goals on a consistent basis and to communicate this information to the Board of Trustees and teachers. The school should continue their plans to inform families of student progress on interim standardized exams to increase family understanding of student academic progress.
- The school's professional staff is encouraged to create goals for their grade levels and classrooms that support the school-wide goals for student achievement to increase staff accountability.

Continue to intensify the school's use of instructional data to target and adjust instruction.

- The school's leadership and teachers have both identified the need for more consistent interim assessments that will provide feedback on student mastery of learning objectives and can be used to identify gaps, more flexibly student groups and to target their learning, and evaluate the success of intervention programs in accelerating student learning.
- The school is encouraged to follow its intention to expand the understanding and effective use of data at all levels of the organization, including its intention to hire a coach-consultant to work with school leaders and to leverage the resources of the Achievement Network to assist staff with analyzing interim assessment data and effectively adjusting instruction in response to instructional data.
- Although the Child Study Team works to identify student learning needs, the resulting action plans reviewed did not specifically address these needs and there was little evidence that goals for measuring student progress were being used to monitor the effectiveness of the strategies.

Continue efforts to ensure school serves a comparable at-risk population as its district of location.

- As of May 2012, the school's population included 72.8% of its students as receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRL) compared to 75.2% in the district, 12.7% of its students has IEPs compared to 16.7% in the district, and 4.9% of its students were English Language Learners (ELL) compared to 21.2% in the district.
- The school should implement the new lottery preferences for ELL students that it has planned for its next charter term and continue to monitor its ongoing recruitment efforts based on the results of these efforts, making any necessary adjustments to achieve their goal and attain compliance with the 2010 charter law.

Continue to improve operational systems and compliance.

- Systems are in place for collecting attendance and tardies but it is not clear, based on staff interviews, how these data are monitored and who is expected to act on the information.

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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, NYSAA 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 data

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[2] 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

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[2] School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

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

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