



Charter Schools Accountability and Support
2012-2013

**BEGINNING WITH CHILDREN CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: School Overview & History

School Overview and History

Beginning with Children Charter School (BwCCS) is an elementary and middle school serving approximately 442 students¹ in grades K-8 during the 2012-2013 school year. It opened in 2001-2002, and is under the terms of its third charter. The school's projected full grade span is K-8, which it reached in the 2007-2008 school year.² The school is located in Brooklyn within CSD 14.³ The lower school (grades K-5) is located at 11 Bartlett Street and the middle school (grades 6-8) is located at 185 Ellery Street.

The table below details the school's performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report.⁴

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall	B	C	C	B
Progress	C	C	C	B
Performance	B	D	C	C
Environment	B	B	A	B
Closing the Achievement Gap	3.8	0.5	1	3.6

Beginning with Children Charter School enrolls new students in grade K. There were 1,840 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2012 lottery.⁵

The average attendance rate for the 2012-2013 school year to date is 95.4%.⁶

On the 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey, the school scored Below Average on the Safety & Respect section, Below Average on the Communication section, Below Average on the Engagement section, and Below Average on the Academic Expectations section. Seventy percent of the school's parents, 74.0% of the school's teachers, and 89.0% of the school's eligible students responded to the survey.⁷

BwCCS is in its third charter term, having been renewed for five years in Spring 2011, consistent with the terms of the renewal application. The school was offered renewal based on the following conditions:

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.
2. The Board must demonstrate a plan for sound oversight and evaluation of school leadership and the Beginning with Children Foundation.
3. The school must demonstrate attainment of charter goals.

The current school leaders are Les King, who is principal of the Lower school, and Dionne Jaggon, the principal of the Upper school.

BwCCS is part of the Beginning with Children Foundation network, a charter management organization (CMO). The CMO provides an overarching Chief Academic Officer and an Assistant Superintendent along

¹ Enrollment based on ATS data from 3/8/13.

² NYC DOE internal data.

³ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

⁴ NYC DOE Progress Report – <http://schools.nyc.gov/progressreport>

⁵ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form.

⁶ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form.

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

with school leadership support and evaluation, back office support, curriculum assessment; student assessment data gathering, and technology support, among other services. BwCCS, working with and through the network, manages student information via ATS and invoices the NYC DOE. The annual budget is created in conjunction with the Board of Trustees of the school. BwCCS is solely responsible for complying with all grant requirements for the school, the school's governing charter, and all applicable laws. The fee structure is based on 9% of public non-competitive revenues such as per pupil funding and other public entitlement funding.

Part 2: Annual Review Process Overview

Rating Framework

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability & Support Team (CSAS) performs a comprehensive review of each DOE-authorized charter school to investigate 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, CSAS inquires about the school's plans for its next charter term.

This review is conducted by analyzing student performance data and collecting and evaluating school-submitted documents during the 2012-2013 school-year. The report outlines evidence found during this review.

As per the school's monitoring plan, CSAS may also conduct a visit to a school. Visits may focus on academic outcomes, governance, organizational structure, operational compliance, fiscal sustainability or any combination of these as necessary.

In addition, a school's charter goals are reviewed. The progress that a school has made towards achieving its goals at this particular point during its charter period is noted. However, as this is an interim review before the end of the charter term, progress towards goals is not used as part of this evaluation.

Essential Questions

Is the school an academic success?

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

- Overall New York City 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 and high school graduation rates compared to the city,
- 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**. If a school does not yet have a NYC Progress Report, it is rated as 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 Framework⁸.

CSAS also 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 NY SED,
- NYC DOE School Survey,
- Data collection sheets provided by schools,
- Student, staff, and Board turnover,

⁸http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance_Framework_Fall_2012_Draft.pdf, page 38-59

- 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**. These ratings indicate whether there are concerns about the financial sustainability of the school.

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

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

Staff Representatives

The following experts participated in the review of this school and visited the school on May 15, 2013:

- Andrea McLean, DOE
- Keisha Womack, DOE
- Bertram Wyman, DOE

Part 3: Findings

Summary of Findings

Based on CSAS review, the findings are as follows. To date, BwCCS:

- has partially demonstrated academic achievement and progress (p. 7-8),
- has not yet developed a governance structure and organizational design (p. 12),
- has partially developed a stable school culture (p. 12),
- is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices (p. 13),
- is compliant with some applicable laws and regulations but not others (p. 14),
- has no plans for growth, expansion or replication at this time (p.15).

This review included a desk audit, a self-evaluation completed by the school, a school visit and follow up communication via phone and email. CSAS visited the school on May 15, 2013.

Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?

To date, in its third charter term, Beginning with Children Charter School has partially demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

- The school received an Overall grade of B on its 2011-2012 NYC DOE Progress Report, with a B in Student Progress and a C in Student Performance.
- In 2011-2012, the school earned 3.6 'Closing the Achievement Gap' points of extra credit on the Progress Report.
- In 2011-2012, the percentage of students in its tested grades scoring greater than a level 3 was:
 - 43.4% on the New York State (NYS) ELA assessment
 - 47.1% on the NYS Math assessment.
- The school's overall percentage of students proficient in ELA has increased from 36.6% in 2010-2011 to 43.4% in 2011-2012.
- The school's overall percentage of students proficient in Math has decreased from 50.9% in 2010-2011 to 47.1% in 2011-2012.
- The school's overall proficiency scores were below its district location, CSD 14, by 1.8 percentage points in ELA and 9.5 percentage points in Math.

Progress Toward Attainment of Academic Goals⁹

- To date, BwCCS is making progress, but has not yet met all its academic charter goals through all grade levels. The school has partially met four academic charter goals and has not met one of the academic charter goals.

Representatives of the CSAS team visited the school on May 15, 2013. Based on discussion, document review, and observation the following was noted:

- School leadership reports making strides to improve student ELA outcomes by adopting the Reading Street program which follows Common Core standards. Teachers have received professional development training on implementation.
- School leadership reports increased academic intervention programs have been implemented based on data analysis, including but not limited to RTI weekly team meetings and Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) for ELA and Math.
- School leadership reports introducing the Leverage Leadership Cohort model to provide teachers with individualized professional development.
 - Implementation of the model is working towards uniform expectations for lessons and content, common pacing guides, common expectations for guided reading, monthly progress reports and a normed grading policy.
 - At the time of the visit, the Lower School reported over 500 instructional observations. Observations are based on the Danielson Framework and provide each teacher with narratives, feedback, next steps and a timeline.
- On May 15th, CSAS representatives observed classrooms.
 - Seven classrooms were observed between the Lower and Upper schools, including a SETTTS class and a Leveled Literacy Intervention class.
 - In most classes, lead & monitor, station teaching and single teacher instruction were observed.
 - In all rooms, questioning was observed which challenged students to demonstrate understanding and to analyze and apply learned information and/or strategies.
 - In most rooms, checks for understanding that included questioning, teacher observation and classwork were observed.
 - In most rooms, differentiated instruction was observed such as small group instruction, the use of technology and leveled work.
 - In some rooms observed, behavior management was an issue. During class some students were calling out, not engaged in the work or not on task.

⁹ Goal analysis is considered a neutral point and is not used as part of the evaluation.

- Based on classroom observation debriefs, all classrooms had instruction that was aligned with the instructional model and priorities.
- CSAS representatives interviewed six teachers.
 - Most interviewed teachers reported the use of data and assessment to inform instruction.
 - School leadership reports data is captured by Fountas and Pinnell, 2012 State Assessments, Rally (Beginning and Mid-year assessments) and teacher data. However, data collection and analysis as reported by school leadership was inconsistent with what was reported by teachers.
 - Most interviewed teachers reported receiving evaluations.
 - Teachers reported receiving both informal and formal observations with written and verbal feedback from school leadership.
 - Most teachers interviewed reported receiving professional development.
 - The school provides professional development opportunities (i.e. grade level team focused meetings and external professional development opportunities).
 - All teachers interviewed reported having planning time; however some interviewed teachers emphasized the need for more common planning opportunities.
 - Most interviewed teachers reported the Lower and Upper school's lack of academic alignment.
 - Most interviewed teachers reported behavioral management is inconsistent between teachers and classrooms and is not consistently executed. Teachers also reported the lack of followed up by school leadership.
 - Most interviewed teachers did not believe the high level of expectations by school leadership, regarding student academic performance, is attainable.

Beginning With Children Charter School

Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - Whole School

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	73.1	39.1	36.6	43.4
CSD 14*	66.1	37.9	39.9	45.2
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	83.9	43.4	50.9	47.1
CSD 14*	79.7	49.5	50.3	56.6

*CSD data represents only common testing grades, for all years presented

Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - By Grade

Grade 3

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	80.0	41.7	46.8	42.6
CSD 14*	67.0	44.6	46.2	50.6
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	94.0	39.6	51.1	44.7
CSD 14*	90.2	48.2	52.4	55.4

Grade 4

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	69.4	46.0	32.0	53.1
CSD 14*	65.7	43.7	49.0	51.4
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	86.0	54.0	51.0	57.1
CSD 14*	85.0	57.9	57.4	64.3

Grade 5

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	75.0	34.6	29.4	47.1
CSD 14*	73.8	43.6	49.1	53.5
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	88.5	55.8	49.0	47.1
CSD 14*	85.1	59.0	60.7	66.2

Grade 6

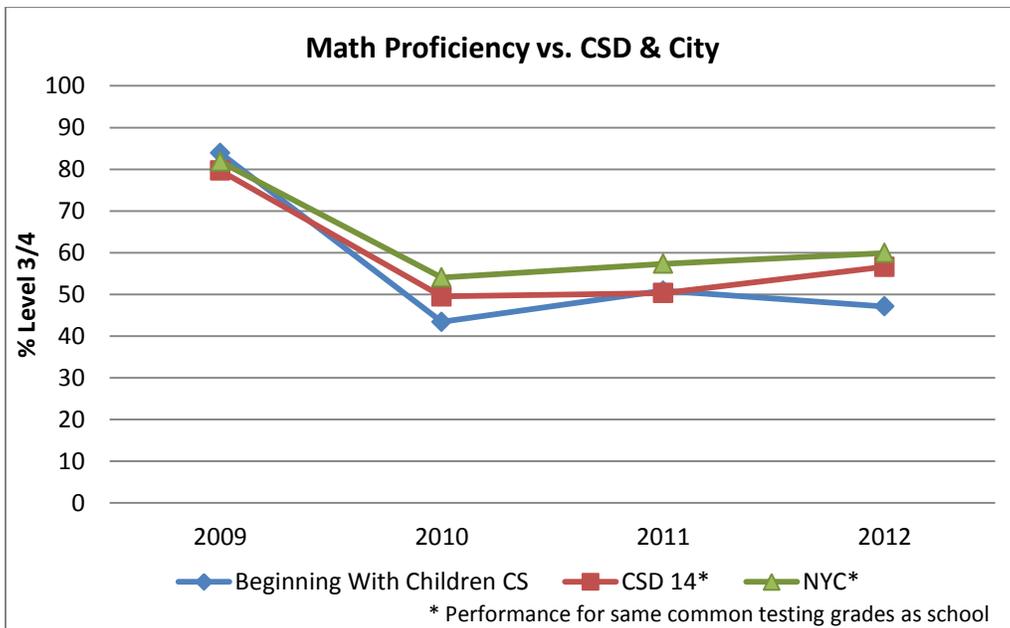
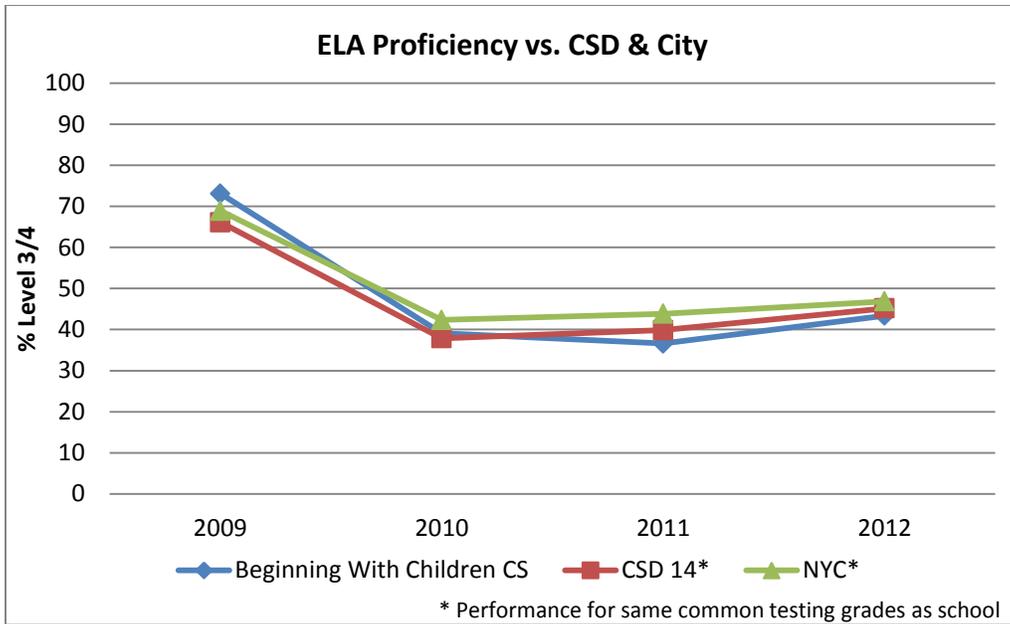
<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	74.0	44.0	42.9	32.7
CSD 14*	69.0	33.7	37.3	42.7
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	56.5	38.0	57.1	22.4
CSD 14*	71.1	43.9	41.2	48.0

Grade 7

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	80.0	34.7	38.0	42.9
CSD 14*	69.9	30.9	30.9	37.8
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	86.0	28.6	58.0	51.0
CSD 14*	77.5	46.2	48.8	52.5

Grade 8

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	60.0	33.3	31.1	42.0
CSD 14*	51.3	30.9	26.7	35.1
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Beginning With Children CS	90.0	43.8	37.8	60.0
CSD 14*	69.3	41.9	41.5	53.2



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

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

To date, the Board of Trustees has not yet developed a governance structure and organizational design.

- Officer positions outlined in the Board's bylaws are filled.
- The Board has appropriate and timely access to legal counsel.
- The Board has clear lines of accountability from school leadership to the Board as evidenced by distribution and presentation of Principal's Report, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Board has held ten meetings during the 2012-2013 school year as evidenced by meeting minutes submitted to CSAS.
 - The Board's bylaws state the Board should conduct six meetings during the academic school year and ten meeting during the fiscal year.
- The Board has active and functioning committees, including a Finance Committee who reports regularly on the schools finances, as recorded in meeting minutes.
 - The lack of reports from other committees is noted as evidenced in meeting minutes.
- The Board votes partially demonstrates quorum.
 - As noted in the December meeting minutes, no quorum was met.
- The Board has four active members, which does not align with both the Charter Schools Act and the Board's bylaws requiring a minimum of five members.
- The Board has been inconsistent with reporting requirements. To date, the Board has not submitted the following to CSAS:
 - Management, Staff and Board Retention report.

School Climate & Community Engagement

The school has partially developed a stable school culture.

- The school's student turnover is 5.4%¹⁰.
- The school's attendance rate is 95.4%, above the school's charter goal of 90%.
- The school's staff School Survey response rate on the 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey was 74%, compared to the City average of 82%.
- The school's parent School Survey response rates were 70%, compared to the City average of 53%.
- The school's student School Survey response rates were 89%, compared to the City average of 82%.
- The level of school leadership turnover, as defined by school, is inconclusive due to lack of data reported by school.
- The level of staff turnover is inconclusive due to lack of data reported by school.
- The school scored Below Average on the Safety & Respect section, Below Average on the Communication section, Below Average on the Engagement section, and Below Average on the Academic Expectations section.

¹⁰ ACR Data Collection From, February 2013

Financial Health

Overall, BwCCS is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices.

- There were no major findings or deficiencies in the last two fiscal year audits. The school received a clean audit.
- The school is maintaining its enrollment projections. At the time of the visit, the school was within 100% of its enrollment target.
- The school does not currently have any outstanding debt obligations.
- The school is operating at a surplus indicating an ability to create a strong reserve to support ongoing growth.
- The school can cover over two months of operating expenses without an infusion of cash.
- The school has a healthy debt to asset ratio.
- The school contributes to various pension funds determined by union membership of school employees. Based on the audited financials, the school paid \$562,000 to the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) for the 2012 fiscal year.
- BwCCS is part of the Beginning with Children Foundation network, a new charter management organization (CMO). The CMO provides an overarching Chief Academic Officer and an Assistant Superintendent, school leadership support and evaluation, back office support, curriculum assessment; student assessment data gathering, and technology support, among other services. BwCCS, working with and through the network, manages student information via ATS and invoices the DOE. The annual budget is created in conjunction with the Board of Trustees of the school. BwCCS is solely responsible for complying with all grant requirements for the school, the school's governing charter, and all applicable laws. The fee structure is based on 9% of public non-competitive revenues such as per pupil funding and other public entitlement funding.
 - For fiscal year 2012, the school paid the foundation \$500,693.

Essential Question 3: Compliance with Charter and All Applicable Laws and Regulations

The school is compliant with some applicable laws and regulations but not others.

To date, the Board of Trustees is in compliance with the below:

- The Board has held the required number of Board meetings, ten of ten meetings, as evidenced by meeting minutes submitted to CSAS.
 - The Board's bylaws state the Board should conduct six meetings during the academic school year and ten meeting during the fiscal year.
- The Board has appropriate liability insurance for officers.
- The Board minutes and agenda items have been posted for inspection by the public.
- The Board has provided CSAS with timely submission of accountability reporting documents, including:
 - Lottery and Recruitment plan,
 - 2012-2013 Board Calendar of Meetings,
 - Meeting minutes,
 - Current Board Roster.

To date, the Board of Trustees is out of compliance with the below:

- The Board does not have the required number of members, there are four active members to date.
- The Board has not provided CSAS with timely submission of accountability reporting documents, including:
 - Management, Staff and Board Retention report.

To date, the school is in compliance with the below:

- The school has submitted required documentation for staff-fingerprint clearance and all staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.
- The school submitted required documentation and proof of teacher certification.
- The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents.
- The school has submitted a school safety plan which has been shared with the entire school community.
- The school is in compliance with NYS Section 917 law in regards to AED/ CPR certification.

To date, the school is not in compliance with the below:

- The school's immunization rate is below the 98.8% threshold established by the NYC Department of Health. The school's current immunization rate is 98.63%.

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

As reported by the school leadership and the Board, the following is noted:

- BwCCS has no plans for growth, expansion or replication at this time.

Part 4: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

The CSAS Accountability Framework

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

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

1. Is the School an Academic Success?

1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

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

- Meet absolute performance goals
- 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