



Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
2013-2014

**DEMOCRACY PREP CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

2013 – 2014 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: School Overview

School Information for the 2013-2014 School Year

Name of Charter School	Democracy Prep Charter School
Board Chair(s)	Josh Pristaw
School Leader(s)	Tanya Nuñez (6-8), Ajaka Roth (6-8), Natasha Trivers (9-12)
Management Company (if applicable)	Democracy Prep
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 5
Physical Address(es)	2230 5th Avenue, New York 10037 (6-8)
	222 West 134 th Street, New York 10030 (9-12)
Facility Owner(s)	DOE

School Profile

- Democracy Prep Charter School (Dem Prep) is a middle and high school, which served 722 students¹ in grades 6-12 during the 2013-2014 school year. It opened in 2006-2007, and is under the terms of its second charter. The school's anticipated full grade span is K-12, which it expects to reach in the 2021-2022 school year. The school is located in DOE-operated facilities in Manhattan within Community School District (CSD) 5.²
- Democracy Prep Charter School enrolls new students in all grade levels, with natural entry points at grades six and nine. There were 3,675 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2013 lottery.³ The average attendance rate for the 2013-2014 school year to date as reported in February 2014 was 95.5%.⁴
- Democracy Prep Charter School was renewed during the 2010-2011 school year for a period of five years, and is consistent with the terms of its renewal application.
- The school leadership includes Natasha Trivers, Ajaka Roth, and Tanya Nunez, Principals; John Linquist and Brian Martin, Assistant Principals. Tanya Nunez has been with Democracy Prep since the start of the 2008-2009 school year. Ajaka Roth has been with Democracy Prep since the start of the 2010-2011 school year. Natasha Trivers has been with Dem Prep since the start of the 2011-2012 school year.
- Democracy Prep Charter School is part of the Democracy Prep Public Schools (DPPS) network, a Charter Management Organization (CMO). The CMO provides the schools in the network with a Superintendent, back office support, institutional goals aligned to network goals, student assessment data gathering, and school policies (e.g. HR) among other support services. The fee structure is based on an initial 15% of public non-competitive revenues with an annual reduction of half a percentage point. In the 2013-14 school year, Dem Prep paid DPPS a management fee in an amount equal to 12% of its public non-competitive revenues.
- Democracy Prep Charter School had a student to teacher ratio of 11.3:1 in the 2013-2014 school year, and served 22 sections across all grades, with an average class size of 26.7.⁵
- The lottery preferences for Democracy Prep Charter School's 2013-2014 school year included the New York State Charter Schools Act's required preferences of returning students, students residing in the community school district of the school's location and siblings of students already enrolled in the charter school.⁶

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

² NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Management System database.

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

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

⁵ Self-reported information given on 9/15/14.

⁶ Democracy Prep Charter School's 2013-2014 application.

Part 2: Summary of Findings

Essential Question 1: Is the school an academic success?

Overview of School-Specific Data through 2012-2013

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

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Democracy Prep Charter School	34.7%	30.9%	38.5%	18.4%
CSD 5	27.8%	27.1%	28.2%	14.6%
Difference from CSD 5	6.9	3.8	10.3	3.8
NYC	38.6%	38.3%	42.5%	24.8%
Difference from NYC	-3.9	-7.4	-4.0	-6.4
New York State	53.2%	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%
Difference from New York State	-18.5	-21.9	-16.6	-12.7

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

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

% Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Democracy Prep Charter School	76.5%	81.5%	81.7%	26.0%
CSD 5	37.2%	40.3%	38.8%	12.7%
Difference from CSD 5	39.3	41.2	42.9	13.3
NYC	50.6%	54.7%	57.3%	26.5%
Difference from NYC	25.9	26.8	24.4	-0.5
New York State	61.0%	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%
Difference from New York State	15.5	18.2	16.9	-5.1

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

HS Performance Compared to Peer and NYC Averages

4-year Graduation Rate				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Democracy Prep Charter School	-	-	-	66.1%
NYC	65.1%	65.5%	64.7%	66.0%
Difference from NYC	-	-	-	0.1
6-year Graduation Rate				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Democracy Prep Charter School	-	-	-	-
NYC	69.2%	70.9%	73.2%	73.0%
Difference from NYC	-	-	-	-

College Readiness Index** - 4 years				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Democracy Prep Charter School	-	-	-	51.8%
Peer Percent of Range	-	-	-	84.5%
City Percent of Range	-	-	-	100.0%

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 or city.

** The College Readiness Index score was not introduced until the 2011-2012 school year.

Credit Accumulation

% 1st-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Democracy Prep Charter School	92.5%	80.7%	89.1%	73.9%
Peer Percent of Range	74.7%	26.1%	54.4%	28.3%
City Percent of Range	86.8%	64.6%	78.2%	42.4%
% 2nd-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Democracy Prep Charter School	-	87.7%	89.2%	76.9%
Peer Percent of Range	-	55.1%	60.0%	40.9%
City Percent of Range	-	79.0%	80.1%	55.6%
% 3rd-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Democracy Prep Charter School	-	-	89.6%	72.7%
Peer Percent of Range	-	-	71.4%	33.8%
City Percent of Range	-	-	82.2%	50.0%

* 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 or city.

Performance on the NYC Progress Report – Middle School Grades

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade	A	A	A	A
Student Progress	A	B	A	A
Student Performance	B	B	A	B
School Environment	A	A	A	A
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	5.3	7.5	4.0	4.5

Performance on the NYC Progress Report – High School Grades

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade	-	-	-	A
Student Progress	-	-	-	B
Student Performance	-	-	-	C
School Environment	-	-	-	A
College and Career Readiness*	-	-	-	A
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	-	-	-	3.6

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

Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals

- According to its 2012-2013 Annual Report to New York State Education Department (NYSED), Democracy Prep Charter School fully met 11, partially met two, and did not meet three of 17 of its academic performance goals identified in its charter. One goal is no longer applicable.

Responsive Education Program & Learning Environment⁷

- Measures that Dem Prep has been using to support assessments include internal midterm and end of trimester tests. Other points of data include STAR reading assessments, teacher created unit assessments, weekly progress reports and the ANET external exam in which Dem Prep's progress is measured in comparison to all charter schools in the Democracy Prep Public Schools network. The schools also use the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) assessment, a computerized adaptive test that provides comparisons of nationally normed exams across the country.
- Dem Prep provides SETTS and ICT classroom settings for students with IEPs.
- The middle school established a new relationship with Alumni Revolution, a new organization designed to support scholars in their transition into and throughout college.
- Opportunities for remediation and acceleration are offered by the way of targeted tutoring sessions, enrichment programming, and Saturday programming through use of constant and consistently deep data dives. After-school & Saturday tutoring is provided and sometimes made mandatory for students who are struggling in a particular class.
- Tutoring is built into the schedule for all 9th and 10th grade students in which they are assigned to a smaller tutoring group during the academic day based on teacher requests. For 11th and 12th grade, due to SAT Prep and seniors working with the college office, upper grade teachers hold office hours to support students individually who are struggling in a particular class.
- The school has implemented an online system for instructors to facilitate lesson plan submission and commenting allowing general education teachers to upload their lessons for feedback. Lessons can be commented on and edited by their partner teachers, ensuring that the lesson plans are reaching more of their scholars with IEPs.
- Weekly professional development is available for instructional staff, along with monthly network-wide professional development for operations staff and a dedicated team within the CMO.
- The school reported that it saw improved co-planning between Academic Collaboration Team (ACT) teachers and general education teachers during the 2013-14 school year.

⁷ Self-reported information from school-submitted self-evaluation form on 2/11/14.

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

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

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

- The Board reports having thirteen voting board members. The Board Chair, Josh Pristow, has been on the Board since 2011.
- During the 2013-14 school year, the Dem Prep board appointed three new trustees and had one member depart.
- As recorded in the Board's minutes, there is a clear reporting structure with school leadership providing regular updates on academic performance to the Board and its committees.
- Board minutes, but not agenda items, have been provided via the school's website for inspection by the public.

School Climate & Community Engagement

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

- The school did not experience any leadership turnover in the 2013-2014 school year.
- Instructional staff turnover from the 2012-2013 school year was 11%, with three out of 55 instructional staff members choosing not to return and three out of 55 not being asked to return for the 2013-2014 school year. As of March 2014, during the 2013-2014 school year, six teachers have left the school.⁸
- As of March 2014, average daily attendance for students during that school year was at 96%, which is higher than the school's charter goal of at least 95%.⁹
- Student turnover was 24% of students from the 2012-2013 school year who did not return at the start of the 2013-2014 school year, and 9% of students who left the school between the start of the 2013-2014 school year and the submission of data in February 2014.¹⁰
- The school's Family Leadership Council, which functions as Dem Prep's equivalent of a parent-teacher organization, meets on a monthly basis.

2012-2013 NYC School Survey Results¹¹

Categories	Result		Community	Response Rate	Citywide Rate
Academic Expectations	Above Average		Parents	60%	54%
Communication	Above Average		Teachers	93%	83%
Engagement	Above Average		Students	87%	83%
Safety & Respect	Above Average				

⁸ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/11/14.

⁹ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/11/14.

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

¹¹ Results are particular to the school type as identified in the 2013 School Survey.

Financial Health

Near-term financial obligations:

- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's current ratio indicated a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school had sufficient unrestricted cash to cover its operating expenses for more than one month without an infusion of cash.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2013-2014 budget to the actual enrollment as of the last day for the 2013-2014 school year revealed that the school met its enrollment target.
- As of the FY13 financial audit, the school had no debt obligations.

Financial sustainability based on current practices:

- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY13, the school generated an aggregate surplus over the three audited fiscal years, and in FY13 the school operated at a surplus.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's debt-to-asset ratio indicated that the school had more total assets than it had total liabilities.
- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY13, the school generated overall positive cash flow from FY11 to FY13, though the school had negative cash flow during FY11.

Annual Independent Financial Audit

- An independent audit performed for FY 13 showed no material findings.

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

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

Board Compliance

The Board is in compliance with:

- The Board's membership size falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws of no fewer than five and no more than 15 members.
- The Board held all nine of its required meetings during the 2013-2014 school year.

The Board is out of compliance with:

- Currently, officer positions outlined in the Board's bylaws are filled, with the exception of the Vice Chair position.

School Compliance

The school is in compliance with (as reviewed during May 2014):

- All staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.
- The school has the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification.
- The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to the NYC DOE.
- The school had an application deadline of April 2, 2014, and a lottery date within April 2014; adhering to the charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1.
- The school leader was trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.
- The school has posted its 2012-2013 NYSED Annual Report and annual audit to its website, as specified in charter law.

The school is out of compliance with:

- The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is not compliant with state requirements for teacher certification having 23 uncertified teachers out of a total of 56 teachers (41%).
- The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is not in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization.

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

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

- While DOE previously approved Dem Prep’s request to expand grades served K-5, the school is currently assessing the viability of such an expansion. Dem Prep currently has no plans to make any programmatic, size, or facility changes for the next school year.

Enrollment and Retention Targets

As a reminder regarding accountability in the next charter term:

- Amendments to Article 56 of the New York State Consolidated Laws: Education, which relates to Charter Schools, call for charter schools, as a consideration of renewal, “to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets” for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program. The amendments further indicate “Repeated failure to comply with the requirement” as a cause for revocation or termination of the charter.
 - The law directs schools to demonstrate “that it has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students” in the event it has not yet met its targets.
 - The NYC DOE, as authorizer, will annually monitor the school’s performance against these targets and the efforts it makes to meet this state requirement.
- For the 2013-2014 school year, Democracy Prep served lower percentages of English Language Learner students and students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch compared to CSD 5 and citywide averages. The school served a smaller percentage of students with disabilities than the CSD 5 average, though a greater percentage than the citywide average.

Special Populations

	Free and Reduced Price Lunch					Students with Disabilities					English Language Learners				
	2009 -2010	2010 -2011	2011 -2012	2012 -2013	2013 -2014	2009 -2010	2010 -2011	2011 -2012	2012 -2013	2013 -2014	2009 -2010	2010 -2011	2011 -2012	2012 -2013	2013 -2014
	School	CSD 5	NYC	School	CSD 5	NYC	School	CSD 5	NYC	School	CSD 5	NYC	School	CSD 5	NYC
	79.7%	79.4%	77.6%	75.9%	56.1%	12.4%	9.9%	11.4%	13.7%	16.9%	5.0%	5.5%	4.6%	4.2%	4.6%
	73.7%	77.7%	80.4%	81.0%	81.1%	15.4%	16.0%	16.3%	16.7%	18.5%	9.7%	10.4%	10.0%	9.4%	9.0%
	61.7%	64.5%	67.3%	69.3%	72.7%	14.9%	15.0%	15.1%	15.5%	16.4%	14.8%	15.0%	14.6%	14.2%	13.9%

Additional Enrollment Information					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grades Served	6-9	6-10	6-11	6-12	6-12
CSD(s)	5	5	5	5	5

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