



Charter School Renewal Report
Charter Schools Accountability and Support
2011-2012

**ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT**

MAY 2012

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Academic Leadership Charter School is an elementary school serving approximately 264 students in grades K-3.¹ The principal and executive director since the school's founding is Norma Hurwitz. The school opened in the fall of 2009 with grades kindergarten through grade one. It has plans during its current, initial charter to grow to serve students in kindergarten through grade five. The school's current charter expires on February 9, 2014. If approved for renewal the school aspires to expand to serve students middle and high school students as well. The school is currently co-located with P.S. 65 Mother Hale Academy in a Department of Education (DOE) facility in District 7 at 677 East 141st Street in the Bronx.²

The school enrolls new students in kindergarten, one and two. After the spring 2012 lottery, the school had over 1500 students remaining in its waitlist.³ The student body includes 90.6% Free and Reduced Lunch students, compared to 86.8% in District 7; 16% special education students, compared to 19.8% in the district; and 9.8% English language learners (ELL), compared to 18.1% in the district.⁴ The average attendance rate to date for the school year 2011-2012 is 95%.⁵

The school has not yet received a NYC DOE Progress Report but will receive its first, an Early Childhood Progress Report in the fall of 2012. The school has completed two NYC DOE School Surveys, receiving Average satisfaction ratings in Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement, and Safety & Respect in 2011, a decrease from the preceding year when all four satisfaction categories were Above Average or better. Parent and Teacher participation in 2011 was higher than city-wide averages with 91% of parents and 100% of teachers completing the survey.⁶

Academic Leadership Charter School is an independent charter school not associated with a charter management organization (CMO).

Annual Review Process Overview:

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

The following experts participated in the review of this school on May 22, 2012:

- Richard Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSAS
- Gabrielle Mosquera, Director of Operations, NYC DOE CSAS
- Scott Torres, Director of Operations, NYC DOE CSAS
- Laurie Pendleton, Consultant to NYC DOE CSAS

¹ Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 4/1/2012

² NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

³ Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 4/1/2012

⁴ NYC DOE ATS system as of 4/3/2012 for all % other than the school's ELL population, which had not been updated as of the 4/3/2012 data pull. At the time of the visit, the school noted that the April ATS numbers were low and needed updating and supplied update on 5/24/12 that showed its ELL population at 16%, which is comparable to the district average.

⁵ Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 4/1/2012

⁶ NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

Part 2: Findings

Overview of Probation Status:

Academic Leadership Charter School was placed on Probation by the CSAS (then CSO) beginning on July 19, 2011 and ending on August 31, 2012. The school was cited for violations of charter law related to the management of its 2011 lottery and enrollment preferences, a variety of operational issues resulting from high staff turnover among operations staff, the absence of clear operational procedures and guidance, and inadequate oversight of school operations by the board and school leadership. In response to the Probation terms, the school made structural and procedural changes, including hiring a Director of Finance and Operations, revising its operations manual and lottery policy and procedures, strengthening its Board, and expanding the Board meeting schedule to 12 monthly meetings. The CSAS will remove ALCS from Probation at the end of its probation term because of the success of the school's efforts in addressing the causes and concerns that led to the probation.

Areas of Strength:

- The school provides a strong, rigorous, consistent approach to teaching and learning that applies the principles of differentiation based on achievement data and sets high academic performance expectations for students and staff.
 - Instruction in classrooms observed was purposeful, and most students were consistently engaged in rigorous content at each grade level. On the day of the visit, observers saw examples of the school's focus on rigorous questioning, checks for understanding, and nonfiction text.
 - All observed classrooms had evidence of differentiated grouping. Most classrooms had at least two groups of varying sizes receiving small group instruction. The content and delivery was differentiated according to student needs. Teachers interviewed described the process used to plan lessons; the lead teacher in each classroom is responsible for laying out goals and objectives for the week based on grade-level pacing guides. Each teacher then plans instruction for the group of students they are working with.
 - The school has a strong focus on content-based instruction with ample time devoted to the core subject areas, including science and social studies. The school is very intentional about not just building basic literacy skills but also ensuring students develop a strong base of contextual understanding to exercise and expand those skills. On the day of the visit, areas of study included segregation, ancient Egypt, butterflies, and the branches of government. Consistent with this approach the school also provides time for special subjects, including art and music. The school believes that all of these will develop student thinking and capacity to apply knowledge and skills, which will build confidence and provide resources for students to encounter increasingly more complex work.
- The school maintains a safe, respectful, and orderly learning environment. School culture is strong and positive, and teachers communicate high expectations for both behavior and academics to all students.
 - On the day of the visit, students were observed to be well behaved, respectful, and responsive to adult direction in classrooms and hallways. They appeared to be happily engaged in their work and excited about what they were learning.
 - Classrooms were print rich with exemplary work displayed in rooms and hallways. Interactive charts in all classrooms provided evidence of prior learning and examples of student work was showcased in hallways and on classroom walls.
 - In some observed classrooms visitors witnessed effective use of technology, including SMART boards for lesson delivery, and students were observed using educational software programs on laptops to practice and reinforce literacy and computational skills.
 - Classrooms observed had common behavior management systems and routines such as chants and silent signals that students appeared to have internalized. As a result, interruptions to instruction were minimal to non-existent on the day of the visit.

- The school administers a range of assessments and uses data to group students, track progress, and drive instruction.
 - Teachers have created interim assessments that are administered every six weeks. The Leadership team provides feedback prior to the use of these assessments and teachers proctor and score each other's assessments. Grade level teams analyze the results so they can identify grade level trends as well as strengths and weaknesses by class. Teachers report this practice has been very useful in helping to identify alternative teaching strategies.
 - Members of the leadership staff have created mock assessments that are also used to identify student needs and track student progress.
 - In addition to these in-house assessments, the school uses the TerraNova and the Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) to track progress longitudinally.
 - Teachers also report using multiple sources of data including exit slips and student work to monitor student learning, create groups, and plan instruction.

- The school has made it a priority to respond to the needs of all learners.
 - On the day of the visit, observers were able to see small group instruction, effective scaffolding techniques, and push-in support for Special Education students and English Language Learners.
 - All core classes have a lead teacher and an assistant teacher who share planning and instructional responsibilities.

- The school has a stable instructional leadership team and has added dedicated instructional staff, increasing the leadership's ability to focus on student learning.
 - The school's academic leadership team has been in place for three years and is led by the founding Executive Director/Principal. The school has added a Dean of Discipline and Academics as well as a position in charge of leading Special Education and staff recruitment.
 - Teachers interviewed reported that the additional leadership team members have made it easier to access support when necessary and have opened the lines of communication between the staff and school leadership.
 - The school has a lead teacher for each classroom with one lead teacher also designated as a grade level leader.
 - The school has been thoughtful in developing leadership skills of staff and promoting from within, creating a career ladder that benefits staff and provides instructional and cultural continuity as the school expands.

- School provides multiple opportunities for professional development and teacher collaboration.
 - Summer PD is between 5 to 7 days, focusing this past summer on content development, pacing calendars, transitioning to the Common Core Standards, and supporting new teachers. Next summer's PD will target individual teacher needs, as well working of 4th and 5th grade pacing calendars, writing and math.
 - The school has a weekly 90-minute PD period every Monday between 4:00 and 5:30.
 - An external consultant has provided coaching support through the fall and early winter, work that was picked up and continued by the school's Dean of Discipline and Academics and Special Education coordinator.

- The school has responded positively to the terms of its probation and has made significant strides in developing systems and improving protocols and oversight capacity, including conducting a successful lottery this spring.
 - The school revised its operations manual and improved its financial internal control practices. Additionally, it has overhauled its lottery process and procedures, and engaged a third party to automate the lottery and oversee its administration.
 - The school conducted a transparent and equitable application, lottery and enrollment process, with significant controls and documented oversight.
 - The school hired a Director of Finance and Operations to work with the school leader to oversee operational and financial improvements. [The Director of Finance and Operations,

- hired in October, resigned at the end of March and a search for his replacement was underway at the time of the visit.]
- As required by the terms of the probation, the Board expanded its meeting schedule to 12 monthly meetings a year, added additional Board members to increase capacity and range of experience, activated its standing committees and launched project-based committees (a lottery committee, for example, and a search committee to help school find new Director of Finance and Operations).
 - Board meetings observed over the course of the year provided evidence of an engaged, active Board that was not only responding to leadership reports but presenting their own reports and updates on Board initiatives and actions. The Board took a particularly active role in revising and supervising the lottery's procedures and its execution.

Areas of Growth:

- The school should continue its ongoing work to improve the instructional program for the grades it currently serves and to develop curriculum and resources for new grades as the school expands.
 - Teachers interviewed suggested the curriculum alignment between grade levels could be stronger. The school is also encouraged to consider strategies for ensuring a strong connection between grades as they continue to grow.
 - Although there was evidence of strong instructional practices in most rooms, the use of some strategies was inconsistent. The school could benefit from identifying quality practices and sharing those across the building.
 - On the day of the visit, much of the instruction was teacher-directed. The school should focus on strategies for shifting responsibility from the teacher to allow for more engaged student learning.
 - Although the work in most classes was rigorous and most teachers were thoughtful in monitoring learning, there was not clear evidence in some classrooms that all students were grasping the content at the level of delivery. Some teaching pairs were systematic about managing their checks for understanding but others were less so, verifying understanding with a student or two without clear evidence that others had also understood the instruction.
- The school should continue to work on improving the professional climate of the building.
 - The teacher responses in areas related to school leadership on the Communication portion of the 2010-11 NYC DOE Survey were concerning in that all five positive prompts drew either "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" responses from between one-fourth to more than half of the year's total teaching staff. While teachers interviewed on the day of the visit stated that these issues were not shared by them or were no longer concerns, the school should monitor the 2011-12 DOE School Survey to ensure that this is the case.
 - The school leadership is encouraged to continue working on communication, clarity of expectations, and clear, consistent supervision and evaluation processes in order to ensure a sustainable professional environment and supportive culture.
- The school's operations department should continue to work on strengthening its procedures. The CSAS will continue to monitor progress and effectiveness of processes and procedures put in place.
 - The school endured significant operational staff turnover for the third year in a row, including the resignation of the Director of Finance and Operations. The Board and school leadership should continue their efforts to understand the source of the turnover so it can more effectively address it.
 - Operational support resources, including manuals, established procedures and training, should be evaluated for effectiveness in sustaining sound practices when on-boarding new staff and refining operational performance through problem-solving and innovation.
 - The school should continue to rigorously monitor the current internal checks and balances and refine as necessary.
 - During the visit, most records reviewed by visitors were organized and appropriately stored. However, some employee records were incomplete to a concerning degree. For example, a

- spot-check of files of former staffers (some permanent employees and some daily substitutes) revealed that some lacked fingerprint clearances, hire letters, and/or resignation letters and did not include results of their 90-day evaluations or any exit interview documentation. Files for some current staff were missing important elements, such as a signed hire letter or a signed acknowledgement of review and understanding of the staff handbook. At least one operations staffer did not receive a fingerprint clearance prior to the first day of employment, with no evidence of an Emergency Conditional Appointment as an alternate clearance for it. The school should examine its policies and procedures related to human relations documentation to ensure that proper documentation is both collected and stored prior, during, and after an employee's tenure, as appropriate.
- The Department of Labor (DOL) investigation noted in last year's ASV report is still open. According to the school leader, the next steps—which may include a DOL audit of the school—belong to the DOL, and the school is waiting and will cooperate fully.⁷
 - The school is encouraged to bring greater clarity and more formal processes and policies for supervision and evaluation of all staff members including both instructional and operational staff.
 - Supervision and evaluation of instructional staff appears to be better articulated and more consistently carried out than that of operational staff, although many operational staff were new at the time of the visit and had not yet been formally evaluated.
 - School policy holds that all staffers begin with a 90-day probation period, but the process for evaluating staff during or at end of 90 days—including who holds the responsibility of review as well as what type of rubric is used—is unclear.
 - The school should continue its efforts to reach compliance with the amended 2010 charter law requirements related to the enrollment and retention of at-risk student populations, specifically students with free or reduced price lunch (FRL), special education students, and English Language Learners (ELLs). The school should monitor its existing strategies and make any necessary adjustments to reach comparable averages to the district serving at-risk students.
 - While its FRL enrollment numbers are comparable to CSD 7 averages (90.6% at the school compared to 86.8% in the district), its enrollment of students with IEPs is below CSD 7 averages with a special education population of 16%, compared to CSD 7's average of 19.8%, as is the school's population of ELLs (9.8% at the school compared to the 18.1% in the district)⁸.

⁷ Following the visit, the school reported that the Department of Labor had completed an audit of its practices and consequently considered the matter resolved.

⁸ NYC DOE ATS system, data pulled April 2012 for all percents except the school's ELL percent. Following the visit, the school submitted an ATS count from 5/24/12 that showed its ELL population at 16%, which is comparable to the district average.

Part 3: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

The CSO Accountability Framework

To help NYC DOE authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the NYC DOE's Charter Schools Office (CSO) has developed an Accountability Framework build around four essential questions for charter school renewal:

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

1. Is the School an Academic Success?

1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

Schools that are academic successes have many of the characteristics below:

- Meet absolute performance goals
- Meet student progress goals
- Are closing the achievement gap for at risk students, including special needs and ELL students
- Are surpassing performance of DOE identified peer-schools
- Are surpassing performance district and city proficiency or better averages
- Are meeting other rigorous academic and non-academic goals as stated in school's charter

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

- Grades 3-8 NYS ELA Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 3-8 NYS Math Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 4 and 8 NYS Science Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 8-12 NYS Regent Exam Results
- When applicable, NYSAA or other approved alternate assessments results
- HS 4- and 6-Year Graduation Rates (absolute and progress, overall, for at-risk student populations)
- Grades 8-12 College Readiness Credit Accumulation
- Percentage of Students Applying to and Being Admitted to College
- Percentage of Students Taking AP Courses and/or Percentage of Students Passing AP Courses
- Results on state accountability measures
- Charter School Academic and Non-Academic Goals
- NYC Progress Reports

1b. Mission and Academic Goals

Schools with successful missions and goals have many of the characteristics below:

- Have an animating mission statement that staff, students and community embrace
- Set ambitious academic and non-academic goals that entire school community knows and embraces
- Have processes for regular monitoring and reporting on progress toward school goals
- Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring data

Evidence for successful missions and goals might include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Mission statement, charter, external documents (parent and family handbooks, school website, etc.)
- Annual reports, school improvement plans, leadership board reports
- Board agendas and minutes
- Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction surveys
- Participation at parent-teacher conferences, school advocacy events, participation in academic goal related programs

1c. Responsive Education Program

Schools with successful education programs have many of the characteristics below:

- Are self-reflective and examine practice based on outcomes against goals
- Have well-thought out curricular programs that are aligned with NYS learning outcomes as described by state standards and the new Common Core Curriculum.
- Use instructional models and resources consistent with school mission and that are flexible in addressing the needs of all learners
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- Implement a coherent and effective interim assessment system (e.g., use of formative, interim, and summative assessment data) for monitoring progress, predicting performance, and adjusting instruction
- Have an effective process for supporting improved classroom instruction, including frequent observation and feedback
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Use a defined process for evaluating curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals

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

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

1d. Learning Environment

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

- Have a strong culture that connects high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to give their best effort academically and socially
- Use a comprehensive approach to student management, including positive behavioral expectations and a clear discipline policy to build and sustain a safe, orderly, and supportive classroom environment
- Provide for safe, respectful, efficient transitions, hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.
- Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and supported
- Provide opportunities for students to actively engage in their own learning and in the life of the school

- Have a formal or informal character education, social development, or citizenship program that provides opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens

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

- 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
- DOE School Survey student results
- DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results
- Self-administered satisfaction survey results
- Leadership, staff, and, if appropriate, student interviews
- Classroom observations
- Scheduled student engagement opportunities (e.g., student advisory, internships, student government, student led conferences, peer tutoring, peer mediation, etc.)

2. Is the School a Fiscally Sound, Viable Organization?

2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

Schools with successful governance and organizational design structures have many of the characteristics below:

- Operate with a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate blend of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter
- Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly but not limited to open-meeting laws and conflict of interest regulations
- Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time and despite circumstance
- Implements a school leadership structure that is aligned with charter and that is sufficient to fulfill school's mission and achieve its accountability goals; it also has clear lines of accountability for leadership roles, accountability to Board, and, if applicable, relationship with a charter management organization
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implemented a process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's organization and leadership structure
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers

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

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar, professional development plan

2b. 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
- An effective process for recruiting, hiring, supporting, and evaluating leadership and staff
- A flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- An effective way of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including the DOE School Survey
- Effective home-school communication practices to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Strong community-based partnerships and advocacy for the school

Evidence for school climate and community engagement may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- DOE School Survey satisfaction parent, teacher, and, if appropriate student results
- 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

2c. Financial and Operational Health

Schools that are responsible stewards of public funds and effective, sustaining organizations have many of the characteristics below:

- Consistently meet its student enrollment and retention targets
- Annual budgets that meets all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- School leadership and Board that oversee financial and operational responsibilities in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to decision-making
- Boards and school leadership that maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of chartered school design and academic program
- A safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations

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
- Appropriate insurance documents
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- Financial audits
- Financial leader(s) resume and accountability documents
- Operational policies and procedures
- Operational org chart
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- School safety plan

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

3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

- Implemented the key features of their charter as described in the original charter and 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 update-to-date charter is publicly available to staff, parents, and school community
- Implemented comprehensive academic, behavioral, oversight, management, and operational policies and procedures that are substantially aligned with the charter and the school's stated mission and vision

Evidence for a school's compliance with the terms of its charter and charter agreement may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Authorized charter and signed agreement
- Charter revision request approval and documentation
- School mission
- School policies and procedures
- Site visits
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership/board interviews

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have:

- Met all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Comparable enrollment of FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location *or* are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages
- Implemented 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
- Conducted independently verified fair and open lottery and manage with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employed instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and certification requirements

Evidence for compliance with applicable federal and state law may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School reporting documents
- School's Annual Report
- Student recruitment plan and resources
- Student management policies and promotion and retention policies
- Student discipline records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Staff roster, fingerprint clearance for all staff, certification status of all instructional staff

3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

- Safe and secure facilities with no significant compliance concerns with applicable regulations
- Consistently clean annual audits, up-to-date escrow accounts, and have completed all other financial reporting as required
- Boards that meet requirements for size, meeting frequency, public notice, applicable open-meeting and conflict of interest regulations, as well as complying with NYC DOE CSO's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members.
- Informed NYCDOE CSO, and where required, received CSO approval for changes in significant partnerships, such as dropping/replacing a management organization
- Effectively engaged parent associations

Evidence for compliance with applicable regulations may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School or building safety plan; appropriate inspection documents
- Annual audits, escrow accounts, other financial reporting documents
- Board roster, calendar, agenda and minutes, conflict of interest documents, notification of changes/approval of new member request documents
- Charter revision requests, revised or new contracts
- Parent association calendar of meetings, identified officers, parent association agenda and minutes, parent satisfaction survey results
- Interviews

4. What Are the School's Plans for its Next Charter Term?

4a. School Expansion or Model Replication

In anticipation of a new charter term schools may be considering various growth options: replication, expansion to new grades or increased enrollment or altering their model in some significant way. Successful schools generally have processes for:

- Conducting needs/opportunity assessments
- Forming Board and leadership committees or subcommittees to investigate options, develop action plans, ensure capacity and resources are aligned, etc.
- Engaging school community in articulating charter revisions (or a new charter in cases of replication) to address the proposed growth plans
- Ensuring that the final proposal is ambitious but realistic in its plans
- Creating a well-reasoned and documented prospective for the school's new charter term and, if applicable, a new charter proposal (for replication)

Evidence for likely success in planning for school growth in a new charter term may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and Board interviews

4b. Organizational Sustainability

Successful schools consistently perform despite change. While there is no single path for ensuring sustainability, successful schools often have the following features:

- School anticipates organizational opportunities/needs and plans for resource development (human resource policies for growing your own talent, for example, or fundraising or budget management to take care of anticipated capital needs and to mitigate risks for the unexpected, or board development to bring new talent or specific needs-based expertise to the school)

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

- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organization chart
- Staff rosters
- Staff handbook
- Leadership and staff interviews
- Budget

4c. School or Model Improvements

Successful schools are thoughtful about the continued appropriateness of school design features and elements of their models. They:

- Review performance carefully and even if they don't make major changes through expansion or replication, they are careful to adjust elements to ensure continued and improved success.
- Develop plans to improve the school learning environment, including improving their facilities to expand program offerings and/or developing new partnerships to further the school's mission.

Evidence for successful improvements to a school's program or model may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- MOUs or contracts with partners