



Charter School Annual Site Visit Report
Charter Schools Office
2009-2010

WILLIAMSBURG
CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

MAY 2010

School Overview and History:

Williamsburg Charter High School is a high school serving approximately 822 students from grade 9 through grade 12 in the 2009-2010 school year.¹ The school opened in 2004 with grade 9 and has no further growth plans.² It is currently housed in a DOE facility in District 14.³

The school population comprises 27% Black, 61% Hispanic, 6% White, and 2% Asian students. 72% of students are designated at Title I.⁴ The student body includes 3% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%.⁵

The school earned a C on its Progress Report in 2009. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 91%.⁶ The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.⁷

Annual Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office conducts an annual site visit of New York City Department of Education authorized charter schools in order to assess three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a viable organization; and is the school in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The visits are conducted by representatives of the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Office Accountability Team and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the principal and school leadership team. Subsequently, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. Areas of evaluation include, but are not limited to: academic goals and mission; curriculum and instruction; school culture and learning environment; assessment utilization; parent engagement; government structures and organizational design; community support; special populations; and safety and security.

The following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Bob Galli, Education Consultant
- Aamir Raza, Director of Oversight and Policy, NYC DOE Charter Schools Office

¹ NYC DOE ATS system

² NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

³ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

⁴ Demographic Data drawn from NYC DOE ATS System; Title I percentage from 2008 NY State Report Cards

⁵ Student Demographic data is inputted by school staff into the ATS enrollment database and summarized by NYC DOE staff.

⁶ NYC DOE School Progress Report. This document is posted on the NYC DOE website at <http://www.schools.nyc.gov>.

⁷ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

What the school does well

- The school unites youth, families, staff, teachers, and members of the community to develop students' character and to prepare them successfully for post-secondary endeavors.
 - A comprehensive *Student Life Guide* focuses on both academic and social success.
 - All students are assigned an advisor who serves as a mentor for 4 years.
 - A school wide model of RESPECT is a key component of the community (self, peers, adults, differences, property).
 - Consistent, daily attendance by all is supported and encouraged.
- The school promotes high expectations and responsibilities for teachers.
 - Teachers play a key role in implementing principles of consistency, common instructional program, and community.
 - A team-based approach to problem-solving is utilized to create effective interventions and success plans for students.
 - Teacher responsibilities go beyond classroom concerns, i.e. mentor teacher, department leader, dean, academic advisor, social-emotional counselor, and grade director.
- Teachers are expected to implement and become familiar with curriculum mapping, lesson planning, co-planning, grading policies, homework expectations, differentiation and modifications, assessment, best practices, and student-centered active lessons.
 - Teachers use *TechPaths* software for curriculum mapping. Weekly lessons are readily available for review.
 - Consistent and constructive feedback is provided by department leaders and administration. Teachers are given ample time to co-plan and modify weekly lessons.
 - Department teachers follow school wide criteria for assessment and a formal system for grading purposes is in place using *Blackbaud* software.
 - A *Best Practices Manual* has been developed and aligned to the school's observation rubric.
- Teachers serve as role models to ensure that all students become good citizens and responsible adults.
 - All teachers adhere to a staff attendance and lateness policy as well as a professional dress code.
 - All teachers maintain appropriate boundaries with students and sustain a professional atmosphere.
 - Teachers model effective learning environments in both the classroom and Teacher Center by maintaining print rich classrooms, celebrating student work, and demonstrating appropriate behavior when interacting with students and other staff members.
- Students are provided with a strong focus on success in the classroom.
 - Student mastery charts are posted in classrooms and individual and group instructional strategies are implemented in all subject areas.
 - Students were observed engaging in extended conversations, analytical thinking, drawing conclusions and building shared understandings.
 - College readiness is introduced in the ninth grade as students write research papers.
 - Achievement rooms are available to provide academic intervention services and lunch time tutoring is available.
 - Advanced Placement classes are offered as needed.

What the school needs to improve

- The school will have a 2010 graduation rate of 67%.
 - Additional programs may be necessary to allow students to work independently, make up course work, and sustain annual yearly promotion.
 - To sustain interest in post-secondary plans, students should continue to be exposed to college opportunities on both the two-year and four-year levels as well as opportunities for entry-level positions in local, state and federal agencies.
- Shared classrooms display little or no student work and/or academic supports (charts, word walls, graphs, etc.).
 - Classroom libraries should be updated periodically to ensure that a wide variety of leveled readings is available in all classrooms.
- The quality of observed classroom instruction was inconsistent.
 - Teachers were observed standing in the front of the room or at one position during the lesson; implementing the use of anchoring to keep students focused and attentive could serve to support increased participation.
 - Insufficient integration of technology skills was observed across classrooms.
 - To support college readiness, the school should consider teaching students explicit lessons that include independent reading activities, highlighting, note-taking, and questioning techniques to demonstrate preparedness.

Part 3: Framing Questions

FRAMING QUESTIONS:

Throughout the Renewal Process and the life of each school's charter, the NYCDOE Charter Schools Office uses the following framing questions to monitor Charter School success:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
2. Has the School Been a Viable Organization?
3. Has the School Been in Compliance with All Applicable Laws and Regulations?

Annual Site Visit Rubric:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
 - Academic Goals and Mission
 - School components and curriculum align together and holistically support the mission
 - School has high academic expectations and employs strategies for the full range of students served by the school, including those at risk and those with special needs
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - The educational plan is flexible and is adjusted to meet the performance levels and learning needs of all enrolled students
 - School implements programming to address the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs
 - Teachers demonstrate the use of differentiated instructional techniques to support the varying ways by which students learn
 - School has implemented programming for students who need remediation or acceleration
 - School Culture
 - The culture is strong, intentional, supportive and sustainable and promotes student learning
 - The school motivates all students and respects the diversity of learners and cultures in the community
 - School offers programs, activities or support services beyond academics to address students' social and emotional needs
 - School calendar and day are set to provide extra supports to ensure that students are able to meet and exceed academic goals
 - Schedule for communication to parents/students is timely and allows for due process, includes strategies to prepare students for transitions and strategies for those students who are not on schedule, presents a clear and fair system that complies with students' due process rights
 - Structures that foster the development of authentic, sustained, caring, respectful relationships among all stakeholders within school
 - Behavioral expectations and social supports that reflect the school's mission and comply with all applicable laws and regulations
 - Assessment
 - Establishes a culture of continuous improvement and accountability for student learning
 - Develops assessments that shape and inform instruction on an ongoing basis and develop data that's used to gauge student, teacher and school progress through formative and summative assessment
 - Student learning measured with multiple forms of assessments/metrics
 - Develops educational goals and performance metrics that are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission and Time-Specific
 - Develops assessments that are appropriately aligned with curriculum, instruction, and adopted standards

- Provides evidence of how data will influence instruction, professional development and curricular adjustments
 - Parent Engagement
 - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
 - Capacity to communicate effectively with parents and families
 - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
2. Is the School a Viable Organization
- Governance Structures and Organizational Design
 - School has articulated appropriate roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structure for school community members (including Board of Trustees and school leadership)
 - An accountability structure that provides effective oversight of the educational program and fiscal components of the school is in place and utilized
 - Board regularly reviews a data dashboard of student achievement and fiscal management that forms the basis for Board discussions and decisions
 - Board has diverse skill set that lends itself to strong educational / operational oversight
 - Board has an articulated process for ongoing policy development, Board member development and self-evaluation
 - Organizational charts are aligned with mission; roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
 - Board has developed essential strategic partnerships with organizations that support the mission of the school
 - Community Support
 - School Leadership demonstrated responsiveness to the unique needs and interests of the community to be served
 - School has established a presence in the community and has buy in from community members
3. Is the School in Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations
- Special Populations
 - Well-defined plan and sufficient capacity to service the learning needs of Special Education students, English Language Learners
 - School adequately addresses the academic and non academic needs of students in need of remediation, students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and gifted students
 - There is a coherent plan for meeting the non-academic needs of students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and other populations
 - School employs a process to identify students at risk of not meeting expectations and creates intervention plans and follow up
 - School demonstrates a comprehensive recruitment, enrollment and retention approach that is sensitive to the diverse needs of students
 - School admission policy and lottery preferences serve to create a student body that reflects community demographics and give a preference to community school district residents
 - Safety and Security
 - School is well maintained
 - Transitions and student gatherings are orderly and well supervised
 - Expectations for student behavior are well known and are enforced fairly
 - School is current with all safety recruitments and drills.
 - AED machines are in operation and school staff is trained in CPR