



Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
2013-2014

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

2013 – 2014 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: School Overview

School Information for the 2013-2014 School Year

Name of Charter School	Beginning with Children Charter School
Board Chair(s)	Amanda Haught and Patrick Kern
School Leader(s)	Les King (K-5), Dionne Jaggon (6-8)
Management Company (if applicable)	Beginning with Children Foundation
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 14
Physical Address(es)	11 Bartlett Street, Brooklyn 11206 (K-5)
	185 Ellery Street, Brooklyn 11206 (6-8)
Facility Owner(s)	Private (K-5), DOE (6-8)

School Profile

- Beginning with Children Charter School (BwCCS) is an elementary and middle school, which served 430 students¹ in grades K-8 during the 2013-2014 school year and is fully at scale. It opened in 2001-2002, and is under the terms of its third charter. The school is located in both public and privately-operated facilities in Brooklyn within Community School District (CSD) 14.²
- Beginning with Children Charter School enrolls new students in Kindergarten, first and sixth grades. There were 617 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2013 lottery.³ The average attendance rate for the 2013-2014 school year to date as reported in February 2014 was 90%.⁴
- Beginning with Children Charter School was renewed during the 2010-2011 school year for a full term (five years), and is consistent with the terms of its renewal application.
- The school leadership during the 2013-2014 school year included Les King, Lower School Principal and Dionne Jaggon, Upper School Principal. Both principals have been with the school since August 2011
- For the 2013-2014 academic year, BwCCS was part of the Beginning with Children Foundation, a charter management organization (CMO)⁵. The CMO provided schools with network level supports along with school leadership support and evaluation, back office support, curriculum assessment; student assessment data gathering; and technology support, among other services. 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.
- Beginning with Children Charter School had a student to teacher ratio of 10:1 in the 2013-2014 school year, and served two sections across all grades, with an average class size of 25.⁶
- The lottery preferences for Beginning with Children Charter School's 2013-2014 school year included the New York State Charter Schools Act required preferences of returning students, students residing in the community school district of the school's location and siblings of students already enrolled in the charter school.⁷

¹ Enrollment reflects ATS data from 10/31/13.

² NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Management System database.

³ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/11/14.

⁴ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/11/14.

⁵ The school's Board of Trustees has submitted a charter revision to the NYC DOE to end its partnership with the Beginning with Children Foundation. Pending NY SED Board of Regents approval, the school will be independently run by its Board of Trustees for the remainder of its charter term.

⁶ Self-reported information given on 9/23/14.

⁷ Beginning with Children Charter School's 2013-2014 application.

Part 2: Summary of Findings

Essential Question 1: Is the school an academic success?

Overview of School-Specific Data through 2012-2013

ES/MS Students scoring at or above Level 3 on the NYS assessment, compared to CSD, NYC, and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Beginning With Children Charter School	39.1%	36.6%	43.4%	19.0%
CSD 14	37.7%	39.6%	45.1%	22.5%
Difference from CSD 14	1.4	-3.0	-1.7	-3.5
NYC	42.4%	43.9%	46.9%	26.4%
Difference from NYC	-3.3	-7.3	-3.5	-7.4
New York State	53.2%	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%
Difference from New York State	-14.1	-16.2	-11.7	-12.1

% Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Beginning With Children Charter School	43.4%	50.9%	47.1%	15.0%
CSD 14	49.3%	50.2%	56.5%	22.7%
Difference from CSD 14	-5.9	0.7	-9.4	-7.7
NYC	54.0%	57.3%	60.0%	29.6%
Difference from NYC	-10.6	-6.4	-12.9	-14.6
New York State	61.0%	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%
Difference from New York State	-17.6	-12.4	-17.7	-16.1

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

Performance on the NYC Progress Report

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade	C	C	B	B
Student Progress	C	C	B	A
Student Performance	D	C	C	C
School Environment	B	A	B	C
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	0.5	1.0	3.6	4.2

Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals

- According to its 2012-2013 Annual Report to New York State Education Department (NYSED), Beginning with Children Charter School fully met five, partially met one, and did not meet two of its 11 academic performance goals identified in its charter⁸.

Responsive Education Program & Learning Environment⁹

- BwCCS continues to use the reading program, Reading Street, and teachers have received continuous professional development on the execution of the program.
- Teachers focus on common planning and collaborative implementation to establish consistency in effective teaching and identify best practices through clearly established expectations and instructional norms.
- The school has incorporated Mock Assessments in ELA and mathematics to inform instructional next steps. Teachers have been provided with intensive, individualized professional development on these assessment techniques to ensure the validity of the data.
- The school reported that the data-driven interventions have increased the school's ability to identify individualized scholar needs. They have implemented the Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) program to support at-risk readers in grades K-5 and identified students for participation in after school and Saturday Academy.
- For this school year, students were strategically put in cohorts to provide maximum support based on teacher strengths, the student's needs, and ELL and SPED needs. Teachers were provided intensive, individualized professional development to best assess and understand the student's needs.
- The school has also implemented the Leverage Leadership Cohort model, which is designed to provide teachers with individualized professional development.

⁸ Three of the academic performance goals identified in its charter are no longer applicable. One of the goals was set for a program that the school no longer provides and one of the goals NY State no longer provides the test identified in the goal.

⁹ Self-reported information from school's self-evaluation form submitted on 2/11/14.

Essential Question 2: Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

After reviewing information and documentation concerning Board turnover, Board minutes, reporting structure, organizational chart, annual accountability reporting documents, Board agendas, and the school's website, the NYC DOE notes the following:

- The Board has five voting board members, which is consistent with the charter's bylaws of having between five and 15 members. The Board Chairs, Amanda Haught and Patrick Kern, have been on the Board since January 2014.
- As recorded on Board rosters, two members who were serving as of August 2012, no longer serve on the Board as of January 2014.
- As recorded in the Board's minutes, there is a clear reporting structure with school leadership providing regular updates on academic and operational performance to the Board and its committees.
- Board minutes and agenda items have been provided via the school's website for inspection by the public. It is noted, the last posted meeting on the website was March 2014.

School Climate & Community Engagement

After reviewing information and documentation concerning leadership turnover, staff turnover, attendance rate, student turnover, NYC School Survey results and response rates, and PTO meetings, the NYC DOE notes the following:

- The school experienced no leadership turnover in the 2013-2014 school year.
- Instructional staff turnover from the 2012-2013 school year was 43%, with 12 out of 35 instructional staff members choosing not to return and three out of 35 not being asked to return for the 2013-2014 school year. As of February 2014, during the 2013-2014 school year, no teachers have left the school.¹⁰
- As of February 2014, average daily attendance for students during that school year was at 90%, which meets the school's charter goal.¹¹
- Student turnover was 7.5% of students from the 2012-2013 school year who did not return at the start of the 2013-2014 school year, and 22% of students left the school between the start of the 2013-2014 school year and February 2014.¹²
- The school reports that they have a parent teacher association (PTA), as evidenced by the school's ACR self-evaluation.

2012-2013 NYC School Survey Results¹³

Categories	Result		Community	Response Rate	Citywide Rate
Academic Expectations	Below Average		Parents	62%	54%
Communication	Below Average		Teachers	71%	83%
Engagement	Below Average		Students	98%	83%
Safety & Respect	Below Average				

¹⁰ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/11/14.

¹¹ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/11/14.

¹² Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/11/14.

¹³ Results are particular to the school type as identified in the 2013 School Survey.

Financial Health

Near-term financial obligations:

- Based on the FY13 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 at least one month without an infusion of cash.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2013-14 budget to the actual enrollment at the end of the school year indicates that the school met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY13 financial audit, the school had no debt obligations.

Financial sustainability based on current practices:

- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY13, the school generated an aggregate surplus over the three audited fiscal years though the school operated with no surplus during FY12.
- 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 to FY13, the school had overall negative cash flow from FY11 to FY13.

Annual Independent Financial Audit

- An independent audit performed for FY13 showed no material findings.

Essential Question 3: Compliance with charter and all applicable laws and regulations?

After a review of documentation submitted for the NYC DOE annual accountability reporting requirements for the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE finds the following:

Board Compliance

The Board is in compliance with:

- The Board has held eight Board meetings with quorum as of January 2014, more than the six Board meetings outlined in its bylaws during the 2013-2014 school year, and is on track to meet the required 10 meetings for the fiscal year.
- The Board's membership size falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws, five to 15 members.

The Board is out of compliance with:

- Currently, officer positions outlined in the Board's bylaws are filled as reported by the school.

School Compliance

The school is in compliance with:

- The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is compliant with state requirements for teacher certification.
- The school has the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification.
- The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to the NYC DOE.
- The school had an application deadline of April 1, 2014 and lottery date of April 8, 2014 adhering to the charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1.
- The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization.
- The school leader was trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.

The school is out of compliance with:

- One staff member in the middle school does not have appropriate fingerprint clearance because the finger print was not legible.
- The school has posted its 2012-2013 NYSED Annual Report and annual audit to its website, as specified in charter law.

Essential Question 4: What are the school's plans for the next charter term?

As reported by the school's leadership, the following is noted:

- The school has no plans for expansion, contraction, growth or model replication at this time.
- The school's contract with the CMO ended as of June 30, 2014 and the school intends to operate in the future without a CMO. The school anticipates organizational needs to replace the services of the Foundation as the school's CMO (including operations, compliance, data, technology, financial strategy, budgeting and accounting, human resources/payroll, and fundraising). The school is reviewing the capacity of current staff at the school to take on additional responsibilities.
 - Given the current capacity of the staff, the Board recognizes that the school will likely have to find a financial services provider to take over much of the back office finance, accounting, and payroll functions, as well as hire an internal staff member to help the school with budgeting and day-to-day financial needs.

Enrollment and Retention Targets

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.
- For the 2013-2014 academic year (and the prior four years), Beginning with Children Charter School served a higher percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch compared to CSD 14 and citywide averages, though the school served a smaller percentage of English Language Learner students compared to CSD 14 and citywide averages. In the 2013-14 school year, Beginning with Children Charter School served a slightly lower percentage of students with disabilities compared to the CSD 14 but higher than citywide average.

Special Populations

	Free and Reduced Price Lunch					Students with Disabilities					English Language Learners				
	2009 -	2010 -	2011 -	2012 -	2013 -	2009 -	2010 -	2011 -	2012 -	2013 -	2009 -	2010 -	2011 -	2012 -	2013 -
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
School	73.8%	73.2%	73.3%	74.5%	80.5%	13.0%	16.0%	18.2%	17.8%	18.1%	4.0%	6.8%	6.5%	7.4%	8.4%
CSD 14	57.7%	60.7%	62.5%	65.8%	70.4%	17.4%	18.1%	17.6%	17.9%	18.8%	15.1%	14.4%	13.4%	12.4%	12.1%
NYC	62.1%	65.3%	68.1%	69.8%	73.5%	15.9%	15.9%	15.7%	16.1%	17.1%	16.1%	16.1%	15.5%	15.0%	14.7%

Additional Enrollment Information					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grades Served	K-8	K-8	K-8	K-8	K-8
CSD(s)	14	14	14	14	14

Comparisons to both the CSD(s) and City are made against students in grades K-8, 9-12 or K-12 depending on the grades the school served in each school year. Special population figures are as of October 31 for each given school year, with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.