



Charter School Annual Site Visit Report
Charter Schools Accountability and Support
2011-2012

MOTT HAVEN ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

MARCH 2012

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Mott Haven Academy Charter School is an elementary school currently serving approximately 214 students in Kindergarten through grade 4.¹ The school is under the terms of its first charter and is projected to expand to K-5 during its current term, which is up for renewal during the 2012-2013 school year. If approved for renewal, the school is projected to reach its full grade span, K-8, during the 2015-2016 school year.

The school is currently located in a private facility on 170 Brown Place in District 7, where it moved in 2010. According to an ATS data pull in April 2012, the student body includes 90.1% Free and Reduced Lunch, compared to 86.8% in the district, 20.2% special education students compared to 19.8% in the district, and 11.3% English language learners compared to 18.1% in the district.² The school serves a unique student population with one third of its students in foster care, one third at risk of being placed in foster care, and one third from the general community. Student attendance for the 2011-12 school year to date was reported by the school to be 95%³.

Mott Haven is in its fourth year of operation. Jessica Nauiakas has been the school principal since the school's founding. The school received a D on its first Progress Report in 2011, with an F in Student Progress, an F in Student Performance, and an A in School Environment. The school's math and ELA scores were below both district and state averages. 25.6% of the school's third-graders scored at Level 3 or 4 in ELA, and 27.9% in Math.⁴ The school had average scores in all categories (Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement, and Safety and Respect) on its 2011 DOE School Survey.

Mott Haven is an independent charter school not associated with a charter management organization (CMO). The school has been partnered with NY Foundling since its inception.

Annual Review Process Overview:

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team conducts an annual site visit of charter schools authorized by the NYC DOE. The site visit is designed to address three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization; and is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations? To ascertain matters of sustainability and strategic planning, we also ask about the school's plans for its next charter term. The visits are conducted by representatives of CSAS and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the school leadership team. Afterward, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators and teachers. Areas of evaluation include, but are not limited to: academic goals and mission; curriculum and instruction; school culture and learning environment; assessment utilization; parent engagement; government structures and organizational design; community support; special populations; and safety and security. The site visit is intended to provide a snapshot of the school and reflects what was observed at the time of the visit.

The following experts participated in the review of this school on March 21st, 2012:

- Jessica Fredston-Hermann, Analyst, NYC DOE CSAS
- Angela Chubb, Consultant

¹ Self-reported on school's ASV Data Collection Sheet (2/24/12)

² NYC DOE ATS system; the school's self-reported (2/24/12) numbers for special education and ELL students were slightly higher than the ATS data pull: 21.5% (46 out of 214) for special education students and 12.6% for ELLs (27 out of 214). The school reports 86.9% (186 out of 214) students receiving free/reduced price lunch.

³ Self-reported on school's ASV Data Collection Sheet (2/24/12)

⁴ NYC DOE website – www.schools.nyc.gov (search: test results)

Part 2: Findings

Areas of Strength:

- The school has a mission-driven, self-reflective leadership team that is solution-oriented and focused on serving its community as effectively as possible.
 - The leadership team changed the time and structure of professional development this year in response to teacher feedback and in order to accommodate families' schedules. PD now occurs on Tuesdays from 7:45 to 9:15 am, and students have a later start time. Leadership additionally restructured PD as smaller teacher study groups in response to teachers' requests for more differentiated PD topics and activities. This allows staff to self-select topics and receive more differentiated support related to their own strengths and weaknesses.
 - The leadership team reported they reorganized the 4th grade class and teaching team mid-year to better meet the needs of students and address teaching/classroom issues that were preventing students in the 4th grade from being successful. Two teachers who left mid-year were replaced internally in order to ensure consistency for students.
 - The school has a stable leadership team that has been with the school since its inception. Teacher and student attrition are similarly low. Last year, only 3 teachers out of 21 chose to leave the school (14% teacher attrition) and there was 0% turnover in administrative staff.⁵ The school reported that only 3 students did not return to the school this year.⁶
 - According to the school leader, she has begun being coached by Kim Marshall this year and the school has adopted the Marshall principal evaluation rubric and the Marshall teacher evaluation rubric for school-wide use.
 - The leadership team continues to consider ways to improve school performance and is currently considering the possibility of a year-round school schedule and the possibility of "looping" teachers (teachers moving up in grade level with their students) in grades K-4.

- The school has multiple support systems in place for a variety of learners. Many of the systems are new this year in an effort to address existing concerns regarding student outcomes.
 - The school held its first Summer Academy in the summer of 2011 intended to target summer reading loss. Thirty-five students attended every weekday for five weeks. Reading loss this year was lower than in past years, with about 1/3 of students gaining a level according to internal reading assessments and the majority maintaining the same level (as compared to last year where many students lost 4-5 reading levels over the summer).
 - Third and fourth grade students receive additional support through Afternoon Academy twice a week. The subject and students selected vary month-by-month but frequently cover targeted skills within reading and math (e.g. sequencing). In these sessions students work in small groups of approximately five students.
 - The school has added an additional 30 minutes of math to the daily schedule this year intended for modeling and practicing math problem-solving skills.
 - The school uses the Reading Recovery program with its students who are testing well below grade level in ELA.
 - The school added two full-time learning specialists this year to support students and provide more individual interventions. Learning specialist support staff as well as the school's ELL coordinator / Reading Recovery Teacher are "pushing in" more and "pulling out" less to better meet the needs of individual students.

⁵ Self-reported on school's Retention and Attrition Report (8/31/11)

⁶ Self-reported on school's ASV Data Collection Sheet (2/24/12)

- The school has incorporated student self-assessments into the DESSA (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment) process and leadership reported that they have seen “a lot of growth” in students’ social/emotional competencies this year. The school also introduced new social/emotional support classes this year.
 - The Student Study Team meets regularly to discuss students’ strengths and weaknesses and develop appropriate interventions.
- The teachers and staff expressed that they feel supported as part of a strong professional learning community.
 - Interviewed teachers say “support is available when [they] need it” and that they are comfortable approaching the school leadership when they have concerns. Teachers described a variety of support both from the school leadership team and from outside consultants and said that support varies based on the needs of the individual teacher.
 - The school introduced teacher study groups this year in response to teacher requests for more differentiated professional development and grade-level collaboration time. Teachers work in small groups on focused topics, such as de-escalating conflict, refining the math curriculum, and teaching guided reading. Teachers are able to request topics and usually pick their own sessions based on need and interest. Teachers interviewed praised the changes around PD as “100 times better” than last year, and noted that they appreciate focusing on the same topic for a number of weeks in a row.
 - The school organized a mid-year retreat in January that included a staff survey with opportunities for feedback. According to school leadership, the question about the value of professional development time was much more positive this year than last year (this year only 6% of teachers were negative, whereas last year the number was higher than 40%).
 - Teachers also attend a two-week Summer Institute that includes sessions on understanding the welfare system and the social/emotional needs of their students. Teachers have the option to attend outside professional development and conferences over the course of the year upon request.
 - School leadership stated that teachers have started doing more colleague-to-colleague observations through teacher study groups, some of which include videotaping lessons and sharing.
 - Teachers share a common planning period with their co-teacher every day and have two periods per week available with their grade team, one of which is used for common planning.
 - The school has obtained a Partnership for Innovation in Compensation for Charter Schools (PICCS) grant that is tied to school-wide performance. Teachers will receive performance bonuses if the school meets its overall goals.
 - According to school leadership, teachers have two formal observations per year using the Marshall rubric that are based on 10 classroom observations rather than one isolated lesson. The school principal sits down with each teacher at the beginning of the year to set goals for the year and record them in an online portal.
- The leadership team and staff collect a variety of data on student progress/performance and use this data to target individual students and classroom practice for immediate intervention.
 - Data collected include Fountas & Pinnell (F&P), Edvista (new this year), TerraNova, mock NY state assessments, Running Records, social and emotional data (DESSA), student attendance, summer reading levels pre and post break, Reading Recovery data, writing rubrics, and a variety of letter/sound word inventories for students in K-2.
 - The EdVista assessment was introduced this year to give the school more flexibility in designing assessments and is administered four times a year in 3rd and 4th grade, with less frequency in K-2. The interim assessments are administered as mock tests with timers and proctors in order to make students more comfortable with the test setting.

- A new Data Specialist position was created this year to aggregate all of the student data and organize it so that it is accessible to all staff.
 - Interviewed teachers described using F&P data to plan guided reading, interventions, and small groups (LLI). A math teacher noted that they use informal assessments “all the time” in math. Interviewed teachers noted that they appreciate the data specialist’s efforts to make data more parent-friendly and to provide more specifics about why students are below grade level.
 - All teachers serve as test coaches for students, working directly with a small group of 3-5 students with the goal of preparing students emotionally for taking the exams. Teachers reported incorporating more test prep into the scope and sequence this year so that students would be better prepared for the state tests in April.
- The school leadership team and staff actively reach out to families and surrounding community to ensure partnerships are in place and parents are well informed of services provided by the school and opportunities to get involved.
 - The school has added a Family Specialist position this year to focus full-time on communicating with parents and organizing workshops for parents, including an ESL class twice a week. The data specialist is also working to make student data more understandable for parents and creating workshops to communicate this data.
 - Attendance has consistently increased over time (91% in 2010 to 94% in 2011 to 95% in 2012, according to school leadership), demonstrating the school’s effectiveness in engaging parents to support student attendance. This is particularly impressive given the school’s transient student population.
 - The school benefits from its strong partnership with NY Foundling, which provides professional development through the use of paid consultants; enrichment providers (including music and dance); and certain contractual services for the building, which is also leased through NY Foundling.
- The school leadership is thoughtful in planning for next year to ensure the school continues to improve and better meet the diverse needs of its students.
 - New positions have been built into the budget to improve instruction and teacher support, next year. In addition, the school is actively recruiting a new World Language Teacher in order to be fully compliant with its charter.
 - The school, as noted, is considering “looping” to reduce the time it takes for students to build trusting relationships with their classroom teachers.
 - The school has a tight budget this year but leadership stated that at the time of the visit, they were spending less than projected. The reasons for the tight budget include the move to private space without yet serving students at scale; slight student attrition below the projected 225 students; and the additional staffing up this year. The school’s contingency plans include working with NY Foundling and requesting a bank line of credit if necessary. Leadership stated that the Board has been “diligent” in advocating on their behalf and that they have been fundraising more aggressively this year.

Areas of Growth:

- The school did not meet any of its academic charter goals this year. While students continue to make progress in ELA and Math on the TerraNova the school will need to increase its instructional effectiveness and sense of urgency in the classroom in order to meet the academic goals in its charter.
 - The school should continue to work on advancing instructional practice and on ensuring alignment between the vision of the school leadership and the implementation of

classroom teachers, improving efficiency and rigor, providing more clarity around student learning objectives/aims, and using a variety of data in classrooms to inform instruction. Suggestions for continued improvement include:

- In observed classrooms there was a “disconnect” between what the leadership team described would be seen in classrooms and what was observed. Instruction and management were inconsistent across classrooms. For example, while leadership spoke about vertical alignment/communication between grades and using data in classrooms on a daily basis, interviews with teachers indicated that these were both areas for growth.
 - In some observed lessons, it was unclear what the learning objective or intended outcome of the lesson was. When students were asked what they were learning, they responded by describing the task (“We have to write a sentence”). The school is encouraged to focus on increasing rigor across all classrooms by ensuring that all lessons have a specific, measurable objective and that teachers use regular checks for understanding and informal assessments to measure students’ achievement of the objective.
 - The school should consider providing more opportunities for teachers to work on vertical alignment of all academic expectations and standards. Currently teachers meet to plan and review data as grade level cohorts but could benefit from meeting with teachers at all grade levels to ensure clear understanding of each grade level’s performance outcomes. Interviewed teachers were not able to describe how a particular skill might be developed over different grade levels, for example, what making inferences might look like at the second, third, and fourth grade levels, and how they can build toward skill development at each grade level.
 - During interviews, teachers stated that they would like more time for curriculum and grade-level planning, both at the beginning of the year and over the course of the year. Teachers stated that there are scope and sequences in place for math and writing in certain grades, but that they are “still a work in progress” in other subjects and for other grade levels.
 - School leadership reported that the current fourth-grade cohort arrived at the school as first graders with a variety of issues from other schools. While the school leadership expressed confidence that its current third-grade cohort, who mostly arrived in Kindergarten, will perform higher on the state assessments they did not express the same confidence that the fourth grade cohort would demonstrate similar growth. The school should continue to use its data to closely monitor progress in all cohorts of students and consider additional interventions to reliably address the needs of all its students.
- As was noted in last year’s annual site visit report, the school leadership team should continue to focus on developing alignment around goal-setting, professional development, observational feedback, and teacher evaluation.
 - While interviewed teachers spoke favorably of the professional development initiatives of the school, their descriptions of the current system for teacher observations and feedback varied and were not consistent with the model described by the leadership team. In regards to receiving feedback, one teacher stated that “we’re still working it out” while another described observations as “a challenge.”
 - When asked about the feedback received, interviewed teachers did not mention the Marshall rubric or any feedback aligned with personal learning goals, as was described by the leadership team. Teachers mentioned setting personal goals at the beginning of the year but reported that feedback was more tied to specific observations from classrooms.
 - Interviewed teachers were not able to describe “school-wide” goals. One teacher stated that the school-wide goal was “to improve.” The school is encouraged to consider engaging all staff in the goal-setting process to ensure that all teachers are working

toward the same end results for their students, and that school-wide goals are clearly connected to classroom practice.

- The 2010-2011 NYC DOE School Survey noted some areas of disagreement on the utility of professional development and teacher feedback. While school leadership reports that internal surveys indicate much higher satisfaction this year and teacher interviews supported this report, the school should continue to monitor the results of the NYC DOE School Survey to ensure progress on areas of concern are effectively addressed.
- The school should continue to focus on developing its culture and climate to ensure consistency across classrooms.
 - Reviewers noted consistency in language used from classroom to classroom, but not in expectations or implementation. In some classes students were engaged, attentive, and clearly accustomed to classroom routines; in others, students were consistently off-task or calling out, and instructional time was lost to correcting misbehaviors.
 - Pacing was observed to be slow in a number of classrooms, leading to student disengagement and wasted time. The school is encouraged to focus on improving pacing and rigor across all classrooms through regular observations and targeted feedback.
 - Some interviewed teachers reported that there are not enough staff on the behavior support team and that they would appreciate having more people for help/advice as well as providing direct intervention services.
- As the school grows, it should continue to focus on balancing expansion, managing its budget, overall stakeholder satisfaction while addressing student academic and emotional development needs.
 - The school should continue its approach to intentional staff recruitment and assignments to ensure that all teachers are comfortable with the school climate and culture.
 - Some interviewed teachers reported that the work/life balance is a challenge.
 - The school may want to consider establishing more leadership roles for existing staff to distribute some of the workload for individuals.
 - The school is already discussing the possibility of “looping” and this may help reduce some of the behavior/adjustment issues for students that contribute to the high workload.
 - Some of the special area teachers interviewed noted that they would benefit from having an extra teacher or additional support during their classes.
 - As noted above, the school should continue its use of DOE School Survey results to monitor the results of its efforts to improve teacher and parent satisfaction. While the results are average compared to city-wide results, they have declined from above average and well above average in the previous two years.
 - The school leases a facility from NY Foundling and pays rent based on the number of pupils in the school. Next year the fees for rent and building services will increase due to the influx of new students. To date the school has proved successful managing tight budgets but should continue to look at improving both effectiveness and efficiency of its services to ensure a sustainable school for its students.
 - The school contracts with Charter School Business Management (CSBM) 2-3 days per week to provide additional oversight and checks and balances. The operations director is responsible for purchasing, petty cash, bank deposits, invoices, contracts, and the on-site day-to-day financial management.
 - The school should continue leveraging the support of internal staff, CSBM, its Board and partnership with NY Foundling to improve the school’s financial position.

- The school should continue to enact measures to be in full compliance with the 2010 amended Charter Schools Act as it relates to recruitment and retention of Special Education students, students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch, and ELL students. The school's proportions of two of these high-needs groups is strong, with the percentages of students eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch (90.1%) and Special Education students (20.2%) being either comparable to, or exceeding, those of District 7. However, the school's ELL population is only 11.3%, compared to 18.1% in District 7.⁷
 - The school should continue to ensure that it serves a comparable population of special education students and students receiving free/reduced prince lunch.
 - The school is encouraged to continue documenting and monitoring outreach to the ELL population in their neighborhood in order to be in full compliance with the amended charter law.
 - Also to ensure that it serve all students as mandated, the school should continue working with the Committee for Special Education (CSE) to secure services for twelve students whose IEPs require occupational therapy.

⁷ NYC DOE ATS system, April 2012

Part 3: 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 team (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 established in school charter
- Meet student progress goals established in school charter
- 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
- Parent association meeting agendas and minutes
- Participation at parent-teacher conferences, school advocacy events, participation in academic goal related programs
- Stakeholder (board, parents, staff, students, etc.) interviews

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
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- 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
- Use a defined process for evaluating curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals
- Have school calendars and day schedules that provide the time necessary to deliver on the school's mission and academic 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
- Special Education/ELL progress monitoring documentation
- Interim assessment results
- Student and teacher portfolios
- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation
- Professional development plans and resources
- School calendar and daily schedules
- DOE School Surveys and internal school satisfaction surveys
- Instructional leader and staff interviews

1d. Learning Environment

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

- Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best efforts
- 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 plan with formal or informal structures or programs in place that provide students opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens (for example: a character education, citizenship, or community involvement or service program)

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

- School mission and articulated values
- School calendar and class schedules
- Student management plan (code of conduct, school values, discipline policy, positive incentive system, etc.)
- Student attendance and retention rates
- Student discipline data (referral, suspension, expulsion)
- DOE School Survey student results
- DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results
- Parent complaint/concern information
- Internal 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:

- Have a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations, with clear lines of accountability for the Board, school leadership and all staff
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate officers, committees, and a purposeful 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, and is fully compliant with its Board approved by-laws (number of meetings, quorum, posting of calendar, agenda and minutes)
- Have a defined process for Board reflection on effectiveness, assessing developing needs, and plan

for professional growth

- 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 and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization is identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implements a process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's staff that is clearly defined in staff handbook
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers, including both formal and informal observations

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

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, calendar of meetings, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Board resources for evaluating school leadership and staff, including rubric/performance metrics
- Board resources for self-reflection and professional growth
- Board development plan
- Board interviews
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar
- Professional development plan for leadership staff
- School leadership and staff interviews

2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

- Create and maintain a healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered, and aligned with school mission and values
- Implement flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- Encourage professional conversations about effective performance and quality instruction among staff, through, for example, such means as regular and periodic teaming (grade level teams, data days, etc.) and peer observations
- Have systems in place to evaluate professional development effectiveness and provide ongoing support for school-wide and individual initiatives
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Engage parents actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- Develop strong community-based partnerships who support and advocate for the school

- Have a clear procedure for parents and staff to express concerns to school leadership and the Board, as appropriate, including a clearly articulated escalation path to authorizer

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
- Internal satisfaction surveys
- Staff handbook
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- School Professional Development Plan and staff feedback on professional development events
- Resources for evaluations and observations, scheduled opportunities for professional collaboration, staff feedback on professional development events
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent/Student Handbook
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)

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 student enrollment and retention targets
- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, as school leadership and Board levels, in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to short- and long-term decision-making
- Have clearly established policies and procedures for overall fiscal and operational health of the school (onboarding of all new staff, record-keeping, processing requests of HR services, application and enrollment calls, visitors, volunteers, etc.)
- Maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Receive consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, have strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school design and academic program
- Ensure a safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage

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
- Financial leader(s) job description, resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Financial audits
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships
- Operational policies and procedures, including training resources
- Staff turnover and retention records
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- School safety plan
- Appropriate insurance documents

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, if appropriate, 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 up-to-date charter is available on request 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
- Annual Site Visit reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership, Board, staff and community interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting

- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location⁸ or are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages for enrollment and retention
- Implement 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
- Conduct an independently verified fair and open lottery and manage with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employ 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
- Family/Student handbook
- Student discipline records
- Parent complaint/grievance records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Demographic data (school, district, and other as appropriate)
- 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 CSAS's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members.
- Informed NYC DOE CSAS, and where required, received CSAS 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 with Board, staff, parents, students or others, as appropriate

⁸ School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Charter (replication) Application
- 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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- 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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) with partners or important vendors