



Charter School Renewal Report
Charter Schools Office
2011-2012

**ACHIEVEMENT FIRST ENDEAVOR CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT**

MAY 2012

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Achievement First Endeavor Charter School is an elementary/middle/high school serving approximately 655 students from kindergarten through first and fifth through tenth grade in the 2011-2012 school year.¹ The school opened in 2006 with grade 5. The school is under the terms of its second charter and is projected to reach its full grade span, K-12, during its current term, which expires June 30, 2015.² The elementary (grades K-1) and middle (grades 5-8) schools are currently housed in a private facility in District 13, and the high school is currently housed in a separate private facility in District 17.³

The school typically enrolls new students in grades K and 5, but in the 2011-2012 school year, several students were enrolled from the school's waitlist in grades K-1, 5-8 and 10. There were 2,538 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2011 lottery.⁴ The student body includes 83.2% Free and Reduced Lunch students, compared to 73.0% in District 13 and 76.2% in District 17; 12.9% special education students, compared to 11.8% in District 13 and 13.6% in District 17; and 0.9% English language learners, compared to 4.5% in District 13 and 9.6% in District 17.⁵ The average attendance rate for the school year 2011-2012 school year to date was 97.9% for the elementary school, 98.1% for the middle school, and 98.2% for the high school.⁶ The school scored Above Average on the Academic Expectations, Communication, and Safety & Respect sections of the NYC DOE School Survey in 2010-2011, and Average on the Engagement section; 76% of the school's parents responded to the survey, 100% of the school's teachers, and 92% of the school's students.⁷

The school earned an A on its progress report in 2010-2011, a C in 2009-2010, and an A in 2008-2009.⁸ The school has outperformed District 13 and the city averages in Math for each of the past two years, and has underperformed District 13 and the city averages in ELA for each of the past two years.⁹ In 2010-2011, 83% of tested students passed the Integrated Algebra Regents exam and 93% passed the Living Environment exam.¹⁰ The high school has not yet had a graduating cohort. The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.¹¹

Achievement First Endeavor Charter School is part of the Achievement First network, a charter management organization (CMO). The CMO provides an overarching Regional Superintendent, school leadership support and teacher recruitment, back office support, curriculum assessment; data management, and technology support, among other services.

¹ Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 5/21/2012; Note: Approximately 466 students in grades K-1 and 5-8, and approximately 189 students in the Achievement First Brooklyn High School, which combines students from AF Crown Heights, AF Endeavor and AF Bushwick

² NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

³ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

⁴ Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 5/21/2012; Note: Approximately 1,438 students for grades K-1 and 5-8, and approximately 1,100 students for the Achievement First Brooklyn High School, which combines students from AF Crown Heights, AF Endeavor and AF Bushwick

⁵ NYC DOE ATS system as of 4/3/2012

⁶ Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 5/21/2012; Note: The high school attendance rate is for Achievement First Brooklyn High School, which combines students from AF Crown Heights, AF Endeavor and AF Bushwick

⁷ NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

⁸ NYC DOE Progress Report – <http://schools.nyc.gov/progressreport>

⁹ NYC DOE website – <http://schools.nyc.gov/> (search: test results); District and city averages are for the grade levels corresponding to the school's testing grades in specified years

¹⁰ New York State Report Card – <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/>

¹¹ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

Annual Review Process Overview:

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Office (CSO) 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 the CSO 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 May 31, 2012:

- Sonya Hooks, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSO
- Daree Lewis, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE CSO
- Laurie Price, Director of Operations, NYC DOE CSO
- Gretchen Tonnesen, Analyst, NYC DOE CSO
- Simeon Stolzberg, Consultant

Part 2: Findings

Overview:

Achievement First Endeavor Charter School was renewed for a full 5-year term in 2010-11. The renewal was conditional based on the following:

1. The school must demonstrate improved student achievement by scoring in the 25th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal, in the 50th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal, and in the 75th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th years after renewal.

In 2011-2012, the school scored in the 96th percentile of all middle schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report.

Areas of Strength:

- School leaders set high expectations for academic outcomes, student behavior and teacher performance.
 - The school set specific priorities for this school year, including enhancement of professional culture and student investment in the school.
 - The school has clear measurable goals that are monitored.
 - All 8th grade students are expected to take the Algebra and Earth Science Regents exam. For the 2010-11 school year, 79.7% of 8th grade students earned high school credit.¹²
 - Staff is focused on implementing the Common Core Learning Standards and providing students with an educational foundation that prepares them for college. Teachers were observed requiring students to use complete sentences, cite evidence, and use accountable talk techniques.
- The school has useful curriculum resources that guide instructional planning.
 - The Achievement First network provides a “huge array of curriculum resources” that schools can opt into and modify. The network continues to develop and disseminate scope and sequences that include specific learning objectives and are being aligned to Common Core standards.
 - The school has an organized lesson development system; teachers submit lesson plans prior to instruction, receive feedback from instructional leaders, revise lesson plans and archive them on a shared server. Departments create lessons together during common planning time. Teachers indicated that they are provided with flexibility to modify curriculum to meet the needs of their students.
 - The school is piloting a Leadership Skills class focused on character education; a dean is developing the curriculum and teaching the class to reduce the burden on subject teachers.
- The school has established a learning environment that is conducive to learning.
 - On the day of the evaluation visit, the school was orderly and students were respectful in public spaces and classrooms.
 - Staff has established effective routines and procedures that students appear to have internalized. For example, transitions in hallways were quiet with students walking single file. Within classes teachers use hand signals and count downs to coordinate transitions between activities and classes. Teachers used call and response and cold call techniques to engage students.
 - Across classrooms teachers consistently displayed effective classroom management techniques. In the elementary school, teachers use a color-coded “REACH bar” that

¹² New York City Charter School Center- <http://www.nyccharterschools.org/node/817/data>

- displays individual students' levels of behavior. Most observed students were on task and students who were off task were quickly redirected to the learning activities.
 - Evaluators observed a pattern of positive feedback to reinforce desired behaviors. Teachers praised students for following procedures and contributing to discussions.
 - The school uses incentives and recognition to encourage good behavior and academic achievement. A token economy is used in the middle school with teachers giving and taking credits and demerits. Bulletin boards displayed the names of students with the most growth on interim assessments and reading levels.
- The school has generally strong instructional leadership.
 - The instructional leadership teams for the elementary and middle school academies each include a principal, academic deans and dean of students.
 - Instructional leaders frequently observe classroom instruction, conducting both informal and formal visits and providing ongoing coaching. On the day of the visit, coaches were observed in classrooms taking notes and guiding teacher practice.
 - Instructional leaders provide teachers with feedback that was described as useful and actionable. They also follow up to ensure implementation of feedback into practice.
 - Staff development is differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers. For example, the intensity and focus of visits, feedback and coaching varies depending on the skill of teachers. Individual teachers also have opportunities to participate in external development activities; on the day of the visit, a teacher was out in order to participate in a Teach Like a Champion training.
 - Achievement First has developed a detailed teacher performance rubric as part of its Teacher Career Pathways (TCP), which sets expectations in a number of domains. Teachers reported getting detailed feedback on their performance levels and found the evaluation process useful to their professional growth. One teacher said, "I enjoy getting feedback here the way it's framed."
- Both school leaders and teachers use data to drive improvement.
 - The school administers a range of assessments, including Fountas and Pinnell, Terra Nova and mock state tests. Lessons include Do Nows and Exit Tickets, the results of which are tracked. A basic skills test was developed to identify whether students possess foundational skills. The Achievement First network has reportedly revised interim assessments that in the past were modeled on state tests; school leaders indicated they are less rote and more aligned to the school's curriculum and Common Core standards. These are given every six to eight weeks. Common writing and character trait rubrics have also been developed.
 - Data analysis is part of school culture. Data days are built into the schedule following each interim assessment and the school uses its proprietary system Athena to "crunch the numbers." Notably, Fountas and Pinnell data are not easily tracked and compared across the network. Teachers and school leaders described reviewing results and using item analysis to inform instructional planning, identify topics for re-teaching, group students for targeted instruction, and monitor progress towards goals.
 - The school collects a large amount of behavior data, including attendance and tardiness, as well as morning and afternoon colors on the REACH Bar and specific behaviors that earn merits and demerits. In addition, the new Leadership Skills class incorporates pre- and post-tests to assess students' embodiment of certain character traits.
 - The school also employs assessment data to conduct value-added analysis of teacher performance and uses the results as part of teacher evaluation.

Areas of Growth:

- The school should continue to develop and refine an academic program that is aligned to standards and from grade to grade.
 - Both the elementary and middle schools are in the process of developing their academic programs, with an emphasis on English language arts (ELA). As a new school with new

staff, the elementary school is reasonably focused on learning how, for instance, to implement guided reading and has consequently placed less emphasis on writing. Responding to student performance in ELA, the middle school is pursuing its own vision of reading instruction and aligning its reading, writing and history curricula and instruction. It will have a single coach for these subjects to enhance coordination. Next year the reading program will also be aligned with special education and literacy interventions. Writing is also a priority area for development; the middle school is piloting rubrics for the network. Finally, the new Leadership Skills class is a work in progress, and school leaders indicated they are figuring out how to make it meaningful in terms of accountability.

- The quality of instruction was generally adequate. The use of effective questioning was notable in the elementary school, which is focused on increasing the consistency of instruction across classes and subjects. In the middle school, some teachers effectively engaged students in challenging tasks, asking them to cite evidence from text and explain their answers. In other classes, there were missed opportunities for developing higher order thinking skills and developing conceptual understanding. Students were consistently on task, though some teachers did not have clear teaching points and fully engage students in the learning activities. Though teachers and school leaders noted the need to enhance student investment in learning and independence, the majority of instruction was teacher-centered and provided limited opportunities for students to acquire and demonstrate these traits. Similarly, while the Leadership Skills class focuses on character traits clearly tied to academic achievement, the school provides limited opportunities for students to exhibit leadership besides following the rules.
- The school should ensure that all students, including at-risk students, have access to programs and instruction that meets their needs.
 - Every class in the elementary school uses the collaborative team teaching (CTT) approach, which promotes inclusion of students with disabilities and opportunities for differentiated instruction. The middle school introduced one CTT class this year in 5th grade and intends to add at least one CTT class to each grade next year.
 - The elementary school is implementing guided reading, which allows for flexible groups based on regular assessment of students' reading levels.
 - The school has some robust intervention programs; they are less developed for literacy. Interim assessment data is used to identify students for tiered interventions with increasing intensity based on need. While the school has small group instruction (SGI) periods to provide targeted support to students, in the middle school, reading teachers use this time primarily for book clubs. Learning intervention staff does provide some push-in and pull-out services; the most intense literacy interventions are primarily reserved for students with disabilities.
 - There is some evidence that performance data is used to evaluate the efficacy of intervention programs and improve teacher strategies, but it is not a consistent practice.
- The school should ensure the work of the elementary, middle and high school academies are aligned to ensure students ultimately graduate college ready.
 - The middle school, which was started first, is designed to address the generally low performance of entering 5th grade students and accelerate their learning to prepare them for high school. The elementary school currently serves students in kindergarten and 1st grade, and will not matriculate students to the middle school for four years. School leaders recognize that they will likely need to change the middle school program to accommodate students entering at a higher level, but planning for this has not yet begun.
 - The middle school has limited interaction with the high school, which reports that the content knowledge and skills of students arriving from each Achievement First middle school varies. Some practices reportedly trickle down informally, such as the high school writing rubric.

- The school should continue to develop procedures and practices to ensure student retention in the school.
 - The new elementary school experienced high student attrition at the beginning of the year, which school leaders attributed to parents limited knowledge of the school program and behavioral expectations. They intend to revise the orientation program for families next year and involve existing families in clearly communicating the school model to parents.
 - The percentage of students in the school who have disabilities (13.6%) mirrors closely the district percentage (16.7%); on the other hand, 0.9% of students are English language learners compared to 14.2% in the district.

Part 3: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

The CSO 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 Office (CSO) 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
- Meet student progress goals
- 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
- Participation at parent-teacher conferences, school advocacy events, participation in academic goal related programs

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
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- 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
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Use a defined process for evaluating curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and 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
- Interim assessment results
- Student and teacher portfolios
- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation
- Professional development plans and resources

1d. Learning Environment

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

- Have a strong culture that connects high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to give their best effort academically and socially
- 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 formal or informal character education, social development, or citizenship program that provides opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens

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

- School mission and articulated values
- Student management plan (code of conduct, school values, discipline policy, positive incentive system, etc.)
- Student attendance and retention rates
- Student discipline data
- DOE School Survey student results
- DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results
- Self-administered 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:

- Operate with a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate 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
- 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; it also has clear lines of accountability for leadership roles, accountability to Board, and, if applicable, relationship with a charter management organization
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implemented a process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's organization and leadership structure
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers

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

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar, professional development plan

2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

- A healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered, and open to parents and community support
- An effective process for recruiting, hiring, supporting, and evaluating leadership and staff
- A flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- An effective way of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including the DOE School Survey
- Effective home-school communication practices to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Strong community-based partnerships and advocacy for the school

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
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs

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 its student enrollment and retention targets
- Annual budgets that meets all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- School leadership and Board that oversee financial and operational responsibilities in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to decision-making
- Boards and school leadership that maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of chartered school design and academic program
- A safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations

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
- Appropriate insurance documents
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- Financial audits
- Financial leader(s) resume and accountability documents
- Operational policies and procedures
- Operational org chart
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- School safety plan

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 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 update-to-date charter is publicly available 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
- Site visits
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership/board interviews

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have:

- Met all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Comparable enrollment of FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location *or* are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages
- Implemented 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
- Conducted independently verified fair and open lottery and manage with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employed 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
- Student discipline records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- 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 CSO's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members.
- Informed NYCDOE CSO, and where required, received CSO 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

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:

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- 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:

- 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:

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- MOUs or contracts with partners