Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

TEACHING FIRMS OF AMERICA – PROFESSIONAL PREPARATORY CHARTER SCHOOL
RENEWAL REPORT

2014 – 2015 SCHOOL YEAR
DECEMBER 2014

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Part 1: Summary of Renewal Recommendation

I. Charter School Overview:

Background Information

Teaching Firms of America-Professional Preparatory Charter School	
Board Chair(s)	Latoya Massey, Shahidah Kalam Id-Din
School Leader(s)	Rafiq R. Kalam Id-Din II, Esq., Damien Dunkley
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 16
Physical Address(es)	616 Quincy Street, Brooklyn
Facility Owner(s)	DOE
School Opened For Instruction	2011-2012
Current Charter Term Expiration Date	1/11/2015
Current Authorized Grade Span	K-5
Current Authorized Enrollment	342
Proposed New Charter Term	2.5 years [January 12, 2015 – June 30, 2017]
Proposed Authorized Grade Span for New Charter Term	K-5
Proposed Authorized Enrollment for New Charter Term	392
Proposed Sections per Grade for New Charter Term	3

Overview of School-Specific Data

School Evaluation of Academic Goals as stated in Annual Report to NYSED and Renewal Application to NYC DOE

Academic Goal Analysis				
	2011-2012	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**	**Cumulative Charter Term Total**
Total Achievable Goals	11	11	11	33
# Met	1	1	0	2
# Partially Met	0	0	0	0
# Not Met	2	2	3	7
# Not Applicable *	8	8	8	24
% Met	9%	9%	0%	6%
% Partially Met	0%	0%	0%	0%
% Not Met	18%	18%	27%	21%
% Not Applicable *	73%	73%	73%	73%
% Met of All Applicable Goals	33%	33%	0%	22%

* Some goals may not be applicable in all years. For example, goals related to the NYC Progress Report are not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year as Progress Reports were not issued that year.

ES/MS students scoring at or above Level 3 on NYS assessments, compared to CSD, NYC and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts			
	2011-2012	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Teaching Firms of America - Professional Preparatory Charter School	-	-	19.3%
CSD 16	-	-	22.0%
Difference from CSD 16 *	-	-	-2.7
NYC	-	-	29.9%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	-10.6
New York State **	-	-	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-11.3

% Proficient in Mathematics			
	2011-2012	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Teaching Firms of America - Professional Preparatory Charter School	-	-	28.1%
CSD 16	-	-	20.3%
Difference from CSD 16 *	-	-	7.8
NYC	-	-	38.6%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	-10.5
New York State **	-	-	36.2%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-8.1

* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself served. CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

** New York State proficiency rates were taken from data.nysed.gov.

Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School began serving students in third grade, the first grade level in which NYS assessments are administered, in the 2013-2014 school year. As a result, data pertaining to growth metrics is not yet available. This includes, but is not limited to, data on median adjusted growth and closing the achievement gap statistics related to percent of students in the 75th growth percentile for students with disabilities, English Language Learner (ELL) students, and students in the lowest third citywide.

II. Renewal Recommendation and Rationale

Based on limited data availability, as well as the evidence presented herein and detailed below in Part II, the NYC DOE recommends a 2.5 year short term renewal with academic performance conditions.

The academic performance conditions are as follows:

1. **In each year of the charter term, the school must demonstrate its ability to close the achievement gap for students with disabilities: the school's percentage of Special Education students scoring at a Level 3 or above on the New York State ELA assessment must meet or exceed the NYC percent proficient for Special Education students.**
2. **In each year of the charter term, the school must demonstrate its ability to close the achievement gap for students with disabilities: the school's percentage of Special Education students scoring at a Level 3 or above on the New York State math assessment must meet or exceed the NYC percent proficient for Special Education students.**

As part of the renewal application Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School submitted a material revision request. The NYC DOE determination is as follows: regarding the material revision to expand grades served and enrollment to allow the school to serve students in middle school grades during the next charter term, the NYC DOE does not approve this material revision with regards to a grade-level expansion. The NYC DOE finds that insufficient data exists at present to support a finding that the revision is likely to provide a significant educational benefit. However, the NYC DOE approves an authorized enrollment increase to 392 students in the next charter term in order to allow the school to serve its authorized kindergarten through five grade span with three sections of students per grade.

A. Academic Performance

At the time of this school's renewal, Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School has not yet demonstrated academic success. Academic success cannot be adequately evaluated for Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School primarily because the school has not yet generated more than one year of accountability data on NYS assessments and has been classified as an Early Childhood school by the NYC DOE for the 2011-2012 through 2013-2014 school years. As a result, no data exists with regards to median adjusted growth, closing the achievement gap, or peer groupings.

New York Charter Schools Act

The New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 establishes a system of charter schools throughout New York State, with objectives that include:

§ 2850 (2)

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

Currently there is not sufficient data available for Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School to determine if the school has made progress towards meeting these objectives.

Mission and Vision

Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School's mission is to prepare students to become the future professionals (lawyers, doctors, scientists, entrepreneurs, etc.) who will lead our global society in the 21st Century. The school executes against this mission by making efforts to provide instruction that will enable its students to meet or exceed the academic performance of the top public elementary schools in New York State as measured by the mandated standardized exams; as well as by moving towards an interdisciplinary, inquiry-based curricular approach informed by the Common Core Learning Standards.

School Specific Academic Performance

The school entered its fourth year of operation with the 2014-2015 academic year. As a result, the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) has only one year of New York State (NYS) assessment data to evaluate the academic achievement of the school and no NYS growth data available at the time of this report to assess the progress of students at Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School (TFOA).

TFOA does not have sufficient academic data to determine trends of academic progress as compared to its district of location, CSD 16, or to its peer schools.[1] However, the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) has three years of other academic data, such as data obtained through internal assessments and attendance information, to evaluate the academic achievement and progress of the students at Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School.

Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, NYS tests were aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). As such, proficiency rates for school years prior to the 2012-2013 are not directly comparable. However, as this school had its first year of NYS test administration in 2013-2014, all proficiency results are aligned to the CCLS. Additionally, as the school served only grades kindergarten through three in 2013-2014, the only students who took the NYS ELA and math assessments were the school's third grade students. In 2013-2014, 28.1% of TFOA's students were proficient in math. TFOA's math proficiency was 7.8 percentage points higher than the CSD 16 proficiency rate for third grade students. In 2013-2014, 19.3% of TFOA's students demonstrated proficiency in state tests in English. With this level of proficiency, TFOA underperformed the CSD 16 proficiency rate for third grade students by 2.7 percentage points.

Over the three years that data is available for the retrospective charter term, TFOA has met only 22% of its applicable academic charter goals.[2,3] TFOA met zero of its three applicable academic goals in its most recent year. Since the school has only one year of NYS assessment data, there is limited data to demonstrate a trend of achievement of its stated applicable academic charter goals over the three years of the charter term under review. However, year over year goal attainment shows a declining trend during the three-year period. In addition, the school failed to meet its

[1] Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School was classified by the NYC DOE as an Early Childhood Education school for the 2013-2014 school year, the first school year in which NYS assessment data was available for the school. Early Childhood Education schools did not receive peer groups for the 2013-2014 school year. As a result, peer group data does not yet exist for Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School.

[2] This calculation does not include goals which have not been evaluated (not applicable) either as a result of the goal no longer being measurable (e.g. NYC DOE Progress Report grades for 2013-2014 school year forward) or the goal not yet measurable for the school at the time of the annual reporting (e.g. high school graduation rate for an academic year in which the school was not serving grade 12 students).

[3] It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and Math exams or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and Math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals for the 2012-2013 school year. Goals that compared the school to the Community School District performance were included in the analysis. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE will not include goals that are related to NYC DOE Progress Report Grades or, due to a change in state regulation, goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two in its analysis of progress towards goals.

charter goals of absolute proficiency of 75% of students taking state assessments scoring proficiency or higher in ELA and math in the 2013-2014 school year. Although the NYC DOE did not evaluate progress towards this goal for any NYC DOE-authorized charter schools in the first year of CCLS aligned state assessments, 2012-2013, this goal was evaluated for 2013-2014 forward. However, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, due to a change in state regulation, the NYC DOE will not include goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two in its analysis of progress towards goals. Because the school took two planning years and opened with kindergarten and first grades in 2011-2012, there is limited academic data for the charter term. Since the school has only one year of state test results, cohort-level growth data is not yet available for the NYS ELA or math assessments.

The school has shown only mixed evidence of a developed responsive education program and supportive learning environment. Reports from past NYC DOE visits to the school indicate that the quality of instruction varied, and that there were instances of unclear lesson objectives and expectations set for the students. In addition, the school has struggled with providing feedback and support to teachers. In a visit to the school in April 2012, reviewers noted that because the teachers had high levels of autonomy, the school should have identified "strategies to ensure teachers are held accountable for student learning."[4] Continuing in the 2012-2013 school year, reviewers noted that teachers were "unaware of [a] systematic approach to their evaluation."[5]

Since the school did not serve students in testing grades for the NYS assessments in 2012-2013, the school did not receive a NYC DOE Progress Report.

NYC DOE Progress Reports graded each school with an A, B, C, D, or F and were based on student progress, student performance, and school environment. Scores were based on comparing results from one school to a peer group of up to 40 schools with the most similar student population and to all schools citywide. The Student Progress section of the NYC DOE Progress Report was the most heavily weighted of all sections; it constituted 60% of a school's grade. The grade in this section was based on median adjusted growth percentiles,[6] which were a measure of how much a school's students perform on state tests relative to other students with the same prior score. Although the NYC DOE Progress Report was discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, individual academic performance metrics from the former NYC DOE Progress Report are included in this renewal report for all years for which data was available in the current charter term.

Closing the Achievement Gap

NYC DOE-authorized charter schools are also assessed based on their ability to close the achievement gap for specific student populations. In school years prior to the 2013-2014 school year, schools received additional credit on the NYC DOE Progress Report for progress and performance of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who start in the lowest third of proficiency citywide. Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, charter schools will be assessed on the actual performance as well as the academic growth of students in these populations compared with public school students in the CSD and throughout New York City.

The school does not yet have any data on closing the achievement gap as demonstrated by the percent of students in the 75th growth percentile who are classified as either students with disabilities, ELLs, or students in the lowest third citywide.

[4] TFOA Annual Site Visit Report 2011-2012

[5] TFOA Annual Comprehensive Report 2012-2013

[6] A student's growth percentile compares his or her growth to the growth of all students in the City who started at the same level of proficiency the year before. To evaluate a school on its students' growth percentile, the NYC DOE uses an adjusted growth percentile. Growth percentile adjustments are based on students' demographic characteristics and reflect average differences in growth compared to students with the same starting proficiency level. The NYC DOE evaluates a school based on its median adjusted growth percentile, the adjusted growth percentile of the middle student when all students adjusted growth percentiles are listed from lowest to highest.

For the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, TFOA did not serve the minimum number of students with disabilities for the NYC DOE to report on proficiency levels for this student population. Comparisons to the CSD and City are also not reported for this reason.[7]

For the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, TFOA did not serve the minimum number of English Language Learner (ELL) students for the NYC DOE to report on proficiency levels for this student population. Comparisons to the CSD and City are also not reported for this reason.

B. Governance, Operations & Finances

TFOA is a partially operationally sound and fiscally viable organization. This assessment was made based on a review of the following indicators of operational and fiscal viability:

- Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School's Board of Trustee bylaws;
- Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School's Board of Trustee meeting minutes;
- Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School's self-reported staffing data;
- Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School's financial disclosure forms;
- Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School's FY12, FY13, and FY14 independent financial audits;
- Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School's 2014-2015 staff handbook;
- Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School's 2014-2015 student/family handbook; and
- Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School's FY15 budget.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has not yet developed a governance structure and its organizational design. The Board currently has seven active members, which is consistent with the established bylaws, all of whom were part of the board in the most recent school year. However, in the 2012-2013 school year, the Board experienced a 67% attrition rate as a result of the resignation or termination of six of nine board members that year. The school's bylaws indicate that the Board is to hold at least six meetings a year. The Board held 11 meetings in 2011-2012 and in 2012-2013. The Board's current model is structured differently than what is outlined in the established bylaws. Further, the functioning committees referenced in the bylaws are not currently represented. There are, however, clear lines of accountability between the Board and the school leadership team.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has partially developed a stable school culture. Two of the three school's founding leaders are still with the school. The Pedagogy Partner left after the 2012-2013 school year and, to date, has not been replaced. The Managing Partner and Stakeholder Partner have both been with the school since it opened. The school's Executive Officer, who had been with the school since it opened, resigned after the start of the 2014-2015 school year. The instructional turnover rate over the course of the charter term has averaged 17.5% over the period. In year one, year two, and year three of the charter term (2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014), 19%, 14.3%, and 19% of instructional staff did not return, either by choice or request, at the start of the following school year.

The school employs a Choice Theory framework as well as a Leadership Index, which has been incorporated into all of the Schoolhouses and been adopted by all staff and students. Schoolhouse is the term used for "classroom" under the TFOA model.

[7] The minimum number of students for Closing the Achievement Gap metrics is five. Metrics are excluded for a school when student sample-size criteria are not met because of confidentiality considerations and the unreliability of measurements based on small numbers.

TFOA self-reported average yearly attendance rates of 92.3%, 92.4% and 92.3% for school years 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, respectively.[8] Average yearly attendance at TFOA has been lower than the citywide average attendance rates of 93.9%, 93.6% and 93.2% for all elementary/middle schools over the same period. Across the charter term, the school generally had a higher percentage of parents and teachers that agreed or strongly agreed with key statements on the NYC School Survey compared with citywide averages. The school has an active Parents Council.

Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations. The school has at least 51 days of unrestricted cash on hand to meet current liabilities totaling $600,827.

There was no material weakness noted in the three independent financial audits from FY12 to FY14.

C. Compliance with Charter, Applicable Law and Regulations

Over the charter term, TFOA has been compliant with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

Conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms are not available for all current Board members.

The Board has not consistently submitted board resignation notices or new Board member credentials within the required five days of change to the NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) for review and if necessary, approval. During the charter term, documents were not submitted per the required timeframe for three Board members.

The Board relies heavily on videoconferencing to ensure that quorum is met; however, the Board does not notify or disclose the public locations of the videoconferences. Additionally, the Board has not consistently made all board minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to or at Board meetings.

The Board did not consistently submit the Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) by the deadline of August 1 (or by the NYSED granted extension date) for each year of the current charter term. The school has not posted on its website its annual report and audit for each year of the charter term, as required in charter law. The school posted the 2012 annual audit to its website; however, no other years' audits are available.

The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is not compliant with state requirements for teacher certification. The Charter Schools Act prohibits more than five staff members or more than 30% of the teaching staff from not being certified in accordance with requirements applicable to other public schools. Eight staff members are pending certification and five are not appropriately certified. In addition, four staff members may not meet highly qualified status as their Bachelor's degree has not been confirmed.

None of the school leaders were trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.

All staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.

The school has submitted the required safety plan. The school has the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification.

The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization.

[8] Attendance data was self-reported by the school in its Renewal Application to the NYC DOE dated November 2014.

The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to the NYC DOE.

For the 2014-2015 school year, the school had an application deadline of April 1, 2014 and lottery date of April 3, 2014 adhering to charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1. Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently adhere to this requirement.

Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently submit complete invoicing and reconciliation documents by the associated deadlines.

The school has not submitted a current and complete copy of its Student Discipline Policy for the 2014-2015 school year; the school maintains that they deliver student discipline on an individualized basis consistent with the school culture and behavior management model, which outlines possible consequences for "highly disruptive or unsafe behavior."[9] As no formal discipline policy exists which clearly details behaviors and resulting consequences, the due process policy, and consideration of disciplinary measures for students with disabilities, the NYC DOE finds that the school's policy is not compliant with federal law.

D. Plans for Next Charter Term

As part of its renewal application to the NYC DOE, Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School requested a material revision to expand its grade configuration to include middle school grades, expanding from serving grades kindergarten through five to serving kindergarten through eight during its next charter term. If the request is approved, the school would add a new grade each year until it reached its full grade span of kindergarten through eighth grade.

In addition to this material revision request, the school is also requesting to add a preference for students who qualify for free and reduced priced lunch, as well as a variance to give a preference to those students from CSD 16 and 13 (allowing them to serve all of the Bedford Stuyvesant community).

The school also plans on applying to the NYC DOE Department of Early Childhood Education to offer Pre-Kindergarten as part of the NYC DOE's Universal Pre-Kindergarten program.

[9] Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School - 2014-2015 School Culture and Behavior Management Policy

Part 2: School Overview and History

Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School (TFOA) is an elementary school serving 321 students[10] in kindergarten through fourth grade during the 2014-2015 school year. It opened in the 2011-2012 school year with kindergarten and first grades and is under the terms of its first charter. The school's authorized full grade span is for grades kindergarten through five, which it is not expected to reach during its current charter term expiring January 11, 2015.[11] The school does not currently offer a public universal Pre-Kindergarten program in New York City. The school is located in a New York City Department of Education[12] (NYC DOE)-operated facility in Community School District 16 in Brooklyn and is co-located with P.S. 308 Clara Cardwell.[13]

TFOA's mission is to prepare students to become the future professionals (lawyers, doctors, scientists, entrepreneurs, etc.) who will lead our global society in the 21st Century. The school sets out to provide an instructional environment that is student-centered, data-driven, and mastery-focused, as well as holistic for the teaching professionals, who are expected to hold themselves, and each other, accountable for each student's academic achievement.

TFOA's Board of Trustees is led by two co-chairs, Latoya Massey and Shahidah Kalam Id-Din. The school's founder, Rafiq R. Kalam Id-Din II, is still one of the school's Partners (a "Partner" is the school's term for a school leader). The elementary school is led by Rafiq R. Kalam Id-Din II and Damien Dunkley, who have been at the school since the school's inception.

The school typically enrolls new students in all elementary grades served. There were 453 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2014 lottery.[14] The school does backfill students from the waitlist during the school year for grades one through four.

Over the charter term, the school enrolled and served students as follows with average class size and section count noted for the most recently completed school year, 2013-2014.

Enrollment

Grade-Level Annual Enrollment *	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Kindergarten	73	61	72
Grade 1	58	73	67
Grade 2	-	61	72
Grade 3	-	-	61
Grade 4	-	-	-
Total Enrollment	131	195	272

* Enrollment figures reflect ATS data as of October 31 for each school year with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.

[10] ATS data as of October 31, 2014
[11] NYC DOE internal data
[12] NYC DOE internal data
[13] NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Management System
[14] Reflects self-reported data submitted with the 2014-2015 DOE Annual Charter School Survey

Additional Enrollment Data

School Year 2013-2014 Information	Section Count	Average Class Size
Kindergarten	3	24
Grade 1	3	22
Grade 2	3	24
Grade 3	3	20
Grade 4	-	-
Grade 5	-	-
Students Admitted Through The Lottery	433	

* Lottery and section count information are based on self-reported data from the 2013-2014 DOE Annual Charter School Survey and the school's Renewal Application. Average Class Sizes were determined by dividing ATS enrollment as of October 31, 2013 by the appropriate grade-level section count.

Please see additional demographic data in Section 4 of this report for information regarding the enrollment of special populations at TFOA. This information includes enrollment data for the percentage of students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities as compared to the CSD and citywide averages as well as targets proposed by the New York State Education Department (NYSED).[15]

[15] Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, Board of Regents authorized charter schools, including those authorized by NYC DOE, will be held accountable to enrollment targets once established by NYSED for students with disabilities, English Language Learner students, and students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch.

Part 3: Renewal Report Overview

Renewal Report

This report contains the findings and recommendations of the NYC DOE regarding the charter school's application for charter renewal. This report is based on a cumulative record of the school's progress during the current charter term, including but not limited to oversight visits, annual reports, and formal correspondence between the school and its authorizer, the NYC DOE, all of which are conducted in order to evaluate and monitor the charter school's academic, fiscal, and operational performance. Additionally, the NYC DOE incorporates into this report its findings from the renewal application process, which includes a written application, a report on student achievement data and a school visit by the Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships and other staff from the NYC DOE.

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

Is the school an academic success?

To assess whether a school is an academic success, the NYC DOE considers performance measures, including, but not limited to the following (as appropriate for grades served):

- New York State ELA and math assessment absolute results;
  New York State Regents exams passage rates;
- Comparative proficiency for elementary and middle schools, including growth rates for ELA and math proficiency;
- Comparative graduation rates and Regents completion rates for high schools;
- Closing the achievement gap performance relative to CSD or New York City public schools;
- New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) or other approved alternate assessments; and
- Performance data pertaining to college and career readiness.

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

Is the school a fiscally and operationally sound, viable organization?

To assess whether a school is a fiscally and operationally sound, viable organization, OSDCP 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 National Association of Charter School Authorizer's Core Performance Framework.[16]

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

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

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

[16] Please refer to the following website for more information:
http://nacsa.mycrowdwisdom.com/diweb/catalog/item/id/126547/q/%20q=performance*20framework&c=82

Is the school compliant with its charter and all applicable law and regulations?
As it pertains to compliance, the NYC DOE identifies areas of compliance and noncompliance with relevant laws and regulations as identified in the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework.

Staff Representatives

The following experts participated in the review of this school, including the renewal visit to the school on September 17-18, 2014:

- Julian Cohen, Senior Executive Director, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- DawnLynne Kacer, Executive Director, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Maria Campo, Senior Director, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Kaitlin Padgett, Director of Evaluation and Policy, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Ola Duru, Director of Operations, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Caitlin Robisch, Director of Analytics, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Paul Yen, Data Analyst, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Dariana Castro, Director of School Design, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Lynette Aqueron, Senior School Improvement Specialist, NYC DOE Office of Special Education

Part 4: Findings

Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?

At the time of this school's renewal, Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School (TFOA) has not yet demonstrated academic achievement and progress. The data available is not sufficient to make a complete evaluation of academic success due to only one year of NYS assessment data and the absence of student growth data on the NYS assessments.

High Academic Attainment and Improvement

- The school has three years of academic performance data and one year of New York State (NYS) assessment data at the time of this report. For detailed information on grade-level data on NYS assessments, please see Appendix A.

NOTE: Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, proficiency on the NYS assessments for ELA and math were based on the Common Core Learning Standards – a more demanding set of knowledge and skills necessary for 21st century college and career readiness. However, as TFOA had its first year of testing in 2013-2014, all proficiency results are aligned to the CCLS.

ES/MS students scoring at or above Level 3 on NYS assessments, compared to CSD, NYC and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts			
	2011-2012	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School	-	-	19.3%
CSD 16	-	-	22.0%
Difference from CSD 16 *	-	-	-2.7
NYC	-	-	29.9%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	-10.6
New York State **	-	-	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-11.3

% Proficient in Mathematics			
	2011-2012	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School	-	-	28.1%
CSD 16	-	-	20.3%
Difference from CSD 16 *	-	-	7.8
NYC	-	-	38.6%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	-10.5
New York State **	-	-	36.2%
Difference from New York State	-	-	-8.1

* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself served. CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

** New York State proficiency rates were taken from data.nysed.gov.

Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School did not receive NYC DOE Progress Reports for school years 2011-2011 and 2012-2013. Progress Reports were discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.

Mission and Academic Goals

According to the school's Renewal Application submitted to the NYC DOE, as well as annual reports submitted to NYSED, over each of the three years in the charter term during which the school was open, the school met or partially met academic goals as follows:

- 1 of 3 applicable charter goals in the first year of the charter,
- 1 of 3 in the second year, [17] and
- 0 of 3 in the third year.

Progress Towards Academic Charter Goals *

	Academic Goals	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
1.	75% of students taking state assessments will score proficiency or higher in ELA.	N/A	N/A	**Not Met**
2.	75% of students taking state assessments will score proficiency or higher in Math.	N/A	N/A	**Not Met**
3.	75% of students taking state assessments will score proficiency or higher in Science.	N/A	N/A	N/A
4.	75% of students taking state assessments will score proficiency or higher in Social Studies.	N/A	N/A	N/A
5.	Proficiency rates on state ELA assessments will place school in the top quartile of all similar schools	N/A	N/A	N/A
6.	Proficiency rates on state Math assessments will place school in the top quartile of all similar schools.	N/A	N/A	N/A
7.	For grades kindergarten through two: in years 2 to 4 of the proposed charter, 75 percent of students in grades kindergarten through two will perform at or above grade level on the end of year Terra Nova reading and math examinations. **	**Not Met**	**Not Met**	N/A
8.	The school will be ranked at or above the 75th percentile in the City-wide Progress Report.	N/A	N/A	N/A
9.	For years 3 through 5 of the proposed charter, grade-level cohorts of the same students (i.e. students who are in the school for two years in a row), will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State ELA exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's State ELA exam.	N/A	N/A	N/A

[17] It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and Math exams or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and Math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals for the 2012-2013 school year. Goals that refer to comparative academic performance of the school (e.g. to the Community School District) were included in the analysis. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE will not include goals that are related to NYC DOE Progress Report Grades or, due to a change in state regulation, goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two in its analysis of progress towards goals.

Academic Goals		2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
10.	The school will have a daily student attendance rate of at least 95%.	**Not Met**	**Not Met**	**Not Met**
11.	The school will achieve Adequate Yearly Progress ("AYP") each year.	**Met**	**Met**	N/A

* Goals were self-reported by the school in the school's Renewal Application submitted to NYC DOE and 2013-2014 Annual Report documentation submitted to NYSED.
** The method of assessment was changed from Terra Nova to CTP-4 in 2012-2013. Since this change was made without proper notification to the DOE, the progress for this goal in the 2012-2013 school year is considered as Not Met.

Responsive Education Program

In 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, the school administered the Comprehensive Testing Program (CTP-4) assessment that is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and is administered by the Educational Records Bureau (ERB). The following data was reported by the school:

- For the third grade cohort in 2013-2014, 79% of the students performed at or about the national norm in reading comprehension and 80% of the students performed at or above the national norm in math.

As part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE visited the school on September 17, 2014 and September 18, 2014. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- **Alignment with Common Core**:
    - School leadership reported that the school has aligned school-created academic rubrics, which are used to determine acquisition of knowledge and mastery, with CCLS.
    - School leadership reported that the school uses Developmental Reading Assessments (DRAs) to monitor students' literacy levels, Amplify's mCLASS, and the CTP-4 to determine student achievement of essential standards and learning domains in ELA and math. Quarterly, instructional staff present out class-specific data to the entire staff in the school's Instructional Methods and Professional Practice (IMAPP) conferences.
    - In the 2012-2013 school year, the school leaders (who also serve as the lead teachers in their respective Schoolhouses), and other lead teachers across the school began using the strategies of Socratic questioning, inquiry-based instruction, and integration to increase the level of rigor in their classrooms. After this pilot, they shared the strategies as best practices with their Co-Teacher Apprentice instructional staff, who began using them more fully in the 2013-2014 school year.

- **Addressing the Needs of All Learners:**
    - The school's model is to have Schoolhouses, each with one lead teacher (either Associate level or Partner) and a Co-Teacher Apprentice (a new or inexperienced teacher). The Schoolhouses may also have instructional interns, as well as paraprofessionals. The school's instructional organizational structure maintains a low student-to-teacher ratio, in an effort to provide individualized instructional attention to the students.
    - The school employs two learning specialists, one who works with students with disabilities and one who works with students who need speech therapy. The special education learning specialist also serves as the special education coordinator and has sole access to the Special Education Student Information System (SESIS).

- Related services, such as occupational therapy and physical therapy, are being provided by outside agencies. During the visit, related services were being implemented as per the students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- TFOA completes the process of identification of English Language Learner students. However, there are no supports or ESL teachers for identified ELLs.
- For students identified as at-risk of failure through the school's Targeted Assistance Program (TAP), the school utilizes several strategies to provide academic support, such as Mindfulness Practice, Choice Theory, and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.

- **Instructional Model and Classroom Instruction:**

  - TFOA's schedule incorporates time daily for teachers to be able to plan, reflect, and fulfill their administrative responsibilities. In addition, once a week they have formal professional development time to meet in small professional development teams consisting of a Partner, Senior Associates, Junior Associates, Co-Teacher Apprentices, as well as learning specialists and social workers from the Dean's Team.
  - The school uses "looping" for all of their Schoolhouses, keeping each Lead TFOA teacher with the students assigned to their Schoolhouse from kindergarten through fourth grade.
  - During the renewal visit, 29 classrooms across grades kindergarten through four were observed with the school's Partners and a few Junior Associates.
  - In all observed classes there were multiple teachers in the classroom. According to the school's leaders, TFOA offers co-teaching classes. Station teaching and Lead-and-Monitor were the instructional models observed in most classrooms.
  - Class sizes in observed classrooms ranged from 14 to 26 students, with one to four teacher(s) in each classroom.
  - Forms of questioning identified during the classroom observations included mostly basic fact recall, with limited evidence of teachers challenging students to analyze and apply.
  - In most rooms, checks for understanding that included questioning, polling, and classwork, were observed.
  - Differentiation of materials and tasks through small group instruction or independent practice was observed in only a few classrooms. This is inconsistent with the school model.
  - In some observed classes, students were responsive to teacher directions and instruction.
  - In the majority of observed classes, students were mostly on task. The few off-task students were re-directed, but most off-task students remained off task.
  - Based on debriefs with the school's leadership team members after classroom visits, they found that all classrooms observed had instruction that aligned with the instructional model and current academic goals of the school.

Learning Environment

NYC DOE representatives conducted one-on-one interviews with 26 teachers and two learning specialists. The following was noted:

- All interviewed teachers reported that they received frequent school-based professional development throughout the school year, which was administered either by the school leadership or consultants. Examples of professional development topics included neuropedagogy, choice theory, and CCLS implementation strategies.
- A few of the interviewed teachers mentioned the use of the professional rubric that was created by the Partners for teacher evaluations. Some of the interviewed teachers reported that they received informal feedback from teachers in their Schoolhouse. Some of the interviewed teachers mentioned the use of a 360-degree survey that all staff complete to give feedback to their colleagues. Most of the interviewed teachers reported an end of the year meeting with the Partners, where a formal evaluation is given. A few teachers seemed unclear as to how they would be evaluated.

- Most of the interviewed teachers reported that they use Developmental Reading Assessment and teacher-created unit assessment data to gauge student progress.

A group of 10 fourth grade students were interviewed. Based on student interviews conducted on the September 18, 2014 visit to the school, the following was noted:

- Students interviewed reported that the difficulty level of classwork and homework was mixed, depending on the subject and time given to do the work.
- Students interviewed reported that getting complimented by their teachers and/or receiving a high score on their work indicates that they are doing well.

According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, most parents agree "that the school has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss [their] child" and 99% of parents who responded to the survey agree "that the school has high expectations for [their] child."[18]

According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 80% of teachers agree that "order and discipline are maintained at the school" and zero percent of teacher respondents agreed with the statement that "at my school students are often harassed or bullied in school."[19]

[18] According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 70% of parent respondents strongly agree that TFOA has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss their child; another 28% agree with the statement. Similarly, 72% of parent respondents strongly agree that TFOA has high expectations for their child; another 27% agree with the statement.

[19] According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 35% of teacher respondents strongly agree that order and discipline are maintained at TFOA; another 45% agree with the statement. Of teacher respondents, 0% marked that they strongly agree or agree that students are often harassed or bullied in the school.

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

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has not yet developed its governance structure and its organizational design.

On October 15, 2014, as part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE attended a meeting of the school's Board of Trustees and met with a representation of the school's Board of Trustees independent of the school leadership team. Based on document review and observation, the following was noted:

- The Board currently has seven active members. This level of membership is consistent with the minimum of five members and maximum of 15 members established in the Board's bylaws.
- The Board's Treasurer and Secretary positions, as specified in the bylaws, are currently filled; however, the Board's bylaws indicate that the structure should also include a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. Presently, the school uses a Co-Chairperson model.
- In each of the following school years, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014, the Board met 11 times with quorum.
- Academic progress, operations, and financial standings are inconsistently reported on at Board meetings as evidenced in meeting minutes.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership team as evidenced by the school's organization chart.
- The Board's bylaws reference committees, including an Executive Committee, a Finance Committee, an Education Advisory Committee, and a Compensation Committee; however, neither the meeting minutes nor the board roster indicate these committees are active.
- The founder and one of the elementary school leaders, Rafiq R. Kalam Id-Din II, has been at the school for five years, since the school's inception.

School Climate & Community Engagement

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

- To date, the school has met its charter goal of having an annual average student attendance rate of at least 90%. Average daily attendance for students over the course of the charter term is 92.3% according to the data in the table below.[20]

Average Attendance

Elementary and Middle School Attendance			
	2011-2012	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School *	**92.3%**	**92.4%**	**92.3%**
NYC **	93.9%	93.6%	93.2%
Difference from NYC	-1.6	-1.2	-0.9

* Attendance was self-reported by the school for all school years.
** NYC attendance figures reflect average attendance across all general education district schools as reflected in ATS.

- Staff turnover has been relatively consistent over the charter term as a percentage of overall staff, but over the last year the staff turnover rate did increase. In year one and year two of the charter term (2011-2012 and 2012-2013), 19% and 14.3% of instructional staff did not return, either by choice or request, at the start of the following school year. This represented four teachers in both

[20] The table reflects school self-reported attendance data for all school years.

years. However, for the most recent period, eight staff members chose not to return, representing a doubling of the number of staff who left and a staff turnover rate of 19%.[21]

- Student mobility is presented below for the charter term without comparison to other schools, the CSD or NYC as final student retention goals were not established by the New York State Education Department for the retrospective charter term. Based on the NYC DOE's evaluation and not in comparison to any other school, the CSD or NYC averages, the school has not had challenges with retaining students.

Mobility

Student Mobility out of Teaching Firms of America-Professional Preparatory Charter School *			
	2011-2012	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Number of Students who Left the School	16	22	35
Percent of Students who Left the School	12.2%	11.3%	13.9%

* Figures are based on student enrollment as of October 31 for each respective school year with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012. Students in terminal grades are not included.

- The NYC DOE has made changes to the NYC School Survey during the entirety of the retrospective charter term. Questions asked have been altered, added or deleted from year to year. Also, beginning with the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, survey categories will not be measured in total points out of 10 possible points. To allow for consistency during the evaluated charter term, selected questions, consistent with the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework were identified as relevant for charter schools. These are presented below for the duration of the retrospective charter term. In the most recent year of survey results, 2013-2014, the percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing was above citywide averages for two of four selected questions; the percentage of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing was above citywide averages for all three selected questions.
- NYC School Survey Response Rates should be comparable over time, however, as the measurement of these has remained consistent. Response rates for parents, teachers and students (if participating) are presented below for each year of the charter term. In general, for each year of the charter term, the response rates for Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School parents are above NYC averages and the response rates for Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School teachers are below NYC averages (with the exception of the teacher response rate in the second year of operation for the school).

[21] Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form in November 2014

NYC School Survey Results

Percent of Respondents that Agree or Strongly Agree					
Survey Question		Teaching Firms of America-Professional Preparatory Charter School			Citywide Average
		2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014
Students*	Most of my teachers make me excited about learning.**	-	-	-	-
	Most students at my school treat each other with respect.	-	-	-	-
	I feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker room, cafeteria, etc.	-	-	-	-
Parents	I feel satisfied with the education my child has received this year.	99%	100%	99%	95%
	My child's school makes it easy for parents to attend meetings.	99%	98%	98%	94%
	I feel satisfied with the response I get when I contact my child's school.	97%	99%	99%	95%
Teachers	Order and discipline are maintained at my school.	100%	88%	80%	80%
	The principal at my school communicates a clear vision for our school.	100%	88%	95%	88%
	School leaders place a high priority on the quality of teaching.	100%	81%	89%	92%
	I would recommend my school to parents.	100%	75%	90%	81%

* Students in grades kindergarten through five do not participate in the NYC School Survey.
** This question was phrased as "My teachers inspire me to learn" in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 School Surveys.

NYC School Survey Results

	Response Rates			
		2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students*	Teaching Firms of America - Professional Preparatory Charter School	-	-	-
	NYC	-	-	-
Parents	Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School	83%	66%	68%
	NYC	53%	54%	53%
Teachers	Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School	71%	84%	71%
	NYC	81%	83%	81%

* Students in grades kindergarten through five do not participate in the NYC School Survey.

- The school's charter goals include, "parents will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the NYC School Survey in which the school receives scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety and

Respect." The school met this goal in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years. This goal is not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year.

- The school's charter goals include, "staff will express satisfaction with school leadership and professional development opportunities as determined by the NYC School Survey in which the school receives scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety and Respect." The school met this goal in the 2011-2012 school year. The school partially met this goal in the 2012-2013 school year; TFOA received a score of 7.5 or higher in only two of the four survey domains. This goal is not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year.
- The school's charter goals include, "students will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the NYC School Survey in which the school receives scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety and Respect." This goal was not applicable in any years of the existing charter.

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

- The school's model encourages students to act as leaders and "choose" to conduct themselves in a way that supports the school's values and core attributes: reflection, self-confidence, empathy, focus, inquiry, and principle. Many aspects of the schools' environment, including the classroom and hallway walls and the language used by teachers and students, emphasize those attributes.
- Over the course of the charter, the school has maintained a Parents' Council that works directly with the school's leadership team.
- The NYC DOE conducted a public renewal hearing on September 18, 2014 at Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School at 616 Quincy Street, Brooklyn, NY 11221 for the school in an effort to elicit public comments. Approximately 110 participants attended the hearing with 11 persons speaking in support of the school's renewal and zero speaking in opposition.
- The NYC DOE made randomized phone calls to parents/guardians from a roster provided by the school for students of all grades. Calls to school parents/guardians were made during October 2014 until 20 phone calls were completed. Of these calls, 100% provided positive feedback regarding the school.

Financial Health

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

- Based on the fiscal year 2014 (FY14) financial audit, the school's current ratio of 1.57 indicated a strong ability to meet its current liabilities**.**
- Based on the FY14 financial audit, the school had sufficient unrestricted cash to cover 51 days of operating expenses without an infusion of cash.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2014-2015 budget to the actual enrollment as of September 30, 2014 revealed that the school had met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY14 financial audit, the school had no debt obligations**.**

Financial Sustainability

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

- Based on the financial audits from FY12 to FY14, the school generated an aggregate surplus over these audited fiscal years, and in FY14 the school operated at a surplus.
- Based on the FY14 financial audit, the school's debt-to-asset ratio of 0.44 indicated that the school had more total assets than it had total liabilities**.**
- Based on the financial audits from FY12 through FY14, the school generated overall positive cash flow from FY12 to FY14 and the school had positive cash flow in each measurable year.

There was no material weakness noted in the three independent financial audits from FY12 to FY14.

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

Over the charter term, Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School has been compliant with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

As of the review on November 2014, the Board of Trustees for TFOA is in compliance with:

- **Membership size.** Over the charter term, the Board has consistently had a membership size that falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws, a minimum of five and maximum of 15 members.
- **Required number of board meetings.** The school's bylaws indicate that the Board is to hold at least six meetings a year. The Board held 11 meetings in each school year in 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014. The Charter Schools Act requires that the Board hold monthly meetings over a period of 12 calendar months per year. The NYC DOE has requested that the board modify its bylaws to comply with this law, but to date has not submitted revised bylaws that include this requirement.

The Board of Trustees is out of compliance with:

- **Timely submission of documents.** The Board did not consistently submit the Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) by the deadline of August 1 (or by the NYSED granted extension date) for each year of the current charter term. The school has not posted on its website its annual report and audit for each year of the charter term, as required in charter law. The school posted the 2012 annual audit to its website; however, no other years' audits are available.
- **Submission of all required documents.** Conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms are not available for all current Board members.
- **Posting of minutes and agendas.** The Board has not consistently made all board minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to or at Board meetings. Additionally, the Board relies heavily on videoconferencing to ensure that quorum is met and the Board does not notify or disclose the public locations of the videoconferences.
- **Notification of Board Member resignations/submission of new Board Members for approval.** The board has not consistently submitted board resignation notices or new board member credentials within the required five days of change to OSDCP for review and, if necessary, approval. During the charter term, documents were not submitted per the required timeframe for three board members.

As of the review on November 2014, the charter school is in compliance with:

- **Fingerprint clearance.** All staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.
- **Safety Documents.** The school has submitted the required safety plan. The school has the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification.
- **Immunization.** The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization.
- **Insurance.** The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to the NYC DOE.
- **Application and Lottery.** For the 2014-2015 school year, the school had an application deadline of April 1, 2014 and lottery date of April 3, 2014 adhering to charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1. Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently adhere to this requirement.
- **Timely Submission of Invoicing and Reconciliation Documents.** Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently submit complete invoicing and reconciliation documents by the associated deadlines.

The charter school is out of compliance with:

- **Teacher certification.** The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is not compliant with state requirements for teacher certification. The Charter Schools Act prohibits more than five staff members or more than 30% of the teaching staff from not being

certified in accordance with requirements applicable to other public schools. Eight staff members are pending certification and five are not appropriately certified. In addition, four staff members may not meet highly qualified status as their Bachelor's degree has not been confirmed.

- **Fire Emergency.** None of the school leaders were trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.
- **Student Discipline Plan.** The school has communicated that they do not employ a discipline policy. Instead they utilize guiding frameworks (e.g. Choice Theory, Leadership Index, Mindfulness) in making tailored, individualized decisions about student behaviors, which are articulated in their School Culture and Behavior Management Policy. This policy was determined to be not compliant with federal law.

Enrollment and Retention Targets

- 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.
    - As of November 1, 2014, charter school enrollment and retention targets as required by the NYS Charter Schools Act are still in a *proposed* status. The information presented below for enrollment is compared to NYC CSD and NYC averages, however, these averages should not be assumed to be similar to the final enrollment targets to be released by NYSED.[22]
- In school year 2013-2014, Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School:
    - served a lower percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch compared to the CSD 16 percentage, but a higher rate compared to the citywide percentage;
    - served a lower percentage of students with disabilities compared to both the CSD 16 and citywide percentages; and
    - served a higher percentage of English Language Learner students compared to the CSD 16 percentage, but a lower rate compared to the citywide percentage.

[22] Please see the following website for more information: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/enrollment-retention-targets.html

Enrollment of Special Populations[23]

Special Population		2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014 State Enrollment Target (Proposed)
Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)	**Teaching Firms of America-Professional Preparatory Charter School**	**92.4%**	**87.7%**	**92.3%**	**91.1%**
	CSD 16	93.4%	92.8%	94.5%	
	NYC	83.1%	82.4%	82.3%	
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	**Teaching Firms of America-Professional Preparatory Charter School**	**10.7%**	**11.3%**	**13.6%**	**12.7%**
	CSD 16	14.0%	16.3%	21.8%	
	NYC	14.3%	15.8%	18.6%	
English Language Learners (ELL)	**Teaching Firms of America-Professional Preparatory Charter School**	**8.4%**	**6.7%**	**7.4%**	**2.8%**
	CSD 16	5.3%	5.4%	5.1%	
	NYC	19.7%	18.4%	17.1%	

Additional Enrollment Information			
	2011-2012	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Grades Served	K-1	K-2	K-3
CSD(s)	16	16	16

[23] Comparisons of a charter school's special populations to the CSD and City are made relative only to the grades served by the school. For example, if a charter school serves grades kindergarten through five, comparisons of that school's special populations will only be made relative to grades kindergarten through five in the CSD and citywide. CSD comparisons are particular to the grades served in each CSD each year. Enrollment rates reflect demographic characteristics as of June 1 and enrollment as of October 31 for each given school year, with the exception of enrollment in the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.
State enrollment targets were generated by a calculator developed by the State Education Department (SED). Once a school's CSD, total enrollment and grade span are entered, the calculator generates a school-specific enrollment target. The CSD for a multi-district school is the primary CSD as determined by each school. The enrollment is determined by the total number of students enrolled as of October 31, 2013. Any school with an unusual grade configuration (i.e. K, 6-9) should use an available grade configuration provided by SED that is most aligned as determined by the DOE, otherwise a school's actual grade span is used. For more information regarding SED's methodology behind the calculation of charter school enrollment and retention targets, please refer to the memo at
http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2012Meetings/July2012/712brca11.pdf.

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

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

- The school applied to serve middle school grades as part of its renewal. The school requested to serve students in grades kindergarten through eight in its next charter term.
- The school plans to apply for the NYC DOE Universal Pre-Kindergarten program to begin serving Pre-Kindergarten in 2015-2016 school year.
- The school plans to add preferences to its lottery, including students from CSD 13 and students who qualify for Free or Reduced Price Lunch.

Part 5: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

Renewal Process

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

The NYC DOE does not automatically grant charter renewal, and no charter operator is entitled to renewal. Rather, a school must prove that it has earned renewal and is worthy of continuing the privilege of educating New York City public school students. To make such determinations, the NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) renewal team performs a comprehensive review of the school's academic, operational and fiscal performance over the course of the charter, which includes an analysis of the school's renewal application. This application is built around the four essential questions of the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework and includes a retrospective analysis of the school's prior track record as well as a prospective plan for the school. In reviewing this information, a school must be able to demonstrate that it can satisfy the four essential questions of the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework:

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

The school presents evidence to support its application for renewal by providing a compelling response to these overarching questions that demonstrates its students have made significant academic progress, is serving students equitably, has sustainable operations to be successful in the next charter term, and that the school has met the goals and objectives pledged in its current charter. In addition, the school will describe challenges it has faced during its charter term, the strategies that were used to address those challenges and the lessons learned.

While the academic performance of students is the foremost determining factor of a school's success, a school's ability to demonstrate an effective educational program, a financially and operationally viable organization, and a strong learning community with support from stakeholders are also important factors that inform a renewal decision. For more information on how OSDCP makes renewal recommendations to the Chancellor, please see the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework overview in Part 6 of this report.

Statutory Basis for Renewal

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

§2850:

(a) Improve student learning and achievement;
(b) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
(c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
(d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
(e) Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and

(f) Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

When granted, a charter is valid for up to five years. For a school chartered under the Act to operate beyond the initial charter term, the school must seek and obtain renewal of its charter.[24]

The Act states the following regarding the renewal of a school's charter:

> **§2851.4**:
> Charters may be renewed, upon application, for a term of up to five years in accordance with the provisions of this article for the issuance of such charters pursuant to section twenty-eight hundred fifty-two of this article; provided, however, that a renewal application shall [also] include:
> (a) A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in the charter.
> (b) A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private. Such statement shall be in a form prescribed by the board of regents.
> (c) Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school required by subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty-seven of this article, including the charter school report cards and the certified financial statements.
> (d) Indications of parent and student satisfaction.
> (e) The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the board of regents or the board of trustees of the state university of New York, as applicable, of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program which shall be considered by the charter entity prior to approving such charter school's application for renewal. When developing such targets, the board of regents and the board of trustees of the state university of New York shall ensure (1) that such enrollment targets are comparable to the enrollment figures of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the charter school is located; and (2) that such retention targets are comparable to the rate of retention of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the proposed charter school would be located.
>
> Such renewal application shall be submitted to the charter entity no later than six months prior to the expiration of the charter; provided, however, that the charter entity may waive such deadline for good cause shown.

The determination of whether to approve a renewal application rests in the sole discretion of a charter school's authorizer.

A school seeking renewal of its charter must submit a renewal application to the charter entity to which the original charter application was submitted.[25] As one such charter entity, the New York City Department of Education ("NYC DOE") institutes a renewal application process that adheres to the Act's renewal standards:

- A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in its charter;
- A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private;

[24] See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.
[25] See generally §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4).

- Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school including the charter school report cards and certified financial statements;
- Indications of parent and student satisfaction; and
- The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the board of regents of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program which shall be considered by the charter entity prior to approving such charter school's application for renewal.[26]

Where the NYC DOE approves a renewal application, it is required under the Act to submit the application and a proposed charter to the Board of Regents for its review and approval.[27]

[26] § 2851(4)(e) added with the 2010 amendments to the Act.
[27] See § 2852(5).

Part 6: NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework

The Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) team may recommend to the Chancellor three potential outcomes for charter schools applying for renewal: full-term renewal (with or without conditions), short-term renewal (with or without conditions), or non-renewal.

After the OSDCP renewal site visit, the OSDCP team incorporates its findings from the visit into this renewal report. The evidence and findings align to the four essential questions of our accountability framework and may include classroom observations, leadership interviews, assessment results, School Survey results, public hearings and other community feedback, as well as a variety of other data. Schools will be given the opportunity to correct factual errors in this report. If the OSDCP renewal team determines that renewal is not warranted, the school will be informed in writing of the reasons for the non-renewal. If OSDCP approves the renewal application and the Chancellor recommends renewal for the school, prior to the school's charter expiration date, OSDCP will send the renewal report and recommendation along with the school's renewal application and other supporting evidence to the Board of Regents for its approval.

Full-Term Renewal, With or Without Conditions

In cases where a school has demonstrated exceptional results with its students, a five-year renewal will be granted. A school must show that its program has clearly and consistently demonstrated high academic attainment and/or consistent and significant student academic progress, has met the majority of its charter goals, has demonstrated financial stability, has demonstrated operational viability, has attained sufficient board capacity, and has an educationally sound learning environment in order to gain this type of renewal.

Short Term Renewal, With or Without Conditions

In cases where a school is up for renewal of its initial charter and has two years or fewer of state-assessment results, or where any school has demonstrated mixed academic results or has uncertain organizational or financial viability, a short-term renewal with or without conditions may be considered.

Non-Renewal

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

Grade Expansions or Enrollment Changes

A school may seek material charter revisions as part of the renewal process. In the case of a grade expansion or change in authorized enrollment, these material charter revisions are considered separately from the charter renewal. Charter renewal, with or without conditions, is not a guarantee of approval for a proposed material charter revision.

The NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework

To help Chancellor-authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the OSDCP team has developed an Accountability Framework built around four essential questions for charter school renewal:

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

Although academic performance is primary, the NYC DOE takes into account a wide variety of factors (as indicated by the framework strands and available evidence detail) when evaluating a school. These factors include academic, fiscal, operational and environmental indicators of a charter school's performance. Additionally, some of the indicators we evaluate relate to expected performance as defined in the New York State Charter Schools Act including evidence of improved student learning and achievement, special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure, use of different and innovative teaching methods, parent and student satisfaction, and enrollment and retention of special student populations. Further detail about the application of the framework to school reflection and evaluation is provided beginning on page 17 of the NYC DOE Chancellor-Authorized Schools Accountability Handbook for 2014-15.

What follows is a framework that outlines strands, indicators, and potential evidence for each of the four essential questions. The framework identifies what OSDCP looks at in determining whether a school is successful enough to earn a new charter term, with or without conditions, and the duration of the charter term recommended by NYC DOE. As schools use the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework, they should remember that charter schools exist to deliver improved student achievement for the students they serve, particularly at-risk students, so the schools are high-quality choices for families. This reminder should help a school apply this framework to its own performance analysis, underscoring the state and city's commitment to superior academic performance as the most important factor in a school's performance, while also recognizing the importance of closing the achievement gap and offering high-quality learning opportunities for all students.

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 • Meet other rigorous academic goals as stated on school charter • Demonstrate increasing student achievement/growth • Are closing the achievement gap for at risk students, including special needs and ELL students • Are surpassing academic performance measures of DOE identified peer-schools • Are surpassing academic performance measures compared with district/city proficiency averages

Evidence for success might include, but not be limited to, the following depending on school configurations:

- Grades 3-8 NYS ELA Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- Grades 3-8 NYS Math Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- Grades 4 and 8 NYS Science Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- HS 4- and 6-Year Graduation Rates
- Grades 8-12 NYS Regent Exam Results
- 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
- When applicable, NYSAA or other approved alternate assessments results
- Results on state accountability measures
- Charter School Academic Goals
- School-reported internal assessments
- NYC DOE Progress Reports or School Quality Reports[28]

1b. Instructionally Sound and 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 and Common Core Learning Standards
- Use instructional models and resources that are consistent with school mission and 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
- Utilizes 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 and supporting curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals

[28] Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE replaced the DOE Progress Report with the DOE School Quality Report. The 2012-2013 school year is the last year NYC public schools will have a Progress Report score. The Progress Report and School Quality Report contain similar indicators of performance.

Evidence for successful education programs, in addition to positive results, may include, but not be limited to, many of the following:

- Classroom observations
- Instructional planning documents (alignments, scope and sequences, curriculum maps, unit and lesson plans, etc.)
- Instructional leader and staff interviews
- Special Education/ELL progress monitoring documentation
- Professional development plans and resources
- Student/teacher schedules
- Student Intervention / Response to Intervention program description and resources
- Interim assessment results
- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation

1c. Learning Environment

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

- Provide a safe, respectful, and stable academic environment conducive to student leaning (one with efficient transitions and safe hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.)
- Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best effort academically and to actively engage in their own learning and the life of the school
- 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
- Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and supported
- Have 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:

- Classroom observations
- NYC DOE School Survey results (students, parents and teachers)
- 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 (referral, suspension, expulsion)
- Parent complaint/concern information
- Self-administered satisfaction survey results
- Interviews with school leadership, staff, and, if appropriate, students
- Scheduled student engagement opportunities (e.g., student advisory, internships, student government, student led conferences, peer tutoring, peer mediation, etc.)
- School calendar and class schedules

2. Is the School a Fiscally and Operationally Sound, Viable Organization?
2a. Mission and Goals
Schools with a successful mission and goals have many of the characteristics below: • Have an animated mission statement and clearly articulated goals (both academic and non-academic) that staff, students and community embrace • Demonstrate an active self-evaluation process that involves regular monitoring, an examination of practices based on outcomes against goals, and reporting on progress towards school goals • Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring data
Evidence for a successful mission and goals might include, but not be limited to, the following: • Mission Statement • School charter and external documents (student/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 • Stakeholder interviews (board, parents, staff, students, etc.)

2b. Leadership and Governance Structure
Schools with successful leadership and governance 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 Law and conflict of interest laws, 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 • 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 • Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel • Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provides 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 and core operational policies • School calendar • Professional development plans • Stakeholder interviews (board, school leadership and staff)

2c. 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 • Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the NYC DOE School Survey • Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children • Strong community-based partnerships that support and advocate for the school • Engage families actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives • 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 • Share instructional and operational practices with the larger NYC school community and actively seek opportunities for partnering and collaboration • 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
Evidence for school climate and community engagement may include, but not be limited to, the following: • NYC 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 • Participation in NYC DOE initiatives and efforts to collaborate/partner with other NYC schools • Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc. • Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.) • 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 • Student/Family and Staff Handbooks

2d. Operational Health
Schools that are effective, sustainable organizations have many of the characteristics below: • A safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations • Demonstrate efficient and orderly daily operations • Have appropriate insurance coverage and insurance and facility documents • An effective process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, supporting, and evaluating school leadership and staff • A flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff • Consistently meet student enrollment and retention targets as established by SED (applicable to schools renewed after 2010) • Communications with NYC DOE are timely, comprehensive, and appropriate • If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees
Evidence of an operationally viable organization may include, but not be limited to, the following: • Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.) • Appropriate insurance documents • Operational policies and procedures • Operational organizational chart • Secure storage areas for student and staff records • Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records • School safety plan • Immunization completion rate information • Appropriate AED/CPR certifications
2e. Financial Sustainability
Schools that are responsible stewards of public funds and are effective, sustainable organizations have many of the characteristics below: • Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues • Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, at 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 • Consistently clean financial audits and compliant escrow accounts • If applicable, strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school's design and academic program • School leadership and Board maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk • School leadership and Board oversee financial and operational responsibilities in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to decision-making • Demonstrate financial planning for future school years, including per-pupil and space-related cost projections
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 audits, escrow accounts and other fiscal reporting documents • Financial leader(s) resume and accountability documents • Financial and operational organizational chart • Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships

3. Is the School in Compliance with its Charter and All Applicable Laws and Regulations?

3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with the school's charter and charter agreement have the characteristics below:

- Implement 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
- Implement 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 Comprehensive Review reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership/Board and staff interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have the characteristics below:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for Free and Reduced Price Lunch, ELL and Special Education students to those of their community school district of location[29] *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 enrollment process and annual waiting lists with integrity
- Employ instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and meet all 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 NYSED Annual Report
- Student recruitment plan and resources
- Student management policies and promotion and retention policies
- Student/Family Handbook
- Student discipline policy and 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

[29] School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from the NY State Education Department. This requirement of the New York State Charter Schools Act applies to schools renewed after 2010.

3c. Applicable Regulations
Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have the characteristics below: • Safe and secure facilities with no significant compliance concerns • Consistently clean annual audits, up-to-date escrow accounts, and complete 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 comply with NYC DOE OSDCP's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members • Inform NYC DOE OSDCP, and where required, receive OSDCP 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 • Stakeholder 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, a school may consider various growth options: replication, expansion to new grades or increased enrollment, or alteration of its 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 determine community needs and to communicate regarding the school's 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 revision or merger applications
- 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 (for example, human resource policies for growing your own talent, 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)
- School develops contingency plans especially for facilities or financial scenarios

Evidence for organizational sustainability may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Charter renewal application
- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organizational 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 without major changes through expansion or replication, 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 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

Appendix A: School Performance Data

Students scoring at or above Level 3

Grade-Level Proficiency in English Language Arts			
	2011-2012	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School			
Grade 3	-	-	19.3%
DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 16 *			
Grade 3	-	-	-2.7
DIFFERENCE FROM NYC			
Grade 3	-	-	-10.6

Grade-Level Proficiency in Mathematics			
	2011-2012	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Teaching Firms of America – Professional Preparatory Charter School			
Grade 3	-	-	28.1%
DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 16 *			
Grade 3	-	-	7.8
DIFFERENCE FROM NYC			
Grade 3	-	-	-10.5

* CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

Appendix B: Additional Accountability Data

NYC DOE Accountability Reports

Annual Comprehensive Report 2013-14
Annual Comprehensive Report 2012-13
Annual Site Visit Report 2011-12