



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**NEW HEIGHTS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
RENEWAL REPORT**

**2014 – 2015 SCHOOL YEAR
FEBRUARY 2015**

Table of Contents

PART 1: SUMMARY OF RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION	2
I. CHARTER SCHOOL OVERVIEW:	2
<i>Background Information</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Overview of School-Specific Data</i>	<i>3</i>
II. RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE	9
PART 2: SCHOOL OVERVIEW AND HISTORY.....	16
PART 3: RENEWAL REPORT OVERVIEW	18
PART 4: FINDINGS	20
<i>Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Essential Question 2: Is the School a Fiscally and Operationally Sound, Viable Organization?.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Essential Question 3: Is the School Compliant with its Charter and All Applicable Law and Regulations? ...</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Essential Question 4: What are the School’s Plans for the Next Charter Term?.....</i>	<i>37</i>
PART 5: BACKGROUND ON THE CHARTER RENEWAL PROCESS	38
PART 6: NYC DOE OSDCP ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK.....	41
APPENDIX A: SCHOOL PERFORMANCE DATA	53
APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY DATA	55

Part 1: Summary of Renewal Recommendation

I. Charter School Overview:

Background Information

New Heights Academy Charter School	
Board Chair(s)	Gail Grossmann
School Leader(s)	Christina Brown (Executive Director), Christopher Barfield (HS Director), Denise Linares (MS Director)
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 6
Physical Address(es)	1818 Amsterdam Avenue, Manhattan
Facility Owner(s)	Private
School Opened For Instruction	2006-2007
Current Charter Term Expiration Date	4/14/2015
Current Authorized Grade Span	5-12
Current Authorized Enrollment	750
Proposed New Charter Term	2.5 years [April 15, 2015 - June 30, 2017]
Proposed Authorized Grade Span for New Charter Term	5-12
Proposed Authorized Enrollment for New Charter Term	750
Proposed Sections per Grade for New Charter Term	Grades 5-12: 4 sections per grade

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						
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Cumulative Charter Term Total
Total Achievable Goals	14	14	14	14	14	70
# Met	3	1	2	1	2	9
# Partially Met	0	1	2	1	0	4
# Not Met	7	9	7	9	8	40
# Not Applicable *	4	3	3	3	4	17
% Met	21%	7%	14%	7%	14%	13%
% Partially Met	0%	7%	14%	7%	0%	6%
% Not Met	50%	64%	50%	64%	57%	57%
% Not Applicable *	29%	21%	21%	21%	29%	24%
% Met of All Applicable Goals	30%	9%	18%	9%	20%	17%

* 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					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	20.9%	20.8%	25.4%	10.2%	14.0%
CSD 6	27.7%	27.4%	31.1%	13.5%	15.6%
Difference from CSD 6 *	-6.8	-6.6	-5.7	-3.3	-1.6
NYC	40.5%	41.0%	45.0%	25.7%	27.4%
Difference from NYC *	-19.6	-20.2	-19.6	-15.5	-13.4
New York State **	53.2%	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-32.3	-32.0	-29.7	-20.9	-16.6

% Proficient in Mathematics					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	41.9%	62.0%	61.3%	18.1%	18.1%
CSD 6	43.1%	47.8%	50.6%	15.0%	20.4%
Difference from CSD 6 *	-1.2	14.2	10.7	3.1	-2.3
NYC	52.8%	56.7%	59.3%	27.3%	31.5%
Difference from NYC *	-10.9	5.3	2.0	-9.2	-13.4
New York State **	61.0%	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	-19.1	-1.3	-3.5	-13.0	-18.1

* 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.

Student improvement on the state tests compared to other students

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile - English Language Arts					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School – All Students	56.0%	56.0%	55.0%	67.5%	58.0%
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	15.1%	7.4%	28.9%	71.6%	36.1%
City Percent of Range- All Students	8.1%	5.2%	27.1%	59.8%	30.7%
New Heights Academy Charter School – School's Lowest Third	63.0%	72.0%	64.5%	80.0%	70.0%
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	8.9%	38.5%	26.5%	67.0%	31.7%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	0.0% ¹	29.3%	22.2%	51.5%	26.1%

¹ In the 2009-2010 NYC DOE Progress Report for New Heights Academy Charter School, the City Percent of Range for the school's ELA Median Adjusted Growth Percentile was reported as -1.5%. This figure has been changed to 0.0% in this table for consistency, because the percent of range methodology was changed in 2010-2011 so that the lowest possible percent of range for a school was 0.0%.

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile - Mathematics					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School – All Students	57.0%	74.0%	64.0%	63.0%	53.0%
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	38.5%	74.9%	59.7%	48.7%	25.4%
City Percent of Range- All Students	36.9%	71.9%	62.6%	52.8%	28.8%
New Heights Academy Charter School – School's Lowest Third	65.0%	80.0%	70.0%	72.5%	54.5%
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	49.3%	83.3%	61.6%	47.2%	0.0%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	42.6%	78.6%	60.9%	43.5%	0.0%

A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A peer/city percent of range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of their peer group/city.

Closing the Achievement Gap

Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - English Language Arts					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities *	35.7%	42.9%	42.9%	69.4%	61.0%
English Language Learner Students	17.2%	34.3%	23.1%	48.6%	29.2%
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	32.5%	42.0%	37.0%	51.5%	38.8%
Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - Mathematics					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities *	42.9%	58.5%	36.1%	47.2%	43.9%
English Language Learner Students	26.3%	49.4%	31.4%	31.4%	29.0%
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	42.4%	56.4%	41.4%	41.5%	31.7%

* Defined as students with a placement in Self-Contained, ICT, or SETSS.

HS Performance Compared to Peer and NYC Averages

4-year Graduation Rate					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	77.4%	80.5%	70.7%	78.7%	91.6%
NYC *	66.7%	65.7%	64.7%	66.0%	68.4%
Difference from NYC	10.7	14.8	6.0	12.7	23.2
6-year Graduation Rate					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	-	-	87.1%	87.4%	85.9%
NYC *	-	-	73.2%	73.0%	72.7%
Difference from NYC	-	-	13.9	14.4	13.2
College and Career Preparatory Course Index **					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	-	6.9%	10.1%	21.3%	53.0%
Peer Percent of Range	-	-	9.2%	30.5%	65.6%
City Percent of Range	-	-	13.4%	27.8%	70.5%

* The New York State graduation rate calculation method was first adopted in NYC for the Cohort of 2001 (Class of 2005). The cohort consists of all students who first entered ninth grade in a given school year (e.g., the Cohort of 2005 entered ninth grade in the 2005-2006 school year). Graduates are defined as those students earning either a Local or Regents diploma and exclude those earning either a special education (IEP) diploma or GED.

** The College and Career Preparatory Course Index score was not introduced until the 2010-2011 school year and peer and city percent of range scores were not available until the 2011-2012 school year. A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A peer/city percent of range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of their peer group/city.

Weighted Regents Pass Rates

2014					
	English	Math	Science	Global History	U.S History
New Heights Academy Charter School	1.05	1.60	1.44	1.29	1.17
Peer Percent of Range	57.6%	100.0%	79.2%	95.0%	70.9%
City Percent of Range	65.2%	97.6%	67.4%	98.0%	76.0%
2013					
	English	Math	Science	Global History	U.S History
New Heights Academy Charter School	0.74	1.85	1.37	1.03	1.16
Peer Percent of Range	13.3%	100.0%	69.8%	69.6%	74.4%
City Percent of Range	25.0%	100.0%	62.2%	71.0%	74.0%

2012					
	English	Math	Science	Global History	U.S History
New Heights Academy Charter School	1.28	2.36	1.45	1.43	1.63
Peer Percent of Range	48.4%	100.0%	49.3%	56.0%	85.5%
City Percent of Range	53.6%	100.0%	53.5%	55.2%	82.6%
2011					
	English	Math	Science	Global History	U.S History
New Heights Academy Charter School	1.15	2.29	1.09	1.91	1.19
Peer Percent of Range	46.9%	100.0%	38.0%	91.6%	53.4%
City Percent of Range	50.0%	100.0%	36.9%	84.7%	53.9%
2010					
	English	Math	Science	Global History	U.S History
New Heights Academy Charter School	1.3	1.96	0.76	0.76	0.95
Peer Percent of Range	94.7%	100.0% ²	21.0%	34.6%	47.9%
City Percent of Range	90.9%	100.0%	24.8%	41.3%	52.4%

The Weighted Regents Pass Rate measures students' progress since the corresponding eighth grade test, with more weight given to students with lower proficiency based on eight grade test results.

A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A peer/city percent of range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of their peer group/city.

Credit Accumulation³

% 1st-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	94.2%	90.7%	70.7%	88.8%	-
Peer Percent of Range	87.6%	84.7%	35.3%	71.9%	-
City Percent of Range	89.8%	82.9%	41.3%	75.3%	-

² In the 2009-2010 NYC DOE Progress Report for New Heights Academy Charter School, the Peer Percent of Range for the school's Weighted Regents Pass Rate in math was reported as 108.5%. This figure has been changed to 100.0% in this table for consistency, because the percent of range methodology was changed in 2010-2011 so that the highest possible percent of range for a school was 100.0%.

³ Credit accumulation is self-reported by charter schools to the NYC DOE. New Heights Academy Charter School did not provide credit accumulation data to the NYC DOE for the 2013-2014 school year.

% 2nd-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	87.6%	87.2%	92.8%	81.4%	-
Peer Percent of Range	81.6%	84.4%	88.9%	63.2%	-
City Percent of Range	79.1%	78.2%	86.7%	64.2%	-
% 3rd-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	46.7%	83.3%	92.9%	81.5%	-
Peer Percent of Range	0.0% ⁴	83.2%	100.0%	67.8%	-
City Percent of Range	8.9%	73.4%	88.2%	66.3%	-

A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A peer/city percent of range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of their peer group/city.

Closing the Achievement Gap

4-year Weighted Diploma Rate*					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities **	-	-	225.0%	334.2%	336.4%
English Language Learner Students	-	180.0%	181.8%	263.9%	283.3%
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	158.9%	88.9%	166.7%	236.8%	223.8%
College and Career Preparatory Course Index ***					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	-	-	0.0%	8.8%	23.8%

* The weighted diploma rate assigns a weight to each type of diploma based on the relative level of proficiency and college and career readiness indicated by the diploma type and based on certain student demographic characteristics.

** Defined as students with a placement in Self-Contained, ICT, or SETSS.

*** The College and Career Preparatory Course Index score for Students in the Lowest Third Citywide was not introduced until the 2011-2012 school year.

⁴ In the 2009-2010 NYC DOE Progress Report for New Heights Academy Charter School, the Peer Percent of Range for Percent of Third-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits was reported as -14.6%. This figure has been changed to 0.0% in this table for consistency, because the percent of range methodology was changed in 2010-2011 so that the lowest possible percent of range for a school was 0.0%.

II. Renewal Recommendation and Rationale

Based on 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. The school must demonstrate academic growth, as measured by the school's median adjusted growth percentile in ELA, for each year of the charter term. The median adjusted growth percentile for the school's students will be at or above 50 percent of city percent of range for ELA in each year of the charter term.
2. The school must demonstrate academic growth, as measured by the school's median adjusted growth percentile in math, for each year of the charter term. The median adjusted growth percentile for the school's students will be at or above 50 percent of city percent of range for math in each year of the charter term.

A. Academic Performance

At the time of this school's renewal, New Heights Academy Charter School has partially demonstrated academic success.

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.

Data available for New Heights Academy Charter School indicates that the school has made progress towards meeting some of these objectives.

Mission and Vision

New Heights Academy Charter School's mission is to graduate students who are prepared to succeed in college and life.

School Specific Academic Performance

The school entered its ninth year of operation with the 2014-2015 academic year. The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) has five years of New York State (NYS) assessment data and five years of other academic indicator(s) to evaluate the academic achievement and progress of the students at New Heights Academy Charter School (New Heights) over the course of the retrospective charter term.

New Heights Academy Charter School has struggled with inconsistent performance relative to that of Community School District (CSD) 6 and its peer group during the current charter term. Whereas the school's performance relative to CSD 6 and its peer group increased during the charter term in English Language Arts (ELA) in grades five through eight, performance relative to both the CSD and its peer group fell during the charter term for math in grades five through eight.

Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, NYS assessments 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.

In 2012-2013, only 18.1% of New Heights Academy Charter School's students were proficient in math on the NYS assessments. New Heights Academy Charter School's math proficiency was greater than that of 59% of middle schools citywide and 65% of middle schools in CSD 6. However, when compared to middle schools with student populations most like its own (i.e. peer schools) New Heights Academy Charter School outperformed only 47% of similar schools. In 2012-2013, only 10.2% of New Heights Academy Charter School's students demonstrated proficiency in state assessments in ELA. With this level of proficiency, New Heights Academy Charter School outperformed just 40% of middle schools citywide but 59% of middle schools in CSD 6. However, New Heights Academy Charter School outperformed only 18% of its peer schools.

The following year, in 2013-2014, the percent of students at New Heights Academy Charter School who were proficient in math on the NYS assessments remained at 18.1%. New Heights Academy Charter School's math proficiency was higher than only 50% of middle schools citywide, and higher than only 33% of its peer schools. However, the school outperformed 59% of CSD 6 middle schools. In 2013-2014, the percent of students at New Heights Academy Charter School who demonstrated proficiency in ELA on the NYS assessments rose, to 14.0%. With this level of proficiency, New Heights Academy Charter School outperformed only 48% of middle schools citywide and 28% of middle schools in its peer group; however, New Heights Academy Charter School outperformed 76% of middle schools in CSD 6.

In 2013-2014, New Heights Academy Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was 58.0% with a City Percent of Range of 30.7%, placing the school in the 17th percentile of middle schools citywide.⁵ Similarly, the school's peer and CSD percentiles were 28% and 0%, respectively. This means that 72% of all other middle schools in New Heights Academy Charter School's peer group and all middle schools in CSD 6 had an ELA median adjusted growth percentile greater than New Heights Academy Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile in 2013-2014.

In 2013-2014, New Heights Academy Charter School's math median adjusted growth percentile was 53.0% with a City Percent of Range of 28.8%, placing it in the 19th percentile of middle schools citywide. The school's peer group and CSD percentiles were 15% and 0%, respectively. This means that 85% of all other middle schools in New Heights Academy Charter School's peer group and all middle schools in CSD 6 had math median adjusted growth percentiles greater than New Heights Academy Charter School's math median adjusted growth percentile in 2013-2014.

For the 2013-2014 school year, New Heights Academy Charter School's four-year graduation rate was 91.6%. This rate was higher than the citywide average by 23.2 percentage points. New Heights Academy Charter School's four-year graduation rate was in the 83rd percentile of high schools citywide. When compared to high schools with student populations most like its own (i.e. peer schools) New Heights Academy Charter School outperformed 74% of similar schools. In the same year, 2013-2014, New Heights Academy Charter School's six-year graduation rate was 85.9%. This rate was higher than the citywide average by 13.2 percentage points. The school's six-year graduation rate was in the 68th percentile of high schools citywide, though when compared to peer schools, the school outperformed only 19% of similar schools.

⁵ A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A percentile rank provides the percentage of schools that score lower than the school under consideration. A City Percent of Range of 30.7% indicates that the school's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was below the average but less than one standard deviation below the average (that only 30.7% of the range around the average represented scores lower than that of New Heights Academy Charter School), while a citywide percentile of 17% indicates that New Heights Academy Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was higher than only 17% of all middle schools citywide.

Credit accumulation is self-reported by charter schools to the NYC DOE. New Heights Academy Charter School did not provide credit accumulation data to the NYC DOE for the 2013-2014 school year.

In prior years, however, New Heights Academy Charter School generally outperformed its peer group and citywide averages in grade-level credit accumulation. The school's Peer Percent of Range for first-, second-, and third-year students was above 50.0% in nearly all prior years (with the exception of first-year credit accumulation in 2011-2012 and third-year credit accumulation in 2009-2010), meaning that the school generally outperformed its peer group average along each metric. Similarly, the City Percent of Range for first-, second-, and third-year students was above 50.0% in almost all prior years (with the exception of first-year credit accumulation in 2011-2012 and third-year credit accumulation in 2009-2010.)⁶

Weighted Regents pass rates in English, Math, Science, Global History, and U.S. History were above both the citywide averages and the averages for the school's peer group in the most recent school year, 2013-2014. In addition, in Math, the school achieved peer and city percent of range scores at or near 100.0% in all years. In general, the school compares favorably against its peer group schools and all high schools citywide when analyzing weighted Regents pass rates over the course of the current charter term, though peer and citywide comparisons show that the school has historically performed less favorably in English and Science.⁷

Over the five years that data is available for the retrospective charter term, New Heights Academy Charter School has met only 17% of its applicable academic charter goals.^{8,9} New Heights Academy Charter School met two of 10 applicable academic performance goals in its most recent year. Because of the move to Common Core Learning Standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not evaluate goals that measure a school's academic performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and math exams for the 2012-2013 school year. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, due to a change in state regulation, the NYC DOE will not evaluate goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two; further, due to the elimination of the accountability instrument, the DOE will not evaluate goals related to NYC DOE Progress Report grades beginning with the 2013-2014 school year. The school has demonstrated a relatively stagnant trend of depressed achievement of its stated charter goals over the five years of the charter term under review.

The school has shown only mixed evidence of a developed responsive education program and supportive learning environment. Prior visit reports by the NYC DOE pointed to the school's safe classrooms, focus on improved consistency in instructional quality and classroom routines, and willingness to make structural changes to improve student outcomes as areas of strength.¹⁰

⁶ A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A City Percent of Range of 50.0% represents the average and indicates that the school's credit accumulation rate was equal to the average score for all high schools citywide.

⁷ In three of the five years under review, the school's weighted Regents pass rate in English was less than the average for its peer group; in one of the five years under review, the school's weighted Regents pass rate in English was less than the citywide average. Similarly, in three of the five years under review, the school's weighted Regents pass rate in Science was less than the average for its peer group; in two of the five years under review, the school's weighted Regents pass rate in Science was less than the citywide average.

⁸ 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 twelve students).

⁹ It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not evaluate 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 evaluate goals that are related to NYC DOE Progress Report Grades in its analysis of progress towards goals.

¹⁰ New Heights Academy Charter School Annual Site Visit Report 2010-2011 and New Heights Academy Charter School Annual Site Visit Report 2011-2012

However, these reports also noted the need for increased instructional rigor, more stability among high-quality staff members, and a shift to more student ownership of learning as areas of growth.¹¹ The school also reported a high incidence of disciplinary infractions during the first half of its charter term, particularly in 2010-2011, when 27% of its student body received an out-of-school suspension.¹² The school has since changed its disciplinary approach and its incidence of out-of-school suspensions appears to be stabilizing.¹³

On its 2012-2013 NYC DOE Middle School Progress Report, New Heights Academy Charter School received a B grade in all sections except Student Performance, for which the school received a C grade. This ranked New Heights Academy Charter School in the 52nd percentile of all middle schools citywide and represented an improvement over the prior year. On its 2011-2012 NYC DOE Middle School Progress Report, New Heights Academy Charter School received a B grade in all sections except Student Progress, for which the school received a C grade. This ranked New Heights Academy Charter School in the 41st percentile of all middle schools citywide. As its Overall Grade, the school earned a C and B in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, respectively.

On its 2012-2013 NYC DOE High School Progress Report, New Heights Academy Charter School received an Overall grade of A, as well as an A grade for Student Progress, B grades for Student Performance and School Environment, and a C grade for College and Career Readiness. This ranked New Heights Academy Charter School in the 75th percentile of all high schools citywide. Similarly, on its 2011-2012 NYC DOE High School Progress Report, New Heights Academy Charter School received an A grade in all sections except for School Environment and College and Career Readiness, for which the school received grades of B and D, respectively. This ranked New Heights Academy Charter School in the 69th percentile of all high schools citywide. The school earned Overall grades of A in both 2009-2010 and 2010-2011.

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 40 schools with similar student populations 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 primarily based on median adjusted growth percentiles,¹⁴ which measure students' growth on state tests relative to other students with the same prior-year 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 (ELLs), 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.

¹¹ New Heights Academy Charter School Annual Site Visit Report 2010-2011 and New Heights Academy Charter School Annual Site Visit Report 2011-2012

¹² Self-reported information from the School's Renewal Data Collection Form, submitted November 2014

¹³ Self-reported information from the School's Renewal Data Collection Form, submitted November 2014

¹⁴ 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.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 31.7% of New Heights Academy Charter School's students in the lowest third citywide experienced growth in math that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting math scores. This level places New Heights Academy Charter School in only the 7th percentile of middle schools citywide. In the same year, only 38.8% of the school's students in the lowest third citywide experienced growth in ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting ELA scores; this level places New Heights Academy Charter School in the 12th percentile of all middle schools citywide.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 43.9% of New Heights Academy Charter School's students with disabilities experienced growth in math that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students with disabilities citywide with the same starting math scores. This level places New Heights Academy Charter School in the 35th percentile of middle schools citywide. In the same year, 61.0% of the school's students with disabilities experienced growth in ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students with disabilities citywide with the same starting ELA scores; this level places New Heights Academy Charter School in the 78th percentile of all middle schools citywide.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 29.0% of New Heights Academy Charter School's English Language Learner students experienced growth in math that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other English Language Learner students citywide with the same starting math scores. This level places New Heights Academy Charter School in 22nd percentile of middle schools citywide. Similarly, only 29.2% of the school's English Language Learner students experienced growth in ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other English Language Learner students citywide with the same starting ELA scores; this level places New Heights Academy Charter School in only the 15th percentile of all middle schools citywide.

Students in the lowest third citywide at New Heights Academy Charter School had a four-year weighted diploma rate of 223.8% in 2013-2014. This rate was associated with a City Percent of Range of 82.3%, i.e. above the citywide average. However, only 23.8% of this same group of students met the requirements for the College and Career Preparatory Course Index (CCPCI). Yet this rate was associated with a City Percent of Range of 85.6%, i.e. above the citywide average.

In 2013-2014, New Heights Academy Charter School's students with disabilities had a four-year weighted diploma rate of 336.4%. This rate was associated with a City Percent of Range of 80.1%, i.e. above the citywide average.

In 2013-2014, New Heights Academy Charter School's English Language Learner students had a four-year weighted diploma rate of 283.3%. This rate was associated with a City Percent of Range of 87.5%, i.e. above the citywide average.

In 2013-2014, New Heights Academy Charter School's students in the Lowest Third Citywide had a four-year weighted diploma rate of 223.8%. This rate was associated with a City Percent of Range of 82.3%, i.e. above the citywide average.

B. Governance, Operations & Finances

New Heights Academy Charter School is an operationally sound and fiscally viable organization. This assessment was made based on a review of the following indicators of operational and fiscal viability:

- New Heights Academy Charter School's FY11 mid-year, FY12, FY13, and FY14 independent financial audits;
- New Heights Academy Charter School's 2014-2015 staff handbook;
- New Heights Academy Charter School's 2014-2015 student/family handbook;

- On-site review of New Heights Academy Charter School's financial and operational records;
- New Heights Academy Charter School's FY15 budget and five-year projected budget;
- New Heights Academy Charter School's Board of Trustees financial disclosure forms;
- New Heights Academy Charter School's Board of Trustees minutes;
- New Heights Academy Charter School's Board of Trustees by-laws; and
- New Heights Academy Charter School's self-reported staffing data.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has maintained a developed governance structure and organizational design. Board Chair Gail Grossmann has been on the Board since May 2008, prior to the start of the current charter term, and has been the Board Chair since August 2011. The Board has consistently achieved quorum for the required number of meetings outlined in its bylaws - one annual meeting and six regular Board meetings. It has maintained a steady membership of between five and 15 members, although 72% of its current membership (eight of 11 members) joined the Board in 2013 or after.¹⁵ Additionally, Board officer positions have been consistently filled, and its required Executive, Finance, and Education/Accountability committees have been consistently active. The Board makes its meeting minutes and agendas publicly available via dissemination at Board meetings and receives standing academic and operational reports from the school's leadership team during these meetings.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has partially developed a stable school culture. The school experienced significant turnover in its leadership staff during the last two years of the charter term, with its Middle School Director, High School Director, and Executive Director assuming their roles in 2014, 2013, and 2013, respectively. Additionally, primary instructional staff turnover has been consistently high over the charter term. In 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014, the percentage of primary instructional staff who did not return, either by choice or request, at the start of the following school year was 38%, 33%, 35% and 51%, respectively.¹⁶ The school has also reported mixed parent participation in parent conferences and other school activities over the course of the charter term, and its Parent Teacher Association has not been functional since 2012-2013. Lastly, the school's satisfaction scores on the NYC DOE School Survey from 2011-2012 through 2013-2014 have been consistently average or below average across all categories when compared to schools citywide.

Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations. The school has approximately 80 days unrestricted cash on hand totaling \$2,587,352 to meet near-term obligations. These funds do not include an SEI Investment account totaling \$1.5 million, which contributes to the overall strength of the school's cash position.

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

There was no material weakness noted in the five independent financial audits from FY10 through FY14.

C. Compliance with Charter, Applicable Law and Regulations

Over the current charter term, New Heights Academy Charter School has been compliant with most applicable laws and regulations.

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.

The school's bylaws indicate that the Board is to hold six meetings a year in addition to an Annual Meeting in June, for a total of seven meetings per calendar year. In years 2010-2011 through

¹⁵ Self-reported information from the school's Board Roster, submitted November 19, 2014

¹⁶ Self-reported information from the school's Renewal Data Collection Form, submitted in November 2014

2013-2014 of the charter term, the Board held the required number of monthly meetings, as evidenced by the Board Yearly Meeting Schedule and the posted meeting minutes. Required meetings are those which met quorum. The current Charter Schools Act requires that the Board hold monthly meetings over a period of 12 calendar months, per year. The Board has not updated its bylaws to comply with this law.

All current Board members have submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms. The documents submitted do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.

The Board has not consistently made all board minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to or at Board meetings via its website. However, hard copies of Board minutes and an agenda were available to the public during the meeting attended by a NYC DOE representative on November 20, 2014.

The board has consistently submitted board resignation notices and new board member credentials within the required five days of change to OSDCP for review and, if necessary, approval during the current charter term.

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. 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 10, 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.

The school has provided the NYC DOE with a current and complete copy of its Student Discipline Policy for the 2014-2015 academic year, which was determined to be compliant with federal law.

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

The Board did consistently submit the Annual Report to the New York State Education Department by the deadline of August 1 (or by the NYSED granted extension date) for each year of the current charter term. However, state charter law requires a school to post to its website the annual audit for each year of the charter term, and the school has only posted its annual audits for fiscal years 2012 and 2013.

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. The school had eight uncertified staff members at the time of review, with three of the eight pending certification approval from the state and/or approval of reciprocity.

Due to changes in operational leadership, three school leaders were recently trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.

D. Plans for Next Charter Term

The school has not submitted any requests for material revisions to its charter as part of its next charter term.

Part 2: School Overview and History

New Heights Academy Charter School is a middle/high school serving 739 students¹⁷ in grades five through twelve during the 2014-2015 school year. It opened in the 2006-2007 school year with grades five and nine and is under the terms of its second charter. The school's authorized full grade span is grades five through twelve, which it reached in 2009-2010. The school's current charter term expires on April 14, 2015.¹⁸ The school does not offer a public universal Pre-Kindergarten program in New York City. The school is located in a privately-operated facility in Community School District 6 in Manhattan.

New Heights Academy Charter School's mission is to graduate students who are prepared to succeed in college and life. The school was created to serve students from the Manhattan neighborhoods of Harlem, Inwood and Washington Heights, and at the time of its inception was the first charter school in its Community School District. New Heights Academy Charter School executes against its mission by providing students with a safe and nurturing learning environment, offering a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum emphasizing critical thinking, and promoting character development, independence and a love of learning. The school utilizes a Gradual Release of Responsibility instructional approach that progressively shifts responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student.

New Heights Academy Charter School's Board of Trustees is led by Chair Gail Grossmann, who joined the Board in May 2008. The middle school is led by Denise Linares, a founding school teacher who became the Middle School Director in 2014, and the high school is led by Christopher Barfield, who began working at the school in 2011 and became the High School Director in 2013. The school also has an Executive Director, Christina Brown, who has been with the school for two years. The school has formed partnerships with community organizations such as the Police Athletic League, The Door, the Helen Keller Foundation, the Community Association of Progressive Dominicans, Community Works, and neighboring school PS/IS 210 - Twenty-first Century Academy for Community Leadership.

The school typically enrolls new students in all grades, though fifth grade is considered the primary entry grade. There were 1,019 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2014 lottery. The school reports backfilling students from the waitlist during the school year across all grades.¹⁹

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 *	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grade 5	96	96	96	97	99
Grade 6	97	96	96	97	99
Grade 7	96	95	96	98	99
Grade 8	98	96	96	97	101
Grade 9	98	99	94	101	98
Grade 10	96	96	97	84	88
Grade 11	91	96	92	92	76
Grade 12	82	94	104	92	85
Total Enrollment	754	768	771	758	745

¹⁷ ATS data as of October 31, 2014

¹⁸ NYC DOE internal data

¹⁹ Self-reported information collected through the 2014-2015 DOE Annual Charter School Survey

* 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.

Additional Enrollment Data

School Year 2013-2014 Information	Section Count	Average Class Size
Grade 5	4	25
Grade 6	4	25
Grade 7	4	25
Grade 8	4	25
Grade 9	4	25
Grade 10	4	22
Grade 11	4	19
Grade 12	4	21
Students Admitted Through The Lottery	120	

* Lottery information is based on self-reported data from the 2013-2014 DOE Annual Charter School Survey. Section counts are based on self-reported information collected as part of 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 New Heights Academy Charter School. This information includes enrollment data for the percentage of students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, English Language Learners 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).²⁰

²⁰ 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 (OSDCP) 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.²¹

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 (NYSED);
- 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.

²¹ 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 November 20 – 21, 2015:

- Andrew Lowenthal, Executive Director, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Gabrielle Mosquera, Senior Director, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Kamilah O'Brien, 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

Part 4: Findings

Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?

At the time of this school's renewal New Heights Academy Charter School has partially demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

High Academic Attainment and Improvement

- The school has five years of academic performance data and five years of NYS assessment data at the time of this report. For detailed information on grade-level data on NYS assessments as well as other academic indicators, please see Appendix A.

NOTE: The 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 ELA and math proficiency percentages should not be compared directly with prior-year results. Unlike prior years, proficiency on the NYS assessments for ELA and math in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 were based on the Common Core Learning Standards – a more demanding set of knowledge and skills necessary for 21st century college and career readiness.

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

% Proficient in English Language Arts					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	20.9%	20.8%	25.4%	10.2%	14.0%
CSD 6	27.7%	27.4%	31.1%	13.5%	15.6%
Difference from CSD 6 *	-6.8	-6.7	-5.7	-3.3	-1.6
NYC	40.5%	41.0%	45.0%	25.7%	27.4%
Difference from NYC *	-19.6	-20.2	-19.6	-15.5	-13.4
New York State **	53.2%	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-32.3	-32.0	-29.7	-20.9	-16.6

% Proficient in Mathematics					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	41.9%	62.0%	61.3%	18.1%	18.1%
CSD 6	43.1%	47.8%	50.6%	15.0%	20.4%
Difference from CSD 6 *	-1.2	14.2	10.7	3.0	-2.3
NYC	52.8%	56.7%	59.3%	27.3%	31.5%
Difference from NYC *	-10.9	5.3	2.0	-9.2	-13.4
New York State **	61%	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	-19.1	-1.3	-3.5	-13.0	-18.1

* 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.

Performance on the NYC Progress Report

Middle School Progress Report Grades	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Overall Grade	C	B	B	B	Progress Reports were discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.
Student Progress	D	B	C	B	
Student Performance	D	C	B	C	
School Environment	A	B	B	B	

HS Performance Compared to Peer and NYC Averages

4-year Graduation Rate					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	77.4%	80.5%	70.7%	78.7%	91.6%
NYC *	66.7%	65.7%	64.7%	66.0%	68.4%
Difference from NYC	10.7	14.8	6.0	12.7	23.2
6-year Graduation Rate					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	-	-	87.1%	87.4%	85.9%
NYC *	-	-	73.2%	73.0%	72.7%
Difference from NYC	-	-	13.9	14.4	13.2
College and Career Preparatory Course Index **					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	-	6.9%	10.1%	21.3%	53.0%
Peer Percent of Range	-	-	9.2%	30.5%	65.6%
City Percent of Range	-	-	13.4%	27.8%	70.5%

* The New York State graduation rate calculation method was first adopted in NYC for the Cohort of 2001 (Class of 2005). The cohort consists of all students who first entered ninth grade in a given school year (e.g., the Cohort of 2005 entered ninth grade in the 2005-2006 school year). Graduates are defined as those students earning either a Local or Regents diploma and exclude those earning either a special education diploma or GED.

** The College and Career Preparatory Course Index score was not introduced until the 2010-2011 school year and peer and City Percent of Range scores were not available until the 2011-2012 school year. A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A peer/city percent of range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of their peer group/city.

Performance on the NYC Progress Report

High School Progress Report Grades	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Overall Grade	A	A	A	A	Progress Reports were discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.
Student Progress	B	A	A	A	
Student Performance	A	A	A	B	
School Environment	A	B	B	B	
College and Career Readiness *	-	-	D	C	

* The College and Career Readiness grade was not introduced until the 2011-2012 school year.

Mission and Academic Goals

According to the Renewal Application submitted to the NYC DOE by New Heights Academy Charter School, as well as annual reports submitted to the New York State Education Department, over each of the five years in the retrospective charter term, the school achieved/met academic goals as follows:

- 3 of 10 applicable charter goals in the first year of the charter,
- 1 of 11 in the second year,
- 2 of 11 in the third year,
- 1 of 11 in the fourth year,²² and
- 2 of 10 in the fifth year.

Progress Towards Academic Charter Goals *

Academic Goals	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
1. Each year, 75% of fifth through eighth grade students who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination.	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met
2. Each year, 75% of fifth through eighth grade students who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Mathematics examination.	Not Met	Not Met	Partially Met	Not Met	Not Met
3. Each year, 75% of eighth grade students who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Science examination.	N/A	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met

²² 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	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
4. Each year, 75% of fifth and eighth grade students who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Social Studies examination.	Not Met	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5. Grade level cohorts will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State ELA and Math exams and 75% at or above Level 3 on the current year's State ELA and Math exams. For those cohorts in which the number of students scoring above proficiency exceeded 75 percent on the previous year's ELA or Math exams, the cohort will demonstrate growth (above 75 percent) in the current year.	N/A	Partially Met	Partially Met	Not Met	Not Met
6. Each year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the State ELA exam in each tested grade will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools (as determined by the NYC DOE).	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met
7. Each year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the State Math exam in each tested grade will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools (as determined by the NYC DOE).	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met
8. By the end of the fourth year of enrollment at the school, 80% of each grade level cohort of students will graduate. (*Note – the school does not distinguish between the fourth year of enrollment at the school and the fourth year of enrollment in high school. The school assigns all students to the cohort based on the year they entered ninth grade at any school.)	Not Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met
9. By the end of the fifth year of enrollment at the school, 95% of each grade level cohort of students will graduate. (*Note – the school does not distinguish between the fifth year of enrollment at the school and the fifth year of enrollment in high school. The school assigns all students to the cohort based on the year they entered ninth grade at any school.)	N/A	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met
10. Each year, the graduating cohort of students will increase by 5% the total number of: (1) students earning Regents Diplomas with Advanced Designation; and (2) AP exams passed with a score of 3 or higher; and (3) college credits earned while enrolled in high school.	N/A	Not Met	Met	Partially Met	Met
11. Each year, the percent of students in the high school accountability cohort passing an English Regents exam with a score of 65 or above by the end of their fourth year will exceed that of the students in the high school accountability cohort from a group of similar schools (as determined by the NYC DOE).	Met	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Academic Goals		2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
12.	Each year, the percent of students in the high school accountability cohort passing a Math Regents exam with a score of 65 or above by the end of their fourth year will exceed that of the students in the high school accountability cohort from a group of similar schools (as determined by the NYC DOE).	Met	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
13.	Each year, the school will be deemed "In Good Standing."	Met	Not Met	Met	Met	N/A
14.	Each year, the school will have an average daily student attendance rate of at least 95%.	Not Met				

* 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.

Responsive Education Program

From school years 2010-2011 through 2012-2013, the school used teacher-created interim assessments as its primary method of gauging student performance and progress. School leadership reported that in 2013-2014 New Heights Academy Charter School revised its overall assessment approach to be more comprehensive and to more effectively drive student learning.

- The school continues to use interim assessments created by teachers and department chairs, but these are now summative assessments given every quarter.
- In addition to these summative assessments, the school's current interim assessment program consists of:
 - ELA: Reading Street and Code X assessments given every four to six weeks in grades five through eight, and Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessments given three times per year in grades five and six;
 - Math: enVisionMATH and CMP3 assessments given every four to six weeks in grades five through eight; and
 - Mock state assessment and Regents exams given twice per year in grades five through twelve.
- The school uses the eDoctrina data storage program to store all student assessment data, and results are analyzed during dedicated "data days" to determine which skills and concepts should be re-taught during the three- to five-day period between interim assessments.

As part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE visited the school on November 20 – 21, 2014. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- **Alignment with Common Core:**
 - School leadership reported that in 2013-2014, the New Heights Academy Charter School began using Pearson's CMP3 math curriculum and Scholastic's Code X ELA and Writing Traits at the middle school level, both of which are Common Core-aligned. As stated above, the school also uses the interim assessments from these programs to assess mastery of unit skills and content.
 - In an effort to increase student engagement and ownership of learning, the school began using the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) method of instructional delivery, wherein responsibility for the material covered gradually transfers from the teacher (through modeling) to the class as a whole (through questioning and demonstration) to the class as individuals (through either independent, pair, or small-group practice monitored by the teacher).

- **Addressing the Needs of All Learners:**

- School leadership reported that New Heights Academy Charter School uses the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol to address the needs of its English Language Learner (ELL) students.
 - The school established an English as a Second Language (ESL) class in 2013-2014 to support ELL students with literacy-focused interventions. The school's ELL students receive intervention in the form of an enrichment class focusing on English language acquisition through speech, listening, reading, and writing. This class is taught by a certified ESL teacher using the Cengage Learning curriculum.
 - ELL students are also offered afterschool tutoring to help them prepare for the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT).
 - School leadership reported that more than half of the school's ELL students who took the NYSESLAT in 2013-2014 scored proficient after receiving these services. School leadership also reported that during the 2013-2014 school year the school reduced its ELL student population by 54%, declassifying 72 out of 133 ELL students and earning its highest percentage of overall NYSESLAT proficiency to date.
- The school uses a three-tiered Response-to-Intervention (RtI) program to address the needs of struggling students. The school's RtI leadership team consists of an RtI Coordinator, Special Education Coordinator, and the Director of Student Support Services
 - Tier I interventions are provided to all students through the school's general education program.
 - Tier II interventions are provided three to five times per week to students in groups of 10 to 15 during an intervention period taught by the interventionist teachers.
 - Tier III interventions are provided via daily small-group instruction in groups of three to five students in the System 44 program at the middle school level and in learning labs at the high school level using learning strategists.
 - The school's learning strategists monitor student progress on a weekly basis and use this data, in addition to input from grade-level teams and school leadership, to adjust these tier groupings every nine to ten weeks.
- The school supports struggling students who do not have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) through its Child Study Teams (CST), which are comprised of general education teachers, learning strategists, social workers, the RtI Coordinator, principals, the Director of Student Support Services, deans, parents, and students.
- The school provides Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) to students with IEPs. New Heights Academy Charter School provides SETSS via a learning lab classroom model wherein students with disabilities receive remediation in ELA and math. The school's learning strategists analyze interim assessment data to identify which standards students have not yet mastered, and then choose two to three of these standards for re-teaching. The school uses a data dashboard to update general education teachers on students' IEP goal progress.
- The school also offers two Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes per grade level, totaling sixteen ICT classes.
- The school's Director of Student Support Services oversees the overall delivery of special education services by Special Education-certified learning strategists.
 - The school is a member of the New York City Charter School Center's special education collaborative, which provides its special education teachers with professional development (PD). Additionally, the school contracts with vendor Signature Services to provide special education consultation and professional development opportunities.
- The school partners with NYC DOE alternative education program Young Adult Borough Centers (YABC) to support students who need more than five years to graduate. New

Heights accepts YABC credits and issues students a diploma once they successfully complete the program.

- **Instructional Model and Classroom Instruction:**

During the renewal visit on November 20 – 21, 2014, 17 general education and three intervention classrooms in grades five through twelve were observed with the middle school and high school directors. The following was noted:

- In most observed general education classrooms, teachers were following the school's GRR model. Observed intervention classrooms utilized either the Achieve 3000 or Read 180 programs, with teachers in both classrooms rotating between small-group assistance and monitoring of independent student practice.
- Classrooms observed ranged in size from 13 to 22 students at the high school level and 19 to 24 students at the middle school level, with one to two teachers in each.
- Forms of questioning identified during classroom observations were roughly split between basic fact recall plus demonstration of understanding and higher-level questioning that challenged students to either analyze and apply the material covered or to analyze and apply it (such as a Socratic seminar in which students discussed the merits of language).
- In most rooms, observed checks for understanding included questioning, classwork, and teacher observation.
- In a few observed classrooms, differentiation of materials, tasks, and products, through small group instruction or independent practice, was observed.
- In all observed classes, students were responsive to teacher directions and instruction.
- In all observed classes, students were either fully on task or mostly on task.
- Based on debriefs with the school's leadership team members after classroom visits, most classrooms had instruction that aligned with the instructional model and current academic goals of the school, including use of GRR, use of Tier II vocabulary, content alignment with Common Core Learning Standards, and use of close reading strategies.

Learning Environment

NYC DOE representatives conducted one-on-one interviews with 12 staff members, including teachers, ELA interventionists, and learning strategists. The following was noted:

- All interviewed teachers reported that they received monthly, departmentalized PD based at the school and could also explore PD opportunities outside of the school, such as at the New York City Charter School Center. Several reported having weekly meetings with their department chair in addition to their monthly PD sessions. Several teachers reported that the PD they had received thus far in 2014-2015, particularly that related to Kagan structures, had been both helpful and immediately actionable in the classroom.
- All interviewed teachers could readily define instructional rigor and how they sought to implement rigor in their classroom instruction.
- Some interviewed teachers mentioned the use of the Danielson Rubric for formal teacher evaluations conducted by the school's directors, while most of the interviewed teachers discussed the use of informal observations for receiving feedback from department chairs. All interviewed teachers spoke positively regarding the formal and informal evaluation process and the quality of feedback and coaching they received as a result.
- All interviewed teachers reported that they use data in the classrooms through both formal assessments (such as quarterly interim assessments, Regents scores, reading lexile levels, and class grades) and informal assessments (such as exit slips, quizzes, Senteo clicker results, checks for understanding, and do-nows) to inform teaching and re-teaching strategies as well as to inform meeting with learning strategists.

NYC DOE representatives conducted group interviews with 28 students across grades five, six, seven, eight, ten, eleven, and twelve. The following was noted:

- All interviewed students reported that their teachers had high academic expectations for them but also felt supported by teachers in trying to reach those expectations.

- Many interviewed students spoke positively regarding the school’s behavioral incentives and recognition of positive character traits.
- All interviewed students stated that they had many opportunities both during and outside of school hours to receive academic help when they needed it.

According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 95% of parents agree or strongly agree “that the school has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss [their] child” and 96% of parents who responded to the survey agree or strongly agree “that the school has high expectations for [their] child.”²³

According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey 78% of teachers agree or strongly agree that “order and discipline are maintained at the school,” and 72% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that “at my school students are often harassed or bullied in school.”²⁴

²³ According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 48% of parent respondents strongly agree that New Heights Academy Charter School has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss their child; another 47% agree with the statement. Similarly, 58% of parent respondents strongly agree that New Heights Academy Charter School has high expectations for their child; another 38% agree with the statement.

²⁴ According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 14% of teacher respondents strongly agree that order and discipline are maintained at New Heights Academy Charter School; another 64% agree with the statement. Of teacher respondents, 4% strongly disagree that students are often harassed or bullied in the school; 68% of teacher respondents disagree with the statement; 22% agree with the statement; and 6% strongly agree with the statement.

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 developed its governance structure and organizational design.

On November 20, 2014, as part of the renewal review process, a representative for the NYC DOE attended a meeting of the school's Board of Trustees. Based on document review and observation, the following was noted:

- The Board currently has 11 active members. This level of membership is consistent within the minimum of five members and maximum of 15 members established in the Board's bylaws.
- The Board's required officer positions of President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary, as specified in the bylaws, are currently filled with no vacancies.
- The Board has consistently achieved quorum, as recorded in all instances of 29 meeting minutes provided to the NYC DOE covering meetings held between 2010-2011 and 2013-2014.
- The school leadership team regularly updates the Board on academic progress and operations at the school, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership as evidenced by the school's organization chart and school leadership's monthly updates on academic and operational performance to the Board and its committees, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.
- The Board has active and functioning committees, as required by its bylaws, including an Executive Committee, a Finance Committee, and an Education/Accountability Committee, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- Middle School Director Denise Linares is a founding school teacher who became part of the school's leadership team in 2014. High School Director Christopher Barfield began working at the school as dean in 2011 and began his current role in 2013. The school's Executive Director, Christina Brown, also joined the school in 2013. Board Chair Gail Grossmann has been a Board member since May 2008, prior to the current charter term, and has been the Board Chair since August 2011.

School Climate & Community Engagement

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

- The school has not met its charter goal of having an annual average student attendance rate of at least 95% in any year of the retrospective charter term. Although the school did have average student attendance of at least 95% for middle school students in each year of the charter term, this goal was not met for high school students or for the total student population in any year of the charter term. Average daily attendance for students over the course of the charter term is provided in the table below.²⁵

²⁵ The table reflects average daily attendance data taken from the NYC DOE's Automate the Schools (ATS) system for school years 2009-2010 through 2013-2014. Please note that the school self-reported aggregate attendance rates in its Renewal Application which differ from the aggregate attendance recorded in ATS for all school years. The school self-reported attendance rates of 95.4%, 94.4%, 94.8%, 94.4% and 94.4% for school years 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014, respectively.

Average Attendance

Elementary and Middle School Attendance					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	95.5%	95.0%	96.4%	95.7%	96.0%
NYC	93.4%	93.2%	93.9%	93.6%	93.2%
Difference from NYC	2.1	1.8	2.5	2.1	2.8
High School Attendance					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School	92.3%	90.7%	90.4%	91.0%	91.7%
NYC	85.8%	85.5%	86.2%	86.1%	86.5%
Difference from NYC	6.5	5.2	4.2	4.9	5.2

* NYC attendance figures reflect average attendance across all general education district schools.

- The school experienced significant turnover in its leadership staff during the last two years of the charter term, with its Middle School Director, High School Director, and Executive Director assuming their roles in 2014, 2013, and 2013, respectively.
- Primary instructional staff turnover has been consistently high over the charter term. In 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014, the percentage of primary instructional staff who did not return, either by choice or request, at the start of the following school year was 38%, 33%, 35% and 51%, respectively.
- 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 had minor challenges with retaining students in a few years of the retrospective charter term.

Mobility

Student Mobility out of New Heights Academy Charter School *					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Number of Students who Left the School	53	59	67	50	64
Percent of Students who Left the School	7.9%	8.8%	10.0%	7.5%	10.4%

* 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 below citywide averages for all of four selected questions. The percentage of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing was equal to or above citywide averages for all of the three selected questions. The percentage of students agreeing or strongly agreeing was above citywide averages for two of the 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 each parents, teachers and students (if participating) are presented below for each year of the charter term. The response rates for New Heights Academy Charter School students have been above NYC averages across all years of the retrospective charter term. Response rates for New Heights Academy Charter School parents were above NYC averages in three of the last five years, including the most recent school year, 2013-2014. Similarly, response rates for New Heights Academy Charter School teachers were above NYC averages in three of the last five years, including the most recent school year, 2013-2014.

NYC School Survey Results

Percent of Respondents that Agree or Strongly Agree							
Survey Question		New Heights Academy Charter School					Citywide Average
		2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014
Students*	Most of my teachers make me excited about learning.**	72%	78%	82%	58%	60%	62%
	Most students at my school treat each other with respect.	50%	42%	60%	51%	63%	60%
	I feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker room, cafeteria, etc.	83%	76%	86%	84%	87%	79%
Parents	I feel satisfied with the education my child has received this year.	94%	93%	96%	98%	96%	95%
	My child's school makes it easy for parents to attend meetings.	96%	95%	94%	95%	94%	94%
	I feel satisfied with the response I get when I contact my child's school.	97%	90%	94%	95%	97%	95%
Teachers	Order and discipline are maintained at my school.	85%	53%	52%	94%	78%	80%
	The principal at my school communicates a clear vision for our school.	95%	60%	77%	61%	58%	88%
	School leaders place a high priority on the quality of teaching.	96%	94%	92%	83%	78%	92%
	I would recommend my school to parents.***	-	-	54%	74%	62%	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 2009-2010 through 2012-2013 School Surveys.

*** This question was not introduced until the 2011-2012 School Survey.

NYC School Survey Results

Response Rates						
		2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students*	New Heights Academy Charter School	93%	88%	94%	89%	86%
	NYC	82%	83%	82%	83%	83%
Parents	New Heights Academy Charter School	25%	71%	63%	48%	65%
	NYC	49%	52%	53%	54%	53%
Teachers	New Heights Academy Charter School	90%	81%	100%	69%	93%
	NYC	76%	82%	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 will only have met this goal if at least 50% of parents will participate in the survey." The school has had mixed results in meeting this goal, which was fully met during charter years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, but only partially met in 2009-2010 and 2012-2013 due to less than 50% parent participation.²⁶ This goal was 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 will only have met this goal if at least 90% of the staff will participate in the survey." The school partially met this goal in school years 2009-2010 and 2012-2013, but did not meet this goal in school years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.²⁷ This goal was 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; the school will only have met this goal if at least 75% of the students will participate in the survey." The school partially met the goal in school years 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013, and did not meet the goal in the 2009-2010 school year.²⁸ This goal was not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year.

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 disciplinary approach has evolved over the course of the charter term. School leadership reported that in response to increasing rates of student suspensions, the school switched in 2011-2012 from a more punitive approach, which had followed a discipline matrix of actions and consequences, to a more restorative approach based on reinforcement of positive behavior. The school also hired a second school dean during this time to help support teachers in this effort. In 2012, the school formalized its restorative approach at the high school level by piloting the "house" system, wherein students across all grades are grouped into four houses. Students earn points for themselves and their house by demonstrating the values in the school's PRIDE Pillars: Perseverance, Responsibility, Integrity, Discipline, and Enthusiasm. Starting in school year 2013-2014, the house system was implemented across all middle and high school grades.
- School leadership reports that New Heights Academy Charter School piloted the use of the Efficacy Model instructional framework in its middle school in 2013-2014 and plans to extend this to the high school if it proves effective. This model was developed by the Efficacy Institute and uses the tools of Mission, Mindset, and Method to encourage a growth mindset in students and provide both students and teachers with continuous feedback based on performance data.
- School leadership reports that in response to waning participation at parent-teacher conferences, as well as parent feedback at the start of the charter term, it has implemented several new efforts

²⁶ If the school received less than 7.5 points in one or more of Survey categories and/or had a parent response rate less than 50%, the goal was considered 'partially met.' In the 2009-2010 and 2012-2013 school years, New Heights Charter School Academy had parent response rates of 25% and 48% respectively.

²⁷ If the school received less than 7.5 points in one or more of the Survey categories and/or had a response rate less than 90%, the goal was considered 'partially met.' In the 2009-2010 school year, New Heights Charter School Academy received less than 7.5 points based on teacher responses in all categories except for Academic Expectations. In the 2012-2013 school year, New Heights Charter School Academy received less than 7.5 points in all categories except for Safety and Respect.

²⁸ If the school received less than 7.5 points in one or more of the Survey categories and/or had a response rate less than 75%, the goal was considered 'partially met.' In the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years, New Heights Charter School Academy received less than 7.5 points based on student responses in all categories except for Academic Expectations. In the 2012-2013 school year, New Heights Charter School Academy received less than 7.5 points in all categories except for Academic Expectations and Safety and Respect.

to engage and inform its parent base. These include: twice-monthly “Tea with the ED” meetings that cover school events and information on student learning; a switch to quarterly parent-teacher conferences with set appointment times to eliminate long waiting periods; the school’s first “Back to School” night, held in 2013-2014; a breakfast event and facilities tour for families new to the school; school-wide Math, Literacy, and College Nights; and a Block Party in August before the school year begins. The school aims to hold 12 special events per year outside of its regular “Tea with the ED” meetings.

- In addition to these events, the school communicates with parents via a quarterly school newsletter, the TeacherEase grade reporting system, the school’s website, and automated phone calls.
- Because the majority of its parent base is comprised of Spanish speakers, the school disseminates all communications in Spanish and English and provides staff interpreters at all school events, including conferences.
- School leadership reports that the school’s Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) stopped functioning in 2012-2013, but that the school is working to re-establish the PTA before the end of 2014-2015. The head of the former PTA sits on the school’s Board of Trustees.
- School leadership reports that the school stopped using internal satisfaction surveys in 2011-2012 and currently relies on its internal communication mechanisms as well as the NYC DOE School Survey to gauge constituent support and satisfaction.
- The school has formed partnerships with community organizations such as the Police Athletic League, The Door, the Helen Keller Foundation, the Community Association of Progressive Dominicans, Community Works, and neighboring school PS/IS 210 - Twenty-first Century Academy for Community Leadership, which allows the school to use its gym for sports practices and home games.
- The NYC DOE conducted a public renewal hearing for the school on December 11, 2014 at 1818 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10031 in an effort to elicit public comments. Approximately 62 participants attended the hearing with 19 persons speaking in support of the school’s renewal and none speaking in opposition.
- The NYC DOE made randomized phone calls to parents from a roster provided by the school for students of all grades. Calls to school parents/guardians were made during December 2014 and January 2015 until 20 phone calls were completed. Of these calls, 95% provided positive feedback regarding the school and 5% provided neutral 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 5.09 indicated a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY14 financial audit, the school had sufficient unrestricted cash of \$2,587,352 representing at least 80 days of operating expenses to allow the school to cover its operating expenses for at least two months without an infusion of cash. The school also has an SEI Investment account totaling \$1.5 million that is an added financial resource to the school, thus strengthening the school's cash on hand.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2014-2015 budget to the actual enrollment as of November 30, 2014 revealed that the school had met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY14 financial audit, the school had met its debt obligations of \$1,827,099.

Financial Sustainability

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

- Based on the financial audits from FY10 to FY14, the school generated an aggregate surplus over these audited fiscal years, though they operated at a 2% deficit in FY14.
- Based on the FY14 financial audit, the school's debt-to-asset ratio of 0.12 indicated that the school had more total assets than it had total liabilities.
- Based on the financial audits from FY12 through FY14, the school had overall negative cash flow from FY12 to FY14.

There was no material weakness noted in the five independent financial audits from FY10 to FY14.

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

As of the review in January 2015, the Board of Trustees for New Heights Academy Charter School 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 monthly meetings.** The school's bylaws indicate that the Board is to hold six meetings a year in addition to an Annual Meeting in June, for a total of seven meetings per calendar year. In years 2010-2011 through 2013-2014 of the charter term, the Board held the required number of monthly meetings, as evidenced by the Board Yearly Meeting Schedule and the posted meeting minutes. Required meetings are those which met quorum. The current Charter Schools Act requires that the Board hold monthly meetings over a period of 12 calendar months, per year. The Board has not updated its bylaws to comply with this law.
- **Submission of all required documents.** All current Board members have submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms. The documents submitted do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.²⁹
- **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 via its website. However, hard copies of Board minutes and an agenda were available to the public during the meeting attended by a NYC DOE representative on November 20, 2014.
- **Notification of Board Member Resignations/Submission of New Board Members for Approval.** The board has consistently submitted board resignation notices and new board member credentials within the required five days of change to OSDCP for review and, if necessary, approval during the current charter term.

As of the review in January 2015, the Board of Trustees for New Heights Academy Charter School is out of compliance with:

- **Timely submission of documents.** The Board did consistently submit the Annual Report to the New York State Education Department by the deadline of August 1 (or by the NYSED granted extension date) for each year of the current charter term. However, state charter law requires a school to post to its website the annual audit for each year of the charter term, and the school has only posted its annual audits for fiscal years 2012 and 2013.

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 10, 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.
- **Student Discipline Plan.** The school has provided the NYC DOE with a current and complete copy of its Student Discipline Policy for the 2014-2015 academic year. This policy was determined to be compliant with federal law.
- **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.

²⁹ Source: New York State Education Department Annual Report

- **Fire Emergency.** As a result of a change in the operational leadership of the school, three school officials have most recently been trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.

As of the review on November 2014, 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. The school has eight uncertified staff members, with three of the eight pending certification approval from the state and/or approval of reciprocity.

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.³⁰
- In all years of the current charter term, including the most recent completed school year 2013-2014, New Heights Academy Charter School:
 - served a higher percentage of students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch compared to both the CSD 6 and citywide percentages (with the exception of the 2011-2012 school year, in which the school served a lower percentage of students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch than the CSD 6 percentage);
 - served a lower percentage of students with disabilities compared to both the CSD 6 and citywide percentages (with the exception of the 2010-2011 school year, in which the school served a higher percentage of students with disabilities than the CSD 6 percentage); and
 - served a lower percentage of English Language Learner students compared to the CSD 6 rate but a higher percentage than the citywide rate.

³⁰ Please see the following website for more information: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/enrollment-retention-targets.html>

Enrollment of Special Populations³¹

Special Population		2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014 State Enrollment Target (Proposed)
Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)	New Heights Academy Charter School	93.4%	94.8%	90.9%	95.8%	95.3%	94.3%
	CSD 6	92.6%	89.9%	91.3%	91.0%	90.2%	
	NYC	79.5%	76.2%	79.0%	79.3%	79.0%	
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	New Heights Academy Charter School	13.1%	14.6%	13.9%	12.5%	11.1%	12.6%
	CSD 6	14.7%	14.4%	15.0%	15.9%	17.3%	
	NYC	17.2%	17.5%	17.7%	18.4%	19.1%	
English Language Learners (ELL)	New Heights Academy Charter School	20.4%	20.8%	20.5%	20.3%	17.9%	41.4%
	CSD 6	32.2%	33.1%	33.1%	31.3%	30.9%	
	NYC	12.7%	13.1%	12.8%	12.6%	12.2%	

Additional Enrollment Information					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grades Served	5-12	5-12	5-12	5-12	5-12
CSD(s)	6	6	6	6	6

³¹ 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?

The school has not submitted any requests for material revisions to its charter as part of its next charter term.

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.³²

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.³³ 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;

³² See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

³³ See generally §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4).

- 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;
- 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.³⁴

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.³⁵

³⁴ § 2851(4)(e) added with the 2010 amendments to the Act.

³⁵ 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 the NYC DOE 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 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 2014-2015.

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 Reports³⁶

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

³⁶ 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 learning (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 location³⁷ 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

³⁷ 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.

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

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					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School					
Grade 5	24.0%	28.1%	24.2%	11.7%	10.2%
Grade 6	15.6%	31.6%	32.0%	6.2%	16.2%
Grade 7	16.7%	12.6%	29.3%	12.2%	12.4%
Grade 8	27.7%	10.6%	16.0%	10.6%	17.2%
DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 6 *					
Grade 5	-9.2	-10.3	-13.4	-5.3	-5.7
Grade 6	-8.5	3.0	0.6	-4.8	2.7
Grade 7	-10.3	-11.2	0.9	-1.0	-2.8
Grade 8	0.6	-10.3	-11.6	-2.4	-0.5
DIFFERENCE FROM NYC					
Grade 5	-22.2	-20.9	-28.0	-17.0	-18.2
Grade 6	-24.5	-12.0	-13.3	-17.1	-9.1
Grade 7	-21.5	-23.9	-14.0	-13.2	-14.4
Grade 8	-9.8	-24.4	-23.0	-14.8	-11.7

Grade-Level Proficiency in Mathematics					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
New Heights Academy Charter School					
Grade 5	43.8%	56.3%	46.3%	21.3%	21.4%
Grade 6	32.3%	60.0%	57.7%	8.2%	27.3%
Grade 7	43.8%	64.2%	75.3%	22.4%	13.4%
Grade 8	47.9%	67.7%	66.3%	20.4%	10.1%
DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 6 *					
Grade 5	-5.1	5.3	-7.8	3.9	-4.0
Grade 6	-7.8	14.6	7.5	-7.3	7.3
Grade 7	0.6	15.6	27.9	9.9	-4.6
Grade 8	7.1	21.3	15.4	5.4	-8.4
DIFFERENCE FROM NYC					
Grade 5	-15.9	-6.7	-18.9	-8.3	-17.3
Grade 6	-20.7	4.0	-1.6	-20.6	-6.5
Grade 7	-8.8	8.7	18.0	-2.5	-16.2
Grade 8	1.6	15.2	11.1	-5.3	-12.7

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

Regents Pass Rates

New Heights Academy Charter School			
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Integrated Algebra	70.3%	93.2%	93.5%
Algebra 2 / Trigonometry	5.6%	41.1%	19.8%
Comprehensive English	65.5%	53.2%	73.1%
U.S. History	69.6%	89.8%	84.1%
Chemistry	56.3%	65.3%	63.5%
Physics	-	-	-
Living Environment	68.4%	76.7%	87.3%
Language Other Than English	-	88.2%	67.9%

Appendix B: Additional Accountability Data

NYC DOE Accountability Reports

[Annual Comprehensive Report 2013-2014](#)

[Annual Comprehensive Report 2012-2013](#)

[Annual Site Visit Report 2011-2012](#)

[Annual Site Visit Report 2010-2011](#)