



Charter Schools Accountability and Support
2012-2013

**JOHN W. LAVELLE PREPARATORY CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: School Overview & History

School Overview and History

John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School (Lavelle Prep) is a middle and high school serving approximately 297 students¹ in grades 6-9 during the 2012-13 school year. It opened in 2009-2010, and is under the terms of its first charter. The school's projected full grade span, if approved for renewal and continued expansion, is 6-12, which it is expected to reach in 2015-2016.² The school is located in private³ facilities at Corporate Commons One at 1 Teleport Drive in Staten Island within CSD 31.⁴

The table below details the school's performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report.⁵

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall			A	B
Student Progress			B	C
Student Performance			B	A
School Environment			A	A
Closing the Achievement Gap Points			5	5

Lavelle Prep enrolls new students in grades 6 and 7. There were zero students on the waitlist after the Spring 2012 lottery.⁶

The average attendance rate for the 2012-13 school year to date is 96%.⁷

On the 2011-12 NYC DOE School Survey, the school scored Well Above Average on the Academic Expectations and Communication sections and Above Average on the Engagement and Safety & Respect sections. Participation on the survey included 92.0% of the school's parents, 100.0% of the school's teachers, and 99.0% of the school's eligible students.⁸

The current head of school, Kenneth Byalin and the principal, Evelyn Finn have been at the school since the school's inception. The school added a new position, Co-Principal, this school year, which was filled by Howard Lucks.

¹ Enrollment based on ATS data from 3/8/13.

² NYC DOE internal data.

³ NYC DOE internal data.

⁴ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

⁵ NYC DOE Progress Report – <http://schools.nyc.gov/progressreport>

⁶ Self-reported information from school-submitted Data Collection Form.

⁷ Self-reported information from school-submitted Data Collection Form.

⁸ NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

Part 2: Annual Review Process Overview

Rating Framework

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability & Support Team (CSAS) performs a comprehensive review of each NYC DOE-authorized charter school to investigate 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, CSAS inquires about the school's plans for its next charter term.

This review is conducted by analyzing student performance data and collecting and evaluating school-submitted documents during the 2012-2013 school year. The report outlines evidence found during this review.

As per the school's monitoring plan, CSAS may also conduct a visit to a school. Visits may focus on academic outcomes, governance, organizational structure, operational compliance, fiscal sustainability or any combination of these as necessary.

In addition, a school's charter goals are reviewed. The progress that a school has made towards achieving its goals at this particular point during its charter period is noted. However, as this is an interim review before the end of the charter term, progress towards goals is not used as part of this evaluation.

Essential Questions

Is the school an academic success?

To assess whether a school is an academic success, CSAS considers performance measures, including, but not limited to the following:

- Overall NYC DOE Progress Report score,
- New York State ELA and Math results and/or New York State Regents exams,
- ELA and Math proficiency compared to the district for elementary and middle schools, and graduation rates compared to the city for high 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**. If a school does not yet have a NYC DOE Progress Report, it is rated as Not Yet Demonstrated.

Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?

To assess whether a school is a fiscally sound, viable organization, CSAS 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 NACSA (National Association of Charter School Authorizers) Financial Framework⁹.

CSAS also 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 Survey,
- Data collection sheets provided by schools,

⁹http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance_Framework_Fall_2012_Draft.pdf, page 38-59

- Student, staff, and Board turnover,
- 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.

Is the school compliant with its charter and all applicable law and regulations?

As it pertains to compliance, CSAS identifies areas of compliance and noncompliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Staff Representatives

The following staff representatives participated in the review of this school's documents as detailed above and conducted a finance-based monitoring visit to the school April 22, 2013:

- Kamilah O'Brien, DOE
- Gabrielle Mosquera, DOE
- Richard Larios, DOE

Part 3: Findings

Summary of Findings

Based on CSAS review the following findings are made. To date, the school:

- has partially demonstrated academic achievement and progress (pp. 6-8).
- has a developed governance structure and organizational design (p. 9).
- has partially developed a stable school culture (pp. 9-10).
- is in a weak position to meet near-term financial obligations and may not be financially sustainable based on current practice (pp. 11).
- is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations but not others (p. 12).
- has plans to continue grade level expansion in its next charter term, should its application for renewal be approved, until the schools serves grades 6-12 (p. 13).

This review included a desk audit of submitted documents, a financially focused visit and follow up communication via email. CSAS representatives visited the school on April 22, 2013.

Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?

To date, Lavelle Prep has partially demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

- Lavelle Prep has three years of state assessment data at the time of this report.
- In 2011-12, 45% of its students scored a level 3 or 4 on the NYS ELA assessment and 41.7% of its students scored a level 3 or 4 on the NYS Math assessment.
- Its overall ELA percent proficient increased in 2011-12 by 7.3 percentage points, from 37.7% the year before to 45%, as it had done the year before when it increased from 32.3% to 37.7%.
- Its overall Math percent proficient decreased by 12.9 percentage points from 54.6% to 41.7% in 2011-12.
- The school's overall proficiency when comparing same grades served has been below CSD 31, its district of location, in ELA and Math all three years of the schools operation. While the progress the school has made in the last two years in ELA is closing the gap between school and district overall performance, the 2011-12 decline in overall Math proficiency resulted in a larger gap than the school's first two year's performance.
 - It should be noted that while below CSD performance, school is above NYC's overall proficiency average in ELA, though not in Math.
- The school received an Overall grade of B on its latest NYC DOE Progress Report, with a C in Student Progress and an A in Performance (see page 2).
- In 2011-12, the school earned 5 Closing the Achievement Gap points on its Progress Report.

Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals¹⁰.

- According to its Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Lavelle Prep in 2011-12 did not meet any of the eight academic performance goals identified in its charter.

Based on document review, the following was noted:

- While the school's ELA and Math proficiency are below its CSD, the school's FRPL (Free and Reduced Price Lunch) and SWD (Students with Disabilities) populations are higher than the district's, suggesting that the school serves a more at-risk population of students. The school's FRPL is 81.5% as compared to the district at 54.8% and the school's SWD population is 27.6% as compared to the CSD's 19.8%.
- School leadership reported that progress toward proficiency in ELA and Math was insufficient to achieve their goal of college and career readiness. Therefore school leadership reported:
 - All students who scored in the lower-third on the NYS assessments received additional instructional interventions to supplement core instruction in ELA and/or Math as appropriate. (All middle school students will have at least twelve out of thirty-five weekly instructional periods in ELA and Math, however, students who receive below a 3.0 in ELA or Math will receive up to nineteen periods in these core subjects.)
 - The school will phase in an increase in promotional criteria for all grades during the 2013-2014 school year. During the 2013-14 school year, all students will be required to achieve a 2.3 on the ELA and Math state exam in order to be promoted to the next grade. In 2014-15, they will be required to achieve a 2.55 and in 2015-16, a 2.8 on each exam.
 - Spanish will only be offered to students who have achieved a 3.0 on ELA and Math state exams.
- In advance of the spring 2013 assessment season, school leadership re-launched a Saturday test sophistication class and provided test anxiety awareness to all students in their homeroom and Wellness classes.

¹⁰ Goal analysis is considered a neutral point for the purposes of this evaluation.

**John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School
Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - Whole School**

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School		32.3	37.7	45.0
CSD 31*		47.6	48.4	51.4
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School		40.9	54.6	41.7
CSD 31*		59.6	64.0	63.1

*CSD data represents only common testing grades, for all years presented

Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - By Grade

Grade 6

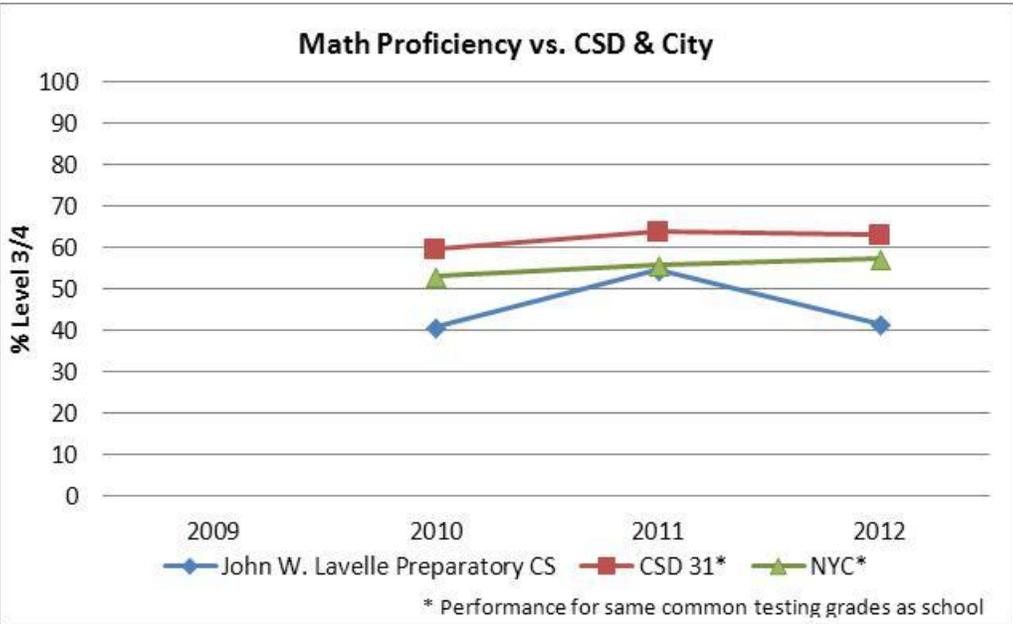
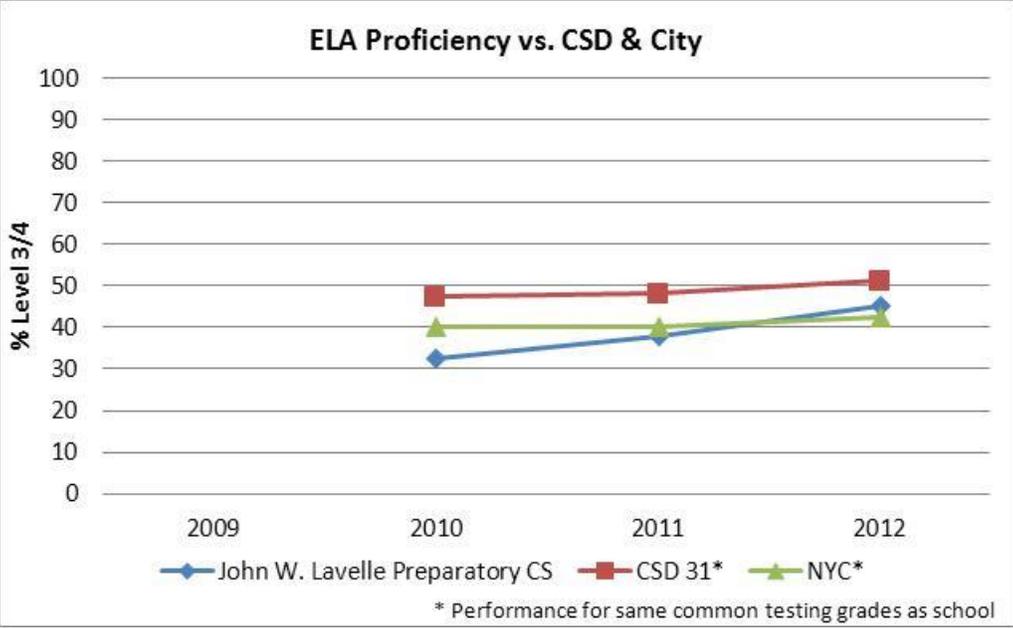
<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School		32.3	47.8	47.3
CSD 31*		47.6	51.7	53.5
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School		40.9	50.0	42.6
CSD 31*		59.6	62.8	65.7

Grade 7

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School			26.2	39.8
CSD 31*			45.1	52.6
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School			60.3	46.3
CSD 31*			65.1	65.1

Grade 8

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School				50.0
CSD 31*				48.0
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School				31.0
CSD 31*				58.5



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

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

The school's Board of Trustees has a developed governance structure and school organization design.

- The Board has been stable in membership and leadership since school founding.
- The Board added three additional board members in September 2012 and now has 12 voting members; Board membership has consistently been within the 5 to 15 minimum and maximum established in Board's by-laws.
- The Board meets monthly and has met monthly since July 2012 through the time of this report, although minutes show that two board meetings (August and December) were canceled because they did not have a quorum.
- There are clear lines of accountability between Board and school leadership and school staff as evidenced by the school's organization chart and school leadership's monthly updates on academic, financial and operational performance to the Board and its committees, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.
- The Board minutes and agenda items have been posted for inspection by the public.
- The committees outlined in the Board's bylaws are active, as recorded in meeting minutes.

School Climate & Community Engagement

The school has partially developed a stable school culture.

- The school's leadership has remained stable since the school's founding.
- Staff retention in 2011-12 had 77% of instructional staff returning from the prior year.
- According to the ACR Data Collection Form, the average daily student attendance rate is 96% as of February 2013.
- NYC DOE School Survey results were Well Above Average for Academic Expectations and Communication, and Above Average for Engagement and Safety & Respect. Participation on the School Survey was above citywide averages for Parents (92% to 53%), Teachers (100% to 82%) and Students (99% to 82%).
- According to the ACR Data Collection Form, from the end of last year to the start of this year, 42 students (13%) chose not to return and 34 students (10%) left between the start of the school year and February 2013.

Progress Towards Attainment of Charter Goals.¹¹

- According to the school's 2011-12 Annual Report to NYSED, student daily attendance was 94.4%, which surpassed the daily attendance goal of 75%. (See above for 2012-13 attendance to date.)

Based on document review and an interview during the April 22nd visit to the school, the following was noted:

- School leadership identified the following reasons for its rate of student attrition:
 - A high number of rising 9th graders left to attend traditional high schools, where there were more opportunities for sports and a wider selection of elective courses. The school reports it is currently revamping their high school structure to offer a wider array of courses and change the schedule to align with traditional high schools.
 - The school stated that many of their new students were below grade level at the time of enrollment and parents were not fully aware of the school's high expectations. When parents received promotion in doubt notifications in the winter, many decided to withdraw as opposed to risk having their child held back a grade. The school plans on adjusting its communication with prospective parents to be clearer about the school's college ready

¹¹ Goal analysis is considered a neutral point for the purposes of this evaluation.

standards and high expectations and the possible implications on promotion and retention.

- School leadership reported that based on a survey of current 9th grade students, there were complaints that the school had a middle school feel. As a result, they are implementing the following changes:
 - The high school will shift to a semester system, consistent with the Regents testing schedule.
 - Courses will be organized on a “college” model that will allow students to select from a menu based on their Individualized Learning Plans.

Financial Health

Overall, the school is in a weak position to meet near-term financial obligations, causing concern about the financial sustainability of the school.

- The school independent auditor stated the school's financial position is of "going concern."
- The school's liabilities are almost double its assets indicating that the school will be unable to pay off all debt if it were due in the next 12 months.
- The school can only cover 4 days of expenses before an infusion of cash is necessary.
- The school is below their budgeted enrollment target by 8% indicating that there may be a gap in expected revenue by \$300,000-\$400,000.
- The school is currently operating at a loss and with its current under-budgeted enrollment; it is projected that the operating loss will be even deeper.
- The school has a high debt-to-asset ratio, indicating their liabilities far outweigh their assets, putting them in a risky financial position.
- Cash flow has highly fluctuated over the course of three years.
- The school is not in a strong position to cover its long term debt.

Based on document review and an interview during the April 22nd visit to the school, the following was noted:

- School leadership reported that the school's lease agreement allows for an incremental increase in lease payment in direct proportion to the amount of space occupied, however the school's independent auditor stated that this practice was not in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. According to the school, this resulted in a less favorable financial position than is in fact the case.
- The school reported that part of the budget shortfall was due to a lottery-driven, lower-than-budgeted enrollment of special education students. The overall number of applications increased, but the increase included an unexpected spike in general education applicants.
- The school has responded in a timely and responsible manner, implementing the following changes to reduce expenses and improve revenue to ensure a year-end surplus and improved future financials:
 - Expenses
 - The school has opted out of taking on an additional 24 thousand square feet of available space to reduce future expenses.
 - The school reduced paraprofessional staffing hours, salary, and benefits, in a manner that reduced expenses but allowed the school to remain in compliance with meeting the obligations of Special Education students in core subjects.
 - The school has developed a policy of using in-house substitutes as opposed to using an outside substitute provider as an expense reducing measure.
 - Revenue
 - The school has changed its lottery preferences for the 2013-14 lottery, in order to reserve 40% of seats for SWD students. This will ensure the school can meet their SWD enrollment target and revenue projections.
 - School leadership is anticipating receipt of a \$100,000 dormitory grant that has been due since 2009 that will be used to repay construction costs.
 - School leadership believes efforts to improve the attraction of the high school program will result in increased enrollment and revenue.

Essential Question 3: Compliance with Charter and All Applicable Laws and Regulations

To date, the school is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

- 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.
 - The Board has held the number of board meetings outlined in its charter and required by state charter law.
 - All Board members have submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms and do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.

- The school is in compliance with:
 - The school has submitted required documentation for staff-fingerprint clearance and all staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.
 - The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is complaint with state requirements for teacher certification.
 - The school has the required number of staff with AED-CPR certification.
 - The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents.
 - The school submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 98.8% for immunization.

- The school is not in compliance with:
 - The school has consistently been late with a number of required accountability document submissions to CSAS. These include but are not limited to: staff and student handbooks, operations policies, audit and escrow documents, and lottery information.
 - The school held four fire drills as of December 1, 2012. However the school was required to hold eight fire drills as of that date and twelve for the entire school year.

Based on document review, the following was noted:

- The school participates in the New York City Charter School Network for Safety Grant. The entire staff has participated in Basic School Emergency procedures and has completed 10 fire drills and one lock down drill as of February 2013.

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

As reported by the school leadership and the school's Board:

- The school has begun planning a Career Readiness component of the high school curriculum and has identified the following clusters of career interests:
 - Medicine and veterinary; Engineering, architecture, computer science and electronics; Cosmetology, fashion, and photography; Law & law enforcement; and Hospitality & business.
- The school expects to engage in a partnership with Wagner College to implement a college advisement program. Wagner students will mentor Lavelle Prep students through the college selection and application process.
- The school is participating with a group of Staten Island educators and community leaders who are exploring the possibility of establishing a charter high school which will serve transfer students and drop-outs. Lavelle Prep will possibly be a partner in the proposed school.

Part 4: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

The CSAS 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 Accountability and Support (CSAS) 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