



Charter School Accountability and Support
2012-2013

NEW HEIGHTS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT

2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: School Overview & History

School Overview and History

New Heights Academy Charter School (New Heights) is a middle and high school serving approximately 742 students¹ in grades 5-12 during the 2012-2013 school year. It opened in 2006-2007, and is under the terms of its second charter. The school reached its full grade span of 5-12 during the 2009-2010² school year. The school is located in private³ facilities at 1818 Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan within CSD 6.⁴

The table below details the school's performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report.⁵

Middle School

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall	A	C	B	B
Student Progress	A	D	B	C
Student Performance	A	D	C	B
School Environment	A	A	B	B
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	3.8	0.0	6	3.2

High School

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall		A	A	A
Student Progress		B	A	A
Student Performance		A	A	A
School Environment		A	B	B
College and Career Readiness		N/A	N/A	D
Closing the Achievement Gap Points		9	6	4.2

New Heights enrolls new students in grades 5 to 12. There were 808 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2012 lottery.⁶

The average attendance rate to date for the 2012-13 school year is 96%.⁷

On the 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey, the school scored Average on the Academic Expectations and Safety & Respect sections, Below Average on the Communication section and the Engagement sections. Sixty-three percent of the school's parents, 100.0% of the school's teachers, and 94.0% of the school's eligible students responded to the survey.⁸

New Heights is in its second full charter term, having been renewed for a five-year term in the winter of 2010.

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

² NYC DOE internal data.

³ NYC DOE internal data.

⁴ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

⁵ NYC DOE Progress Report – <http://schools.nyc.gov/progressreport>

⁶ Self-reported information from school-submitted Data Collection Form.

⁷ Self-reported information from school-submitted Data Collection Form.

⁸ NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

The founding Executive Director of New Heights, Stacy Winitt, stepped down at the end of the 2012-13 school year after serving as school leader from the school's opening through the current year. The Executive Director beginning in July 2013 will be Christina Dukes Brown.

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 NYC 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 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**. If a school does not yet have a NYC DOE 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 Framework⁹.

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 New York State Education Department (NYSED),
- NYC DOE School Survey,
- Data collection sheets provided by schools,

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

- Student, staff, and Board turnover,
- 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, CSAS identifies areas of compliance and non-compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Staff Representatives

The following staff representatives participated in the review of this school's documents as detailed above:

- Rick Larios, DOE
- Gabrielle Mosquera, DOE
- Kamilah O'Brien, DOE

Part 3: Findings

Summary of Findings

Based on CSAS review, the following findings are made. To date, the school:

- has partially demonstrated achievement and progress for its middle school grades and demonstrated academic achievement and progress for its high school grades (pp. 7-10).
- has a partially developed governance structure and organizational design (p. 11).
- has partially developed a stable school culture (pp. 11-12).
- is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices (p. 13).
- is compliant with charter and applicable laws and regulations (p. 14).
- will remain at its current grade span and enrollment size (p. 15).

This review included a desk audit of public and school submitted documents but did not include a school visit in 2012-13.

Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?

To date, New Heights has partially demonstrated academic achievement and progress in its middle school grades.

- In 2011-2012, New Heights received an Overall grade of B on its NYC DOE Middle School Progress Report, following a B for the previous year (see page 2).
- The school received a grade of B for Student Performance, following a C for Performance the previous year.
- The school received a grade of C for Student Progress, following a B the previous year.
- New Heights earned 3.2 Closing the Achievement Gap points on its 2011-2012 NYC DOE Progress Report.
- In 2011-2012, 61.3% of its students in its tested grades (3-8) scored at Level 3 or 4 on the NYS Math assessment, which was 10.6 percentage points above the overall proficiency percentage for the school's district of location, CSD 6, 61.3% to 50.7% at Level 3 or above.
- The school's 2011-2012 ELA NYS Assessment percent of students scoring at Level 3 or above was 25.4%, which was 5.9 percentage points below the result of its district of location, 25.4% to 31.3% at Level 3 or above.
- Overall proficiency on NYS ELA Assessment increased 4.6 percentage points, 20.8 to 25.4%, from the previous year to 2011-2012.
- Overall proficiency on NYS Math Assessment remained largely flat from the previous school year, 61.3% in 2011-2012 compared to 62.0% the previous year.

To date, the school has demonstrated academic achievement and progress for its high school grades.

- New Heights received an Overall Grade of A on 2011-2012 NYC DOE High School (HS) Progress Report, as it has on its previous High School Progress Reports (see page 2).
- It also earned an A in Student Progress, which measures credit accumulation by year level for all students and with an additional measure for credit accumulation for its students in the lowest third for each year. The Student Progress grade also measures the school's average completion rate for remaining Regents exams.
- The school earned an A in Student Performance, which measures the school's 4 and 6-year graduation rates and its weighted diploma rate.
- The school received a D for College and Career Readiness, which includes the school's College Readiness Index (students receiving results on Regents, SAT or ACT, or course standards that allow students to pass out of remedial classes), the school's Post-Secondary Enrollment Rate, and College and Career Readiness Index (for students who reach thresholds for receiving college credit for particular courses, AP or IBB, for example, or additional Regents exams, or who receive CTE or Arts endorsements for their diplomas).
- New Heights received 4.2 Closing the Achievement Gap points for its HS Progress Report in 2011-2012.
- According to the school's 2011-2012 HS Progress Report, 70.7% of its students in their first year completed 10+ credits, 92.8% of students in their second completed 10+ credits, and 92.9% of students in their third year completed 10+ credits.
- As reported in its 2011-2012 HS Progress Report, New Heights students took 9 Regent exams (with at least 15 students taking the exam), in English, Math, Science and History with the following test-taker results:
 - Integrated Algebra: 70% passing
 - Geometry: 59% passing
 - Algebra 2/Trigonometry: 6% passing
 - Comprehensive English: 66% passing
 - U.S. History: 70% passing
 - Global History: 65% passing
 - Living Environment: 68% passing
 - Chemistry: 56% passing
 - Earth Science: 22% passing.

- The percentage of New Heights students who met the CUNY-established college ready thresholds for English or Math was 36% for the English Regents and between 2% and 6% of students that took one of the three Math regents reached the college-ready threshold.

Progress Toward Attainment of Academic Goals¹⁰

- The school, according to its 2011-2012 Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED,) met 1 of 7 of its charter-identified Progress Toward Attainment of Academic Goals that applied to its middle school grades.
- The school, according to its 2011-2012 Annual Report to NYSED, met 2 of 6 of its charter-identified Progress Toward Attainment of Academic Goals that applied to its high school grades, 2 goals were unmet and 2 were assumed to have been met but could not be confirmed by the school because of lack of access to comparable data.

¹⁰ Goal analysis is considered a neutral point for the purposes of this evaluation

New Heights Academy 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>
New Heights Academy CS	62.8	20.9	20.8	25.4
CSD 6*	61.9	27.9	27.9	31.3
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
New Heights Academy CS	77.2	41.9	62.0	61.3
CSD 6*	73.4	43.3	47.9	50.7

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

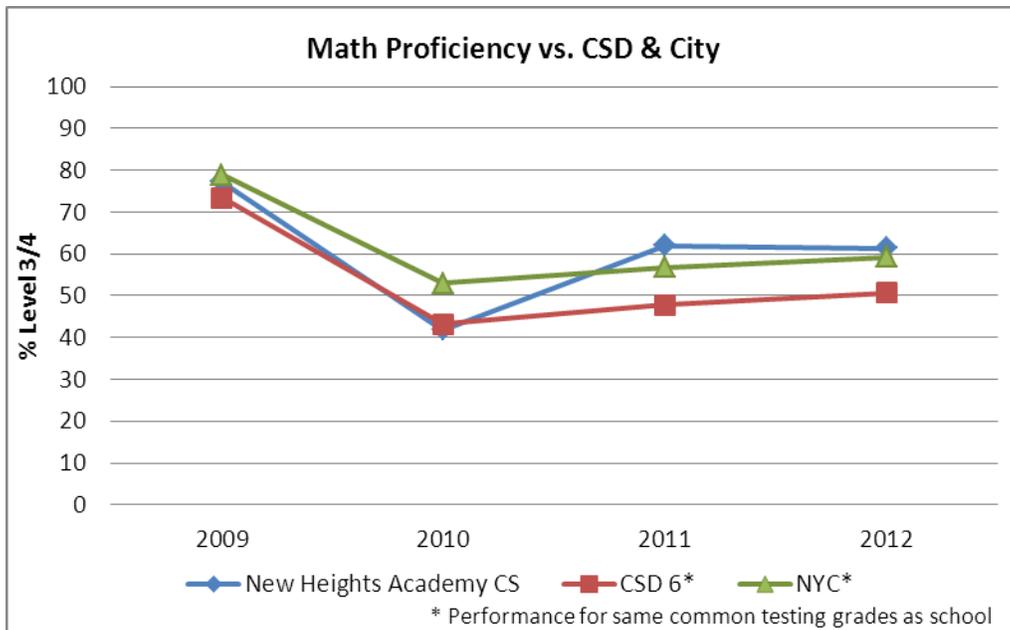
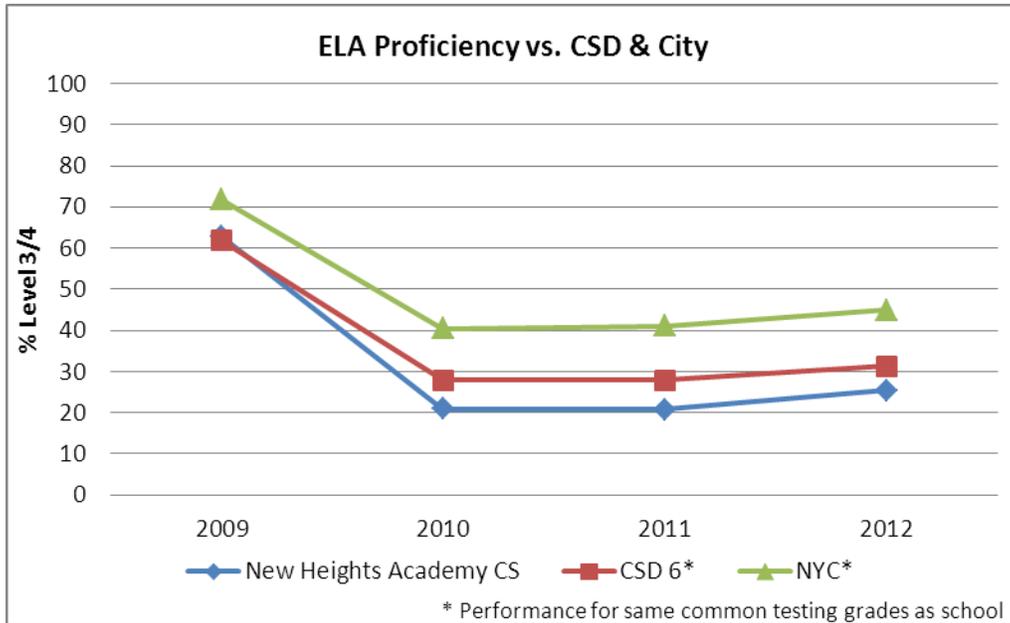
Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - By Grade				
Grade 5				
<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
New Heights Academy CS		24.0	28.1	24.2
CSD 6*		33.2	38.4	37.6
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
New Heights Academy CS		43.8	56.3	46.3
CSD 6*		48.9	51.0	54.1

Grade 6				
<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
New Heights Academy CS	54.2	15.6	31.6	32.0
CSD 6*	62.3	24.1	28.6	31.4
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
New Heights Academy CS	64.6	32.3	60.0	57.7
CSD 6*	68.4	40.1	45.4	50.2

Grade 7				
<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
New Heights Academy CS	71.6	16.7	12.6	29.3
CSD 6*	61.4	27.0	23.8	28.4
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
New Heights Academy CS	89.7	43.8	64.2	75.3
CSD 6*	78.3	43.2	48.6	47.4

Grade 8

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
New Heights Academy CS		27.7	10.6	16.0
CSD 6*		27.1	20.9	27.6
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
New Heights Academy CS		47.9	67.7	66.3
CSD 6*		40.8	46.4	50.9



2011-2012 High School Regents Performance Results			
New Heights Academy Charter School			
Regents Exams	Average Score	% Passing	% at college ready threshold
Mathematics			
Integrated Algebra	67	70%	6%
Geometry	65	59%	5%
Algebra 2/Trig	43	6%	2%
ELA			
English	69	66%	36%
Social Studies			
US History	69	70%	
Global History	70	65%	
Science			
Chemistry	66	56%	
Physics	.	.	
Earth Science	53	22%	
Living Environment	71	68%	
Languages			
Languages Other Than English	.	.	

Source: 2011-12 NYC DOE Progress Reports

Note: College-Ready threshold only applies to Math and ELA results; if less than 15 students take a particular Regents exam the results are not included on the PR.

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

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

To date, the school's Board of Trustees has a partially developed governance structure and organizational design.

- The Board currently has 9 voting members. The officer positions outlined in the Board's bylaws are filled, as recorded in submitted meeting minutes and the school's Board roster.
- The Board posts meeting minutes on the school's website for public review.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board, the network leadership, school leadership, and school staff as evidenced by the school's organizational chart and school/network leadership's regular updates on academic, financial, and operation performance to the Board, as recorded in Board meeting minutes, and the school has met all reporting requirements.
- As evidenced by the Board calendar and Board minutes, and in accordance with the by-laws, the Board holds 1 annual meeting and at least 6 regular meetings each year. As recorded in meeting minutes, Board votes consistently demonstrate a quorum.
- As recorded on Board rosters, approximately half of the Board's members who were serving as of March 2012 (6 of 12 members, excluding the school's Executive Director, which is a now a non-Board position) no longer served on the Board as of July 2013. Approximately 6 new members were added to the Board in 2012-2013, two members resigned during that time, and one member was removed for lack of attendance.

School Climate & Community Engagement

To date, New Heights has a partially developed school culture.

- Stacy Winitt, the school's founding Executive Director and interim high school director is leaving the school at the end of the 2012-2013 school year. The Board has hired Christina Dukes Brown as the new Executive Director. The school is currently in the process of hiring a high school director for 2013-2014. Robert Parkes continues as the middle school director.
- According to the school's ACR Data Collection Form, 41 of the school's approximately 739 students enrolled at the end of the 2011-2012 school year did not return to the school in 2012-13, an attrition rate of less than 6%.
- As of the submission of the school's ACR Data Collection Form, the average daily attendance for 2012-13 is 96%.
- According to the school's ACR Data Collection Form, 12 of the 60 instructional staffers from the end of 2011-2012 school year did not return or were asked not to return in 2012-2013, which is an instructional staff attrition rate of 20%.
- New Heights Academy NYC DOE School Survey participation results were above citywide averages for all three constituencies: teachers (100% to 82%), students (94% to 82%) and parents (63% to 53%).
- On its 2011-12 NYC DOE School Survey, New Heights Academy scored Average compared to other Middle/High Schools in the Communication and Engagement sections, and Below Average in the Academic Expectations and Safety & Respect.

Progress Toward Attainment of Accountability Goals¹¹

- According to the school's Annual Report to NYSED, the school met its 80% staff retention goal.
- According to the school's 2011-2012 Annual Report to NYSED, the average daily attendance was 94%, which is short of the charter goal of 95%. (See above for 2012-2013 attendance to date.)
- The school's charter school goals for Parents, Teachers and Student satisfaction, according to the school's Annual Report to NYSED, were not met in 2011-2012. Parent satisfaction hit the 7.5

¹¹ Goal analysis is considered a neutral point and is not used as part of the evaluation.

school set target but participation was below the necessary threshold for Parents; Teacher and Students met the participation threshold but did not meet the 7.5 target for each section.¹²

¹² Goal analysis is considered a neutral point for the purposes of this evaluation.

Financial Health

To date, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices.

- New Heights is in a strong position to meet all of its liabilities in the next 12 months.
- The school is in a position to cover all its expenses for approximately five months without an infusion of cash.
- The school is meeting its enrollment target, indicating a stable budget.
- The school is meeting its debt obligations.
- The school is operating with a 12% surplus which it has built over the past three years.
- New Heights has continuously maintained a low debt to asset ratio, which has steadily declined.
- The school has a strong cash flow that has trended upward for the past three years.
- The school has a fully funded escrow account.
- New Heights received a clean audit with no material findings on its most recent audited financial statements;
- It is not in a strong position, however, to simultaneously meet its debt obligations and generate a surplus.

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

To date, the school is compliant with its charter and applicable laws and regulations.

- To date, the Board is in compliance with:
 - The Board's membership size falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and the Board's bylaws.
 - The Board has held the number of board meetings outlined in its charter and required by state charter law.
 - All Board members have submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms and do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.
 - The committees outlined in the Board's bylaws are active, as recorded in meeting minutes.

- To date, the school is in compliance with:
 - The school has provided timely submissions of accountability reporting documents to the CSAS team.
 - The school has submitted required documentation for staff-fingerprint clearance and all staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.
 - 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.
 - The school submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 98.8% for immunization.

Based on communication with the school leader and board members during the school year, apart from this review, the following is noted:

- Following a self-check of Board practices against its by-laws, the Board and school leader reported technical violations of Board procedures related to determining quorum and going into executive session. Immediately upon discovery the school contacted CSAS, took measures to remedy, and ensure compliance from the point of discovery on.

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

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

- The school's grade span, enrollment size and location will remain the size. The school has no plans to replicate.

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