



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**METROPOLITAN LIGHTHOUSE CHARTER SCHOOL
RENEWAL REPORT**

**2013 – 2014 SCHOOL YEAR
MAY 2014**

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Part 1: Summary of Renewal Recommendation

I. Charter School Overview:

Name of Charter School	Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School (MetLCS)
Current Board Chair(s)	Anne Laraway
School Leader	Courtney Russell, Principal
Management Company (if applicable)	Lighthouse Academies, Inc.
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 8
Physical Address	500 Courtlandt Avenue Bronx, NY 10451
Facility	Non-DOE Operated
School Opened For Instruction	2010
Current Charter Term Expiry Date	9/14/2014
Maximum Grade Levels/Enrollment at Expiry Date	K-6 / 364
Proposed Charter Term	Full term
Proposed Maximum Grade Levels / Enrollment at New Expiry Date	K-10 / 572

II. Overview of School-Specific Data:

Performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade	-	-	C	A
Student Progress	-	-	C	A
Student Performance	-	-	C	A
School Environment	-	-	B	B
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	-	-	3.0	2.3

Students scoring at or above Level 3, compared to CSD, NYC*, and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School	-	-	28.3%	28.3%
CSD 8	-	-	27.6%	9.6%
Difference from CSD 8	-	-	0.7	18.7
NYC	-	-	49.0%	27.7%
Difference from NYC	-	-	-20.7	0.6
New York State	-	-	55.2%	31.2%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-26.9	-2.9

* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

% Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School	-	-	53.3%	50.0%
CSD 8	-	-	36.4%	12.0%
Difference from CSD 8	-	-	16.9	38.0
NYC	-	-	57.0%	34.2%
Difference from NYC	-	-	-3.7	15.8
New York State	-	-	65.7%	28.9%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-12.4	21.1

* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

Academic Goal Analysis (based on school's submission)					
	1st Year 2009-2010	2nd Year 2010-2011	3rd year 2011-2012	4th Year¹ 2012-2013	Cumulative 4 Year Total
Total Achievable Academic Goals	0	1	5	5	11
# Met	0	1	2	4	7
# Partially Met	0	0	0	1	1
# Not Met	0	0	3	0	3
% Met	N/A	100%	40%	80%	64%
% Partially Met	N/A	0%	0%	20%	9%
% Not Met	N/A	0%	60%	0%	27%

¹ It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% absolute proficiency or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals. Goals that compared the school to the Community School District performance were included in the analysis.

III. Rationale for Recommendation

A. Academic Performance

At the time of this school's renewal, Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School (MetLCS) has demonstrated academic achievement and progress. The school, in its first charter term, has only two years of New York State assessment results and New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Progress Report results. The school earned an Overall grade of C in 2011-2012 but an Overall grade of A in 2012-2013, showing remarkable improvement in its second year of accountability results. MetLCS was ranked in the bottom quartile of Early Childhood Schools based on its 2011-2012 results but in the 88th percentile in 2012-2013. It has surpassed its district in both years of ELA and math proficiency results; surpassed the city in ELA and math proficiency in the second year of results and NYS's math proficiency results in its second year.

The New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 establishes a system of charter schools throughout New York State, with objectives that include, "(a) Improve student learning and achievement;" and "(b) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure." State assessment data available for MetLCS indicate that the school has demonstrated partial success through its first charter term in fulfilling its primary objectives.

MetLCS's mission is to prepare all scholars for college through a rigorous arts-infused education program. To accomplish this mission, MetLCS has partnered with Lighthouse Academies (LHA), a charter management organization operating one other charter school in NYC and approximately twenty charter schools in other parts of the United States, particularly in the Midwest. In the 2013-2014 school year MetLCS serves students in grades K-5.

MetLCS entered its fourth year of operation with the start of the 2013-2014 academic year. For the current charter term, the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) has two years of New York State (NYS) assessment data to evaluate the academic performance of the school. In addition, MetLCS has received one graded NYC DOE Early Childhood Progress Report and one NYC DOE Elementary School Progress Report during this term, beginning in 2011-2012. NYC DOE Progress Reports grade each school with an overall grade of A, B, C, D, or F and are based on the school's performance in each of these categories: student progress, student performance, school environment, with additional points for closing the achievement gap contributing to the overall grade. Grades are based on comparing school results in each category to a peer group of up to 40 schools with the most similar student population and to school results citywide.

Over the course of its first charter term, MetLCS earned an overall C grade on the NYC DOE Early Childhood Progress Report in 2011-2012 and an overall A on the NYC DOE Elementary School Progress Report in 2012-2013. Based on its Progress Report scores, MetLCS was in the bottom quarter of early childhood schools in 2011-2012 but, after a strong second year performance, in the top twelve percent of elementary schools in 2012-2013

MetLCS has seen improved grades in the subsection of Student Performance, increasing from a C in 2011-2012 to an A in 2012-2013. The Student Performance grade looks at the number of students who have reached proficiency on NYS ELA and math assessments, comparing the school's average proficiency to that of its peer group and to all schools citywide. Importantly, it also looks at average student proficiency ratings, comparing school averages to peer and city results.

The main metrics contributing to the Student Progress subsection are Median Adjusted Growth Percentiles, which measures how much students grow relative to all students in the city who

received the same proficiency score the year before². Similar to its Student Performance grades, MetLCS improved its Student Progress grade from a C in 2011-2012 to an A in 2012-2013.

In both years for which there is NYS assessment data, MetLCS has outperformed its district of location, CSD 8, in ELA and math when comparing common tested grades. In addition, MetLCS surpassed citywide proficiency averages in both ELA and math in 2012-2013, significantly so in math. Unlike schools statewide, with the switch to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) assessments, MetLCS's proficiency scores barely changed—its ELA average proficiency was literally the same, 28.3% both years, and in math proficiency, where declines were sharpest statewide, MetLCS only declined from 53.3% to 50%. Additionally, as noted above, its proficiency rates remained above the CSD average in 2012-2013, but by a much wider margin, and exceeded the city average in ELA narrowly and in math significantly.

Based on an analysis of applicable academic charter goals³, over the course of its first term MetLCS has cumulatively met 64% of its applicable goals, partially met an additional 9% of its goals, and failed to meet 27% over the course of the term. In its first year, when there were only one applicable academic goal, based on the grades the school served at the time, MetLCS met 100% of its goals. Beginning in 2011-2012, when the school reached grade spans that took NYS assessments for the first time, MetLCS met 40% (two of five goals) of its academic goals that year and 80% (four of five goals) the following year.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the NYC DOE has conducted four site visits: Annual Visits in the Spring of 2011 and 2012, an Annual Comprehensive Review visit in the Spring of 2013, and, as part of the renewal process, a two-day visit in the Spring of 2014. Based on a visit in May of 2011, it was noted that "the school provides a strong and consistent academic program for its primary grade students, one that strives for rigor and that evidences differentiation of instruction, a blend of instructional approaches, routine use of assessment data, and effective planning practices." This observation was confirmed in subsequent visits; however, it was also noted in the feedback that the school needed greater consistency in implementation of its instructional approach and individual teacher ownership of data use and additional support for adjusting instruction in response to formative assessment data. In response to this feedback, the school made structural adjustments to the school's intervention program, collaboration between the intervention team and general education teachers, and a greater role in unit planning by the school's instructional leadership to strengthen Common Core alignment and to allow teachers, particularly new teachers, to focus instructional planning at the lesson level. The school, still only in its fourth year of operation, has a developing responsive education program.

MetLCS offers comprehensive support for students at-risk of academic failure; these supports include staffing, scheduling, grouping, curricula, a Response to Intervention program, and IEP defined special education services through its Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETTS). The school revised its charter to include two instructors in all core classrooms, a lead teacher and a teacher associate. Its instructional schedule includes a "Power Hour" for ELA and math that allows for additional, targeted instruction and independent practice in small group setting. Its SETTTS program is primarily pull-out and the support schedule was adjusted so that pull-

² This measure calculates the median (middle) adjusted growth percentile of a school's eligible students. A student's growth percentile compares his or her growth to the growth of all students in the City who started at the same level of proficiency the year before. A student's growth percentile is a number between 0 and 100, which represents the percentage of students with the same score on last year's test who scored the same or lower than the student on this year's test. To evaluate a school on its students' growth percentile, the Progress Report uses an adjusted growth percentile. Growth percentile adjustments are made for students with special education program recommendations anytime within the last four years, and to account for the Economic Needs index of the school. The Progress Report evaluates a school based on its median adjusted growth percentile, the adjusted growth percentile of the middle student when all students adjusted growth percentiles are listed from lowest to highest.

³ It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% absolute proficiency or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals. Goals that compared the school to the Community School District performance were included in the analysis.

outs happened during Power Hour, not core academic instruction. The school's English Language Learner approach is a structured English immersion program with pull-out/push-in support provided.

MetLCS has served a higher percent of students eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) and a comparable percent of English Language Learners than its district but lower percentages of Students with Disabilities (see table on page 7), though the school's percentage of SwD has increased in the latter part of the current term.

B. Governance, Operations & Finances

MetLCS is a fiscally sound, viable organization.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has developed governance structure and organizational design. The Board currently has eight members, which is more than the minimum number of five members and fewer than the maximum number of eleven members established by its bylaws. The Board has provided effective oversight of school management, having conducted structured evaluations of the school principal throughout its charter term. The Board maintains authority over school management, holding it accountable for performance and requiring a monthly Principal's Report and Dashboard from the school leader that details information related to the school's academics, operations, and culture.

The school's founding principal, Courtney Russell, has served in this role throughout the charter term.

The school's Board is currently led by Anne Laraway, who joined the Board in August 2011 and has served as Board Chair since July 2012. The school's previous President, Anne LaTarte, resigned in July 2012 after having held the position since the school's founding.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has developed a stable school culture, despite being housed in three different facilities in three different Bronx districts by the time the current term expires in September 2014. The founding school leader, Courtney Russell, continues to lead the school. After its founding Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Daniel Etcheverry, did not return for the 2012-13 school year, the school added two Directors of Teacher Leadership (DTLs) to its leadership team and retained them during the 2013-14 school year.

Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on its current practices. There was no material weakness noted in the three independent financial audits for FY2013, FY2012, and FY2011.

C. Compliance with Charter, Applicable Law and Regulations

Over the charter term, MetLCS has been compliant with all applicable laws and regulations. The MetLCS Board has also been compliant with all applicable laws and regulations.

D. Plans for Next Charter Term

MetLCS proposes to matriculate its elementary grade students into middle school grades in its next charter term and begin its expansion into high school grades. It will expand to begin serving sixth grade at the start of the 2014-2015 school year, while still under the terms of its first charter and complete its expansion to middle school grades in year 2016-2017 and start serving ninth grade in the following year.

For the aforementioned reasons, the NYC DOE recommends a full-term renewal, expiring on June 30, 2019. The school will continue to serve its intended grade span, reaching K-10 in the final year of the new charter term.

Part 2: School Overview and History

Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School (MetLCS) is an elementary school serving approximately 305 students⁴ in kindergarten through fifth grades during the 2013-2014 school-year. It opened in the 2010-2011 school-year, with kindergarten through second grades and is under the terms of its first charter. The school's intended authorized full grade span is kindergarten through six, which it's expected to reach during its current charter term, which expires September 14, 2014.⁵ During its first two years of operation, the school incubated in a New York City Department of Education facility at 1535 Story Avenue in District 8, in the Bronx and was co-located with P.S. 93.⁶ In 2013-2014 it moved into a temporary private facility at 500 Courtland Avenue in District 7, in the Bronx. Beginning in August 2014, MetLCS will be permanently sited in a private facility located at 180 West 165th Street in District 9, in the Bronx.

The MetLCS mission is to prepare students for college through a rigorous arts-infused academic program. To accomplish this mission, MetLCS has partnered with Lighthouse Academies (LHA), a charter management organization operating one other charter school in NYC and approximately twenty charter schools in other parts of the United States, particularly in the Midwest. MetLCS is one of two Lighthouse Academy charter schools in New York City, both located in the Bronx.

Lighthouse Academies provides business and academic services to Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School, one of two charter schools in New York City. LHA also manages Bronx Lighthouse Charter School. Services from LHA are coordinated and/or provided by a Regional Director dedicated to the two schools the CMO manages in the Bronx. Lighthouse Academies provides school leadership support and evaluation, back office support, payroll and human resources, vendor management, and financial and accounting support. It also supports implementation of the Lighthouse education model, providing curriculum guides, supplemental resources to support Common Core instruction, and professional development. The annual budget of the school is created in conjunction with the Board of Trustees of the school. The school paid a flat fee in 2013-2014 of \$175,000 to Lighthouse for its support, resources, and services, with a bonus potential of \$35,000.

The school typically enrolls new students in grades kindergarten but accepts applications at all grade levels with some backfilling of empty seats. The school received 841 applications for its Spring 2013 lottery—457 for kindergarten.⁷

Over the charter term, the school has served the following percentages of special populations of students⁸:

Special Populations

Year	Free Reduced Lunch				Students with Disabilities				English Language Learners			
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
School	-	83.7%	82.4%	86.3%	-	9.2%	9.6%	11.6%	-	8.5%	12.3%	15.0%
CSD	-	74.7%	74.8%	77.6%	-	19.6%	18.9%	18.9%	-	12.6%	12.7%	12.0%
NYC	-	65.3%	68.1%	69.8%	-	15.9%	15.7%	16.1%	-	16.1%	15.5%	15.0%

⁴ ATS data from October 31, 2013.

⁵ NYC DOE internal data.

⁶ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

⁷ Self-reported on Data Sheet Submitted by school December 2013

⁸ Comparisons to both the CSD and City are made against students in Grades K-8. This is determined by the grades the school served in the 2012-2013 school year. Special population figures are as of October 31st for each given school year with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year which is as of October 26th, 2012.

During the current term, MetLCS has served a higher percent of students eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL), a comparable percent of English Language Learners than its district, but lower percentages of Students with Disabilities, though the school's percentage of SwD has increased in the latter part of the current term. Please see page 20 for additional information on MetLCS's plans for sustaining its enrollment of FRL and ELL students and increasing its enrollment of SWD.

MetLCS is in its first charter term. This is its first renewal opportunity.

The MetLCS Board of Trustees is led by Board President Anne Laraway, who has been on the Board since 2011 and President since 2012. The school's principal is Courtney Russell who has been school leader since MetLCS opened its doors.

Part 3: Renewal Process Overview

Renewal Process

In the final year of its charter, a Chancellor-authorized charter school seeking renewal must demonstrate its success during the current charter term and establish goals and objectives for the next charter term. Ultimately, the renewal process offers an opportunity for the school community to reflect on its experiences during its first term, to make a compelling, evidence-based case that it has earned the privilege of an additional charter term, and, if renewed, to carry out an ambitious plan for the future.

As the school is approaching the end of its charter term, the NYC DOE performs a comprehensive review of the school's performance over the course of the charter. This renewal process is conducted through analyzing student performance data and collecting and evaluating school-submitted documents during the charter term. Evidence of a school's success is organized around the four essential questions that comprise the NYC DOE's Accountability Framework:

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?

A school will answer these overarching questions by demonstrating that its students have made significant academic progress and that the school has met the goals and objectives pledged in its initial charter. In addition, the school will describe challenges it has faced during its charter term, the strategies that were used to address those challenges, and the lessons learned.

Renewal Report

This report contains the findings and recommendations of the NYC DOE regarding a school's application for charter renewal. This report is based on a cumulative record of the school's progress during its charter term, including but not limited to oversight visits, annual reports, and formal correspondence between the school and its authorizer, the NYC DOE, all of which are conducted in order to identify areas of weakness and to help the school to address them. Additionally, the NYC DOE incorporates into this report its findings from the renewal application process, which includes a written application, a report on student achievement data and a school visit by staff from the Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team and other staff from the NYC DOE.

Upon review of all the relevant materials, a recommendation is made to the Chancellor. The Chancellor's determination, and the findings on which that decision is based, is then submitted to the New York State Board of Regents.

Is the school an academic success?

To assess whether a school is an academic success, the NYC DOE considers performance measures, including, but not limited to the following:

- Overall NYC DOE Progress Report score,
- New York State ELA and Math results and/or New York State Regents exams,
- ELA and Math proficiency compared to the district for elementary and middle schools, and graduation rates compared to the city for high schools,
- New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) or other approved alternate assessments, and
- Performance data pertaining to college and career readiness.

Academic success is rated as **Demonstrated, Partially Demonstrated, or Not Yet Demonstrated.**

Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?

To assess whether a school is a fiscally sound, viable organization, CSAS focuses on three areas: Governance Structure & Organizational Design, School Climate & Community Engagement, and

Financial Health. This includes an analysis of the school's audited financial statements, based on the NACSA (National Association of Charter School Authorizers) Financial Framework⁹.

The NYC DOE considers a variety of supporting materials and data, including but not limited to the following:

- Board of Trustee bylaws,
- Board of Trustee meeting minutes,
- Annual Reports submitted by schools to New York State Education Department (NYSED),
- NYC DOE School Surveys,
- Data collection sheets provided by schools,
- Student, staff, and Board turnover rates,
- Audits of authorized enrollment numbers, and
- Annual financial audits.

A school's Governance Structure & Organizational Design and Climate & Community Engagement are rated as **Developed, Partially Developed, or Not Yet Developed**. A school's Financial Health is rated to indicate whether there are concerns about the near-term financial obligations and the financial sustainability of the school.

Is the school compliant with its charter and all applicable law and regulations?

As it pertains to compliance, the NYC DOE identifies areas of compliance and noncompliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Staff Representatives

The following NYCDOE staff representatives participated in the review of this school, including the visit to the school on January 16th and 17th, 2014:

- Richard Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE Charter Schools Accountability and Support
- Kamilah O'Brien, Director of Operations, NYC DOE Charter Schools Accountability and Support
- Gabrielle Mosquera, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE Charter Schools Accountability and Support
- Jennifer Peng, Associate Director of Planning, NYC DOE Office of Portfolio Management

⁹http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance_Framework_Fall_2012_Draft.pdf, page 38-59

Part 4: Findings

Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?

At the time of this school's renewal MetLCS has demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

Academic Attainment and Improvement

During this charter term, the school has received two NYC DOE Progress Reports and has two years of New York State (NYS) assessment data at the time of this report. (For detailed information on the grade-level data on NYS assessments, please see Appendix A.)

Performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade			C	A
Student Progress			C	A
Student Performance			C	A
School Environment			B	B
Closing the Achievement Gap Points			3.0	2.3

Students scoring at or above Level 3, compared to CSD, NYC, and State averages

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Difference from New York State	-	-	-26.9	-2.9

% Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School	-	-	53.3%	50.0%
CSD 8	-	-	36.4%	12.0%
Difference from CSD 8	-	-	16.9	38.0
NYC	-	-	57.0%	34.2%
Difference from NYC	-	-	-3.7	15.8
New York State	-	-	65.7%	28.9%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-12.4	21.1

All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

Mission and Academic Goals

Over its charter term, MetLCS achieved: 1 of 1 applicable academic charter goals in the first year of the charter term, 2 of 5 in the second year, and 4 of 5 in the third year (with the fifth partially met)¹⁰.

Progress Toward Academic Charter Goals

	Met in 2009-10?	Met in 2010-11?	Met in 2011-12?	Met in 2012-13?
Each year, 75% of 3rd-6th graders who have been enrolled at the school for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS ELA exam.	N/A	N/A	No	N/A
Each year, 75% of 3rd-6th graders who have been enrolled at the school for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS Math exam.	N/A	N/A	No	N/A
Each year, 75% of 4th graders who have been enrolled at the school for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS Science exam.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes
For years 2 through 5 of the charter, each grade level cohort of the same students will reduce by one half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's NYS ELA and Math exams (baseline) and 75% at or above Level 3 on the current year's NYS ELA and Math exams. If the number of students scoring above proficiency (Level 3) exceeded 75% of the previous year's exam, the school is expected to demonstrate growth (above 75%) in the current year.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Each year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the State ELA and Math exams in each tested grade will exceed the average performance of students tested in the same grades of the Community School District in which the school is located.	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes
For years 2-4 of the charter, the school will receive a "B" or higher on the Student Progress section of the NYCDOE Progress Report.	N/A	N/A	No	Yes
Each year, for a grade level cohort that has been at the school for three full years, the percent at or beyond the national median in reading and math as measured by the Northwest Evaluation Assessment Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) assessments will increase by 10% of the cohort.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Partial
Each year, the school will be deemed "In Good Standing" on the NYS Report Card.	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes

The school administers the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessments twice yearly to all students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. One of the school's charter goals is related to NWEA results, annual cohort increases of 10% in the percent of students performing above the national median in reading and math. MetLCS only partially met that goal the one time during the current charter term that it was applicable. However, the school reports that over the course of the charter term it has consistently seen grade level changes in Mean RIT¹¹ score fall-to-spring growth that exceed the percent of typical

¹⁰ It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% absolute proficiency or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and Math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals. Goals that compared the school to the Community School District performance were included in the analysis.

¹¹ A RIT (or Rausch Unit) score measure is an equal interval of instructional growth; it compares growth of students at the same instructional level. Typical growth is an average increase in RIT score for a class or group of students, in this case, grade levels.

growth achieved based on NWEA's Growth Index. This suggests that while the school has not fully met its primary WNEA goal, students have demonstrated growth each year.

Responsive Education Program

As part of the renewal review process, representatives of the NYC DOE visited MetLCS on January 16 and 17, 2014. Based on discussion, document review, and observation the following was noted:

- Alignment with Common Core
 - MetLCS uses LHA's education program and an in-house developed curriculum that has been aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), using an Understanding by Design approach to curriculum mapping and unit and lesson development. School instructional leadership led this effort and teachers worked from unit plans to develop individual lesson plans created using common sequence: objectives, lesson opener, mini-lessons (an I-do modeling and we-do guided practice), independent practice and closing. The unit plans have already identified topics, time needed, goals, generalizations, vocabulary, enduring understandings, essential questions, outcomes, and assessments to guide and support lesson planning.
 - Understanding Common Core and instructional planning work were part of school's three week summer professional development institute.
 - In 2013-2014, BLCS changed its interim assessment system from Acuity to Lighthouse Academies' interim assessments on Learning Station for grades two through five to improve rigor, consistency, and to support alignment of assessments and instruction with Common Core expectations.
 - The school leadership and board use a dashboard built from its Culture of Achievement Plan (CAP) to monitor school progress. The academic portion of the CAP is aligned with CCLS expectations, according to school leadership.
- Instructional Model and Classroom Instruction
 - The instructional leadership team has evolved over the term and now includes two Directors of Teacher Leadership and grade team leaders who provide coaching and professional development support to teachers.
 - In addition to the coaching model, professional development support includes twenty days prior to school opening set aside for getting ready for the coming year—including a five-day LHA wide summit and 15 days on site at the school. During the year, additional professional development opportunities occur during weekly grade level and team meetings.
 - Over the two days of the visit, NYC DOE representatives observed sixteen classrooms, grades kindergarten through eleven, with members of the school's instructional leadership team.
 - While class sizes ranged from nineteen to twenty-six students per class with most observed classes, twelve of sixteen had two adults in the room, delivering or supporting instruction.
 - All observed classes were safe, orderly and conducive to learning. Students were consistently on-task and responsive to teacher directions and instruction.
 - Instructional delivery varied but included direct instruction, modeling, guided and independent practice, peer discussion, and station learning. 'Do Nows' and mini-lesson were common elements of observed lessons.
 - Multiple checks for understanding, formal and informal, were employed with varying degrees of effectiveness—questioning, polling, exit tickets, observation, activity and work sheets, homework, and some performance-based projects, generally writing.
 - Questioning in most observed classrooms focused on basic recall questions with some questions asking students to explain their answers or cite evidence for a response but few instances of higher level critical thinking or application questions were observed.

- In most observed classes pacing was efficient; in several it was inefficient, with parts of planned lessons, including independent practice, either not completed or, in one instance, not begun.
 - Classrooms were print and resource rich. Student work along with instructional and behavioral supports was displayed; curriculum materials and technology were also available.
 - Feedback on student work, both oral and displayed written feedback, was frequently positive but often generic.
 - Examples of differentiated instruction were observed in instructional groups during power, some flexible grouping in core classes, and intervention pull-outs.
 - Examples of arts infusion were not observed in visited.
 - Based on debriefs with the school's instructional leaders after classroom visits, all classrooms were deemed to be aligned with the school's mission and instructional priorities, although execution varied across classes, particularly in lower and upper elementary where there is a significant number of first and second year teachers.
- Addressing the Needs of All Learners
 - MetLCS has a special education coordinator, two special education teachers and one ELL teacher.
 - Members of the school's intervention and special education teams are appropriately certified.
 - Special Education services are provided in a Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) setting at MetLCS with push-in and pull-out support provided.
 - The school's Child Study Team (CST) is responsible for working with school staff in considering obstacles for individual student success, considering if, given interventions to date, whether a referral to the Committee for Special Education (CSE) is warranted. The CST takes a more holistic approach to student needs—academic, behavioral, social—to mitigate or remove obstacles to student success.
 - The school uses a Response to Intervention (RTI) to meet the needs of all learners. The school has RTI specialists providing Tier II and III support, one specialist per two grade clusters in the lower and upper elementary academy, with an additional RTI specialist assigned to kindergarten. The special education coordinator works with Rtl and general education teachers to monitor progress and adjust interventions, as necessary, which for academic support is on six-week cycles.
 - In addition to the core curriculum and normal classroom supports, Rtl intervention programs include Wilson Reading, Foundations, Orton-Gillingham and SRA Reading Mastery.
 - The school has adjusted its pull-out schedule to occur during the ELA and Math "Power Hour" so that at-risk students don't get pulled from new core instruction but a period designed for all students to get individual or small group assistance.
- Assessment System
 - MetLCS uses a variety of assessments to monitor progress, support instruction and accountability, including:
 - NWEA is administered twice yearly for grades kindergarten through five for all students.
 - Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP) assessments and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) are also used in reading four-five times a year; STEP for K-3 and some grade 4 and DRA for grade 5.
 - Interim assessments in ELA and math are administered five times a year using teacher created assessment on Learning Station. Learning Station replaced Acuity.
 - Curriculum-based assessments are also used in K-5 for Science and Social Studies, administered approximately monthly depended on the length of unit.
 - LHA's Writing Assessment is administered three times a year in grades kindergarten through five and graded using a six traits, plus one rubric.

Learning Environment

- During the days of the visit, all observed transitions and student-teacher interactions were safe, orderly and respectful. Classrooms had LHA's core values and behavioral reminders on display and student management included a positive incentive system in the CPA and upper elementary academy. In the lower elementary individual teachers had classroom-based reward systems.
- CSAS representatives conducted one-on-one interviews with 10 MetLCS teachers.
 - Interviewed teachers spoke highly of the school's dedicated staff members and collaborative environment, with several citing the school's investment in students as one of the best things about their experience there.
 - Interviewed teachers were consistently able to speak to the use of data at the school, from the types of assessments used, to how and when that data is tracked, to student performance expectations for the year.
 - Interviewed teachers spoke positively about the support the school provides, from the amount and consistency of professional development to the value of feedback from observations and coaching, to the addition of the Associate Teacher role. Some teachers reported that while they found the school's professional development valuable, they would appreciate more differentiation based on teacher experience level.
 - All interviewed teachers were aware of who was responsible for their supervision and evaluation, how the evaluation would be conducted, and that the Danielson Framework was the basis of both their evaluation and their coaching support.
- CSAS representatives conducted group interviews with approximately 12 MetLCS students.
 - All students interviewed spoke to the availability of academic and personal help from their current and past teachers.
 - Interviewed students consistently spoke of the school's high academic expectations and their belief that these stem from the investment teachers and school leadership have in their future success.
 - Interviewed students spoke positively about the school's Scholar Dollars system as well as its system of credits and deductions. Students stated that they felt these systems were implemented fairly and consistently.

Essential Question 2: Is the School a Fiscally Sound, Viable Organization?

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has had a developed governance structure and organizational design.

On January 31, 2014, as part of the renewal review process, representatives of the NYC DOE conducted an interview with the school's Board of Trustees. Based on document review and observation, the following was noted:

- The Board currently has eight active members, which is more than the minimum number of five members and fewer than the maximum number of eleven members established by its bylaws. Although the Board has had turnover of its roster between the first and second and fourth and fifth years of the current term, it managed the attrition by adding new members and has kept membership within the parameters of its bylaws throughout the charter term. The current board has no members from the first year of the term, four from the second year, one from the third, and three from the current year.
- All Board officer roles outlined in its bylaws are currently filled.
- The Board has consistently achieved quorum, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The school's Principal updates the Board on academic progress and operations at the school, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership as evidenced by the school's organization chart and school leadership's monthly updates on academic and operational performance to the Board as recorded in Board meeting minutes. Resources and formal structures for leadership and staff evaluation are in place. The Board conducts an annual review and mid-year evaluation of the principal using a formal rubric. During school year 2012-2013 the Board also contracted with a consultant to do a 360-degree review of the Board, the school's leadership team, and staff.
- The Board has active and functioning committees as required by its bylaws, including a Board Development Committee, a Development and Planning Committee, an Educational Program Committee, a Community Relations and Cultural Issues Committee, and a Fiscal Oversight Committee, as recorded in meeting minutes and confirmed during the Board interview.

School Climate & Community Engagement

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has developed a stable school culture.

- To date, the school met its charter goal of having an annual average student attendance rate of at least 95% for two out of its three years of operation. It did not meet this goal in its first year of operation, 2010-11, when its annual average student attendance rate was 94%.¹²

Average Daily Attendance¹³	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
	94%	97%	96%

- The school's non-instructional staff turnover rate has ranged from 14% to 63% throughout the course of its charter term.
- As noted in the Executive Summary, the school has experienced little leadership turnover during the course of its charter term. Its current principal, Courtney Russell, has held this position since the school's opening. After its founding Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Daniel Etcheverry,

¹² As reported in school's goal performance to NYSED in its Annual Reports.

¹³ As reported in school's goal performance to NYSED in its Annual Reports.

did not return for the 2012-13 school year, the school added two Directors of Teacher Leadership (DTLs) to its leadership team and retained them during the 2013-14 school year.

- The school has experienced significant instructional staff turnover throughout its charter term. MetLCS's instructional staff turnover rates over the course of its charter are as follows: 50% in 2010-2011; 53% in 2011-2012; and 69% in 2012-2013.¹⁴
- Over the course of the charter term, the NYC School Survey results and response rates for MetLCS were:

Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School NYC School Survey Results

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Academic Expectations	-	Below Average	Below Average	Below Average
Communication	-	Average	Average	Average
Engagement	-	Below Average	Below Average	Below Average
Safety & Respect	-	Below Average	Well Below Average	Average

Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School Response Rates Compared to Citywide Average

	Parents	Citywide	Teachers	Citywide	Students ¹⁵	Citywide
2009-2010	-	-	-	-	-	-
2010-2011	50%	52%	100%	82%	-	-
2011-2012	56%	53%	100%	82%	-	-
2012-2013	87%	54%	100%	83%	-	-

As part of the renewal process, representatives of the NYC DOE have collected evidence relevant to the school's climate and community engagement over the school's charter term. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- The school has met its goal for at least 80% parent conference attendance during each year of its charter term.¹⁶
- The NYC DOE conducted a public renewal hearing for the school in an effort to elicit public comments on MetLCS's renewal. Approximately 50 community members attended the hearing with 15 offering public comment. All speakers spoke in favor of the school's renewal; no speakers spoke against.
- The NYC DOE made randomized phone calls to parents from a roster provided by the school for students of all grades. Calls to parents/guardians were made until twenty phone calls were completed. Of these calls, 100% provided positive feedback regarding the school.

¹⁴ Self-reported from school in April 2014.

¹⁵ MetLCS has not yet had student participation and won't until it serves middle school grades.

¹⁶ Self-reported on Data Collection Form submitted with Renewal Application in December 2013.

Financial Health

Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations.

- Based on the Fiscal Year (FY) 13 financial audit, the school's current ratio indicated a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school had sufficient unrestricted cash to cover its operating expenses for more than two months without an infusion of cash.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2013-2014 budget to the actual enrollment as of October 31, 2013 show that the school had met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY13 financial audit, the school had met its debt obligations.

Overall, the school is financially sustainable based on its current practices.

- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY13, the school generated an aggregate surplus and in FY13 the school operated at a surplus.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's debt-to-asset ratio indicated that the school had more total assets than it had total liabilities.
- Based on the financial audits from FY11 through FY13 the school had overall positive cash flow, with increasing cash in each fiscal year.

There was no material weakness noted in the three independent financial audits for FY 2013, FY 2012 and FY 2011.

Based on document review and an interview during the visit to the school, the following was noted:

- In 2013, the school entered into a 30 year lease to occupy a private facility in the amount of \$69,972,188, which they will occupy beginning July 2014.

Essential Question 3: Is the School Compliant with its Charter and All Applicable Law and Regulations?

Over the course of the charter term, the Board has been compliant with all applicable laws and regulations.

The Board is in compliance with:

- Membership size. The board has consistently been within the range of five to eleven members outlined in the Board's bylaws.
- Required number of Board meetings. The Board has held the number of board meetings outlined in its charter and required by its bylaws.
- Availability of minutes and agendas. The Board has made all board minutes and agendas available to the public via the school's website.
- Timely submission of documents. Over the bulk of the charter term, the Board has submitted all required documents in a timely fashion.

The school is in compliance with:

- Submission of all required documents. The school has submitted the required private facility safety plan. The school is in compliance with AED/CPR certification requirements.
- Insurance requirements. The school has all appropriate insurance documents.
- Fingerprint clearance. Over the course of the charter term, with the exception of the 2013-2014 school year, all staff have had the required fingerprint clearance. During the renewal visit, it was discovered that three staff did not have fingerprint clearance on file, however it has since been rectified and all staff have been cleared.
- Certification of instructional staff. Staff is either certified or highly qualified, and those that are not, fall under the requirements outlined in the NY State Charter Schools Act. A school can have no more than 5 teachers or 30% of the teaching staff uncertified, whichever number is lower.

Essential Question 4: What are the School's Plans for the Next Charter Term?

As reported by school leadership and the school's Board, the following was noted:

- The school proposes to expand to middle school grades as part of its long term intention to expand to a full scale K-12 school, which, if renewed for additional charter terms and approved for continued expansion, it would reach in the 2020-2021 school year.
- The school has implemented changes to its leadership structure and LHA's regional support team to provide greater stability and support in the next charter term.

As a reminder regarding accountability in the next charter term:

- Amendments to Article 56 of the New York State Consolidated Laws: Education, which relates to Charter Schools, call for charter schools, as a consideration of renewal, "to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets" for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program. The amendments further indicate "Repeated failure to comply with the requirement" as a cause for revocation or termination of the charter.
 - The law directs schools to demonstrate "that it has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students" in the event it has not yet met its targets.
 - The NYC DOE, as authorizer, will annually monitor the school's performance against these targets and the efforts it makes to meet this state requirement.
- In response to the 2010 amendments to the New York Charter Law requiring schools to attract and retain percentages of students who are designated as free and reduced lunch learners, students with disabilities, and English-language learners, the school is making demonstrated efforts to attract and retain these students.
- The school has established outreach measures that is as used in the two districts it has been housed in and that it has begun to do in Community School District, where the school's permanent school facility will be beginning in 2014-2015:
 - posting flyers and notices in local newspapers, supermarkets, communities of faith, community centers, and apartment complexes;
 - conducting Open Houses at public and private elementary schools, after-school programs and youth centers;
 - visiting local organizations in surrounding neighborhoods;
 - canvassing neighborhoods to further reach interested families.
- Further efforts have been used and will continue to be used and enhanced for the recruitment of students identified as FRL, SwD. and ELL, including ensuring the above efforts are supported by multi-lingual staff members, translations of brochures and flyers are provided, schools and programs and community organizations that service or support these student groups are effectively targeted in school recruitment efforts (feeder schools with significant populations of SwD or ELLs, for example) and community organizations that support or provide services for immigrant families and at-risk students.
- The school also provides assistance with application completion, translator support both on-line and at events, and will include program and service descriptions in all materials to ensure community members are aware of school's willingness and capability to successfully serve at risk students.

Part 5: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

Statutory Basis for Renewal

The Charter Schools Act of 1998 (“the Act”) authorizes the creation of charter schools to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently of existing schools and school districts in order to accomplish the following objectives:

- Improve student learning and achievement;
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems by holding the schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.¹⁷

When granted, a charter is valid for up to five years. For a school chartered under the Act to operate beyond the initial charter term, the school must seek and obtain renewal of its charter.¹⁸

A school seeking renewal of its charter must submit a renewal application to the charter entity to which the original charter application was submitted.¹⁹ As one such charter entity, the New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”) institutes a renewal application process that adheres to the Act’s renewal standards:

- A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in its charter;
- A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private;
- Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school including the charter school report cards and certified financial statements;
- Indications of parent and student satisfaction.

Where the NYCDOE approves a renewal application, it is required under the Act to submit the application and a proposed charter to the Board of Regents for its review and approval.²⁰

¹⁷ See § 2850 of the Charter Schools Act of 1998.

¹⁸ See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

¹⁹ See generally §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4).

²⁰ § 2852(5)

Part 6: Authorizer Responsibility Under the NY State Charter Schools Act and the DOE Accountability Framework

The New York State Charter Schools Act (“the Act”) states the following regarding the renewal of a school’s charter:

§2851.4: Charters may be renewed, upon application, for a term of up to five years in accordance with the provisions of this article for the issuance of such charters pursuant to section twenty-eight hundred fifty-two of this article; provided, however, that a renewal application shall [also] include:

- (a) A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in the charter.
- (b) A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private. Such statement shall be in a form prescribed by the Board of Regents.
- (c) Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school required by subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty-seven of this article, including the charter school report cards and the certified financial statements.
- (d) Indications of parent and student satisfaction. Such renewal application shall be submitted to the charter entity no later than six months prior to the expiration of the charter; provided, however, that the charter entity may waive such deadline for good cause shown.
- (e) The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the board of regents or the board of trustees of the state university of New York, as applicable, of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program which shall be considered by the charter entity prior to approving such charter school's application for renewal. When developing such targets, the board of regents and the board of trustees of the state university of New York shall ensure (1) that such enrollment targets are comparable to the enrollment figures of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the charter school is located; and (2) that such retention targets are comparable to the rate of retention of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the proposed charter school would be located.

The NYC DOE may recommend four potential outcomes for charter schools applying for renewal: full-term renewal, renewal with conditions, short-term renewal, or non-renewal.

Full-Term Renewal

In cases where a school has demonstrated exceptional results with its students, a five-year renewal will be granted. A school must show that its program has yielded strong student performance and progress, has met the majority of its charter goals, has demonstrated financial stability, has attained sufficient board capacity, and has an educationally sound learning environment in order to gain this type of renewal.

Renewal with Conditions

In cases where a school has demonstrated mixed academic results or concerns about organizational viability, renewal is contingent upon changes to the prospective application or new charter, new performance measures, or both. These may include changes to curriculum, leadership, or board governance structure that are intended to yield improved academic outcomes during the next chartering period.

Short-Term Renewal

In cases where a school is up for renewal of its initial charter and has fewer than two years of state-assessment results, a renewal of three-years or fewer may be considered. In limited circumstances, a

school not in its initial charter or in its initial charter with more than three years of state assessment data, may be considered for a short-term renewal.

Non-Renewal

Schools that have not demonstrated significant progress or high levels of student achievement and/or are in violation of their charter will not be renewed.

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 & Support (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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

<p>Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 NYCDOE CSAS, and where required, received CSAS approval for changes in significant partnerships, such as dropping/replacing a management organization • Effectively engaged parent associations
<p>Evidence for compliance with applicable regulations may include, but not be limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Appendix A: School Performance Data

% of Third Graders Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School	-	-	28.3%	30.4%
CSD 8	38.6%	36.3%	39.2%	18.2%
Difference from CSD 8	-	-	-10.9	12.2
NYC	46.5%	48.1%	49.0%	28.1%
Difference from NYC	-	-	-20.7	2.3

% of Third Graders Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School	-	-	53.3%	52.2%
CSD 8	46.1%	45.7%	50.2%	22.9%
Difference from CSD 8	-	-	3.1	29.3
NYC	54.3%	54.8%	57.0%	33.1%
Difference from NYC	-	-	-3.7	19.1

* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

% of Fourth Graders Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School	-	-	-	26.1%
CSD 8	36.2%	40.7%	42.8%	16.4%
Difference from CSD 8	-	-	-	9.7
NYC	45.6%	51.0%	52.4%	27.2%
Difference from NYC	-	-	-	-1.1

% of Fourth Graders Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School	-	-	-	47.8%
CSD 8	53.1%	55.0%	58.1%	23.1%
Difference from CSD 8	-	-	-	24.7
NYC	58.4%	62.3%	65.7%	35.2%
Difference from NYC	-	-	-	12.6

* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

Appendix B: Additional Accountability Data

NYC DOE Progress Reports

[2011 – 2012 Academic Year](#)

[2012 - 2013 Academic Year](#)

NYC DOE Accountability Reports

[Annual Site Visit Report 2010-2011](#)

[Annual Site Visit Report 2011-2012](#)

[Annual Comprehensive Review \(ACR\) 2012-2013](#)