Department of Education
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ACCOUNTABILITY HANDBOOK FOR DOE-AUTHORIZED CHARTER SCHOOLS

SCHOOL YEAR 2013-14

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Introduction

Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) Team Mission: to promote the development of high quality public school options for children and families in NYC by supporting the city's charter schools and holding DOE authorized charter schools to the highest performance standards.

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) via the Charter Schools Accountability and Support team (CSAS) is a quality authorizer currently overseeing 69 operating charter schools in all five of New York City's boroughs. CSAS serves as the Chancellor's designee to oversee and renew charter schools, holding DOE-authorized charter schools to the highest performance standards, and providing operational support to all charter schools in NYC. As a quality authorizer, the NYC DOE CSAS provides transparency regarding its evaluative measures and tools, and its standards of excellence. This document provides an overview of the NYC DOE CSAS accountability framework and serves as a guide for DOE-authorized charter schools to better understand how CSAS holds schools accountable.

Article 56 of the New York State Code, or the New York State Charter Schools Act of 1998 ("the Act"), enabled the creation of independent, innovative, and autonomous charter schools. These charter schools are afforded more freedom over their educational program and operations than traditional public schools in return for a commitment to meet higher standards of accountability. As defined in the Act [§2850(2)], the purpose of charter schools in New York is to:

- Improve student learning and achievement;
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at risk of academic failure;
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other personnel;
- Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and
- Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding the schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

The Charter Act states that a public school charter shall be granted for no more than a five-year period, near the end of which the school can apply to its authorizer for renewal of its charter for an additional period of up to five years. The purpose of this renewal period is to hold charter operators accountable for their individual charter goals and for making significant progress with their students.

The oversight role of the NYC DOE as a chartering entity is governed by the New York State Charter Schools Act and each school's Charter Agreement. The documents contained herein describe the framework, lens and tools through which CSAS measures charter school performance (academic, fiscal, and organizational) annually and upon renewal. All charters are also held accountable for meeting their individual charter goals. We believe that by providing clarity and detail, comprehensive feedback to schools based on our evaluations, and timely intervention, where appropriate, schools can chart a successful course toward renewal.

In addition to this document, schools and their governing boards should consistently make close reference to the goals and standards established in their charter, the executed contract between the board and the NYC DOE (the "charter agreement"), the NYC DOE Accountability Framework (see pages 5-15), and other NYSED and NYC DOE-issued memoranda. If a school has been issued a Notice of Concern, Notice of

Deficiency, or Notice of Probation by the NYC DOE, the school should follow the guidelines and requirements set forth in that notice in order to reach full compliance.

Given the changes to the Charter Schools Act, ongoing revisions to the standard charter agreement, and our continuing efforts to ensure rigorous accountability while respecting schools' autonomy, CSAS's oversight processes described in this handbook will continue to evolve.

NYC DOE CSAS Accountability Framework

The NYC DOE CSAS's Role in Charter School Accountability

As articulated in the New York State charter law (Education Law Article 56, Sections 2850-2857), charter schools in New York are approved for operation for limited terms, not more than five years at a time, and are charged with providing:

- Improved student achievement
- Increased learning opportunities for all students, with an emphasis on at-risk students
- High-quality choices for families
- Innovative teaching practices and educational designs
- New professional opportunities for teachers, administrators, and school staff
- Performance-based accountability

While all of the items are important, the first three are inextricably linked together. Charter schools exist to provide high-quality choices to parents and students, particularly at-risk students, through cultivating strong educational environments that lead to high academic achievement. Charter schools are free to define what "increased learning opportunities" they are providing to their communities, whether that might be access to innovative educational models, such as a blended school model, or a STEM program targeted for specified at-risk student groups, or a rigorous college preparatory program coupled with a unique career focus. Regardless of the means, all schools must deliver improved student achievement and represent a high quality choice for families they seek to serve. Charter schools are encouraged to set ambitious goals and to pursue them with thoughtful urgency. Consistent, substantial progress toward those goals will provide evidence that a charter school is positively answering the responsibility with which the state has charged it in the law.

The New York City Department of Education's Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team monitors and supports the schools it authorizes via an annual accountability cycle. (See chart on the following page.) DOE-authorized schools submit an Annual Report to the State Education Department; receive a citywide Progress Report, which includes results from the NYC DOE's annual School Survey and state assessment results; and annually submit an external audit of the school's finances.

All DOE-authorized charter schools will undergo an Annual Comprehensive Review (ACR) process that may involve a school visit, and all are subject to potential pop-in visits by members of the CSAS team. Depending on a school's history of performance it may receive neither, one, or both of these two types of school visits. If a school is up for renewal it will receive a Renewal Visit in place of the ACR. For more information on the types of monitoring visits that CSAS conducts, please see pages 19-32.

In addition, the CSAS team may attend meetings with a school's board of trustees or request an interview with the board chair during the year.

Schools put on CSAS's Early Engagement list receive more intense monitoring and may be required to complete a Corrective Action Plan. A variety of circumstances may trigger Early Engagement; it could be a product of one of the annual accountability cycle events/reports (a concerning audit, an F on a Progress Report, etc.) , an investigation prompted by a complaint, or academic concerns related to school renewal.

The CSAS Accountability Framework

To help NYC DOE authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the CSAS team has developed an Accountability Framework built around four essential questions for charter school renewal:

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

Although academic performance is primary, the NYC DOE takes into account a wide variety of factors (as indicated by the framework strands and available evidence detail) when evaluating a school. Further detail about the application of the framework to school reflection and evaluation is provided on pages 15-18.

What follows is a framework that outlines strands, indicators, and potential evidence for each of the four essential questions. The framework identifies what CSAS looks at in determining whether a school is successful enough to earn a new charter term, with or without conditions or grade expansion (as applicable). As schools use the Accountability Framework, they should remember that charter schools exist to deliver improved student achievement for the students they serve, particularly at-risk students, so they can be high-quality choices for families. This reminder should help a school apply this framework to its own performance analysis, underscoring the state and city's commitment to superior academic performance as the most important factor in a school's performance.

1. Is the School an Academic Success?

1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

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

- Meet absolute performance goals established in school charter
- Meet student progress goals established in school charter
- 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 DOE 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
- Parent association meeting agendas and minutes
- Participation at parent-teacher conferences, school advocacy events, participation in academic goal related programs
- Stakeholder (board, parents, staff, students, etc.) interviews

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
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- 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
- Use a defined process for evaluating curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals
- Have school calendars and day schedules that provide the time necessary to deliver on the school's mission and academic 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
- Special Education/ELL progress monitoring documentation
- Interim assessment results
- Student and teacher portfolios
- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation
- Professional development plans and resources
- School calendar and daily schedules
- DOE School Surveys and internal school satisfaction surveys
- Instructional leader and staff interviews

1d. Learning Environment

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

- Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best efforts
- 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 plan with formal or informal structures or programs in place that provide students opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens (for example: a character education, citizenship, or community involvement or service program)

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

- School mission and articulated values
- School calendar and class schedules
- Student management plan (code of conduct, school values, discipline policy, positive incentive system, etc.)
- Student attendance and retention rates
- Student discipline data (referral, suspension, expulsion)
- DOE School Survey student results
- DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results
- Parent complaint/concern information
- Internal 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:

- Have a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations, with clear lines of accountability for the Board, school leadership and all staff
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate officers, committees, and a purposeful blend of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter
- Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly but not limited to Open-Meetings Law and conflict of interest regulations, and is fully compliant with its Board approved by-laws (number of meetings, quorum, posting of calendar, agenda and minutes)
- Have a defined process for Board reflection on effectiveness, assessing developing needs, and plan for professional growth
- Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time 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 and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization is identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implements a process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, and evaluating the

effectiveness of the school's staff that is clearly defined in staff handbook

- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers, including both formal and informal observations

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

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, calendar of meetings, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Board resources for evaluating school leadership and staff, including rubric/performance metrics
- Board resources for self-reflection and professional growth
- Board development plan
- Board interviews
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar
- Professional development plan for leadership staff
- School leadership and staff interviews

2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

Schools with a sustaining school climate and engaged parent and community support have many of the characteristics below:

- Create and maintain a healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered, and aligned with school mission and values
- Implement flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- Encourage professional conversations about effective performance and quality instruction among staff through, for example, such means as regular and periodic teaming (grade level teams, data days, etc.) and peer observations
- Have systems in place to evaluate professional development effectiveness and provide ongoing support for school-wide and individual initiatives
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the NYC DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Engage parents actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- Develop strong community-based partnerships who support and advocate for the school
- Have a clear procedure for parents and staff to express concerns to school leadership and the Board, as appropriate, including a clearly articulated escalation path to authorizer

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

- NYC DOE School Survey satisfaction parent, teacher, and, if appropriate student results
- Internal satisfaction surveys
- Staff handbook
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- School Professional Development Plan and staff feedback on professional development events
- Resources for evaluations and observations, scheduled opportunities for professional collaboration, staff feedback on professional development events
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent/Student Handbook
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)

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 student enrollment and retention targets (applies to schools renewed after 2010)
- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, as school leadership and Board levels, in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to short- and long-term decision-making
- Have clearly established policies and procedures for overall fiscal and operational health of the school (onboarding of all new staff, record-keeping, processing requests of HR services, application and enrollment calls, visitors, volunteers, etc.)
- Maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Receive consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, have strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school design and academic program
- Ensure a safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage

Evidence for a financially sound, viable organization may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School budget, P&Ls, and monthly/quarterly cash-flow reports
- Financial leader(s) job description, resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Financial audits
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships
- Operational policies and procedures, including training resources
- Staff turnover and retention records
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- School safety plan
- Appropriate insurance documents

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

3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Compliance with a school's charter and charter agreement includes:

- Implemented the key features of their charter as described in the original charter and, if appropriate, as modified in approved revisions to their charter, including but not limited to mission, academic program, school organization, grade configuration, enrollment, goals, etc.
- Ensure that up-to-date charter is available on request to staff, parents, and school community
- 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
- Annual Comprehensive Review reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership, Board, staff and community interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Compliance with federal and state law includes:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting

- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location[1] or are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages for enrollment and retention (applies to schools renewed after 2010)
- Implement school policies related to student discipline and promotion and retention that are fully compliant with laws and regulations related to students with disabilities and due process regulations
- Conduct an independently verified fair and open lottery and manage enrollment process and annual waiting lists with integrity
- Employ instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and 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
- Family/Student handbook
- Student discipline records
- Parent complaint/grievance records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Demographic data (school, district, and other as appropriate)
- Staff roster, fingerprint clearance for all staff, certification status of all instructional staff

3c. Applicable Regulations

Compliance with applicable regulations includes:

- 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 CSAS's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members.
- Informed NYC DOE CSAS, and where required, received CSAS 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 with Board, staff, parents, students or others, as appropriate

[1] School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Charter (replication) Application
- 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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- 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: • Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term • Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term • Leadership and board interviews • Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) with partners or important vendors

Using the NYC DOE CSAS Accountability Framework for Charter Schools

Critical next questions are: How should schools use this document? And equally important, how will the CSAS team use it during the renewal process?

How should schools use this framework?
The framework provides a comprehensive description of what successful charter school performance might look like. Some elements, including the most important, are school performance outcomes: state test results, Progress Report grades, satisfaction results on DOE School Surveys, graduation rates, attendance rates, and the like. The framework can be used by Boards and school leaders to keep these critical outcomes clearly in focus, reflect on their own progress in pursuit of positive outcomes, and to define the interim measures that will be regularly monitored to ensure positive results for these outcomes each year.

Other elements of the framework are descriptive of best practice means to the required positive performance outcomes, including what a responsive education program looks like, a healthy learning environment and school climate, an effective governance and school organization, etc. These elements are more broadly defined because effective schools can approach these in a variety of ways depending on their educational and administrative philosophy, their school design and instructional model, their approach to student management, etc. Despite the designed flexibility in these areas effective Boards and school leaders can adapt the indicator statements to their school's unique features and use the evidence for the indicators to monitor successful implementation of their school model.

Still other elements are essentially yes/no indicators, including many of the financial indicators in Essential Question 2 and the compliance related strands and indicators in Essential Question 3. Boards and school leaders need to know these are important and ensure schools have audits completed on time and that audits are clean, for example. When an answer is no to any of these financial or compliance related elements, the school should either be working on a remedy or adjusting efforts to get a better result.

Finally, Essential Question 4 speaks to the importance for charter schools to not just bear in mind that they are always in the renewal process but that their long-term success depends on having a strategic vision and doing the necessary groundwork for executing that vision in a timely manner. Waiting until the

renewal year to think strategically about the next term is not a recipe for success. Large initiatives require time to execute, whether that time is related to moving to a private facility, growing into an existing facility, or expanding to new grade levels. So the elements of Essential Question 4 are important for school leaders to bear in mind and especially for Boards to be thinking and planning about—how do we build the necessary capacity? What implications are there for current state? What impact might the current state have on our long-term plans? The framework can be useful in prompting this kind of necessary reflection.

Because of the framework's comprehensive nature, schools can use it to prepare for any comprehensive review of the school's status and performance, whether internal or external, by re-visiting the Essential Questions, Strands, Indicators and Evidence contained in the framework. It can help schools think about where they are, how they are progressing, what might need more attention, and so on. This reflection can help with school improvement planning or preparing to complete its Self-Evaluation Form prior to an Annual Comprehensive Review by CSAS staff.

Because the framework looks at school success in a structured way, school leadership or Boards can focus on a specific part of the framework for a specific purpose, an education committee of the Board might review the strands of Essential Question 1 with a new committee member as part of his or her orientation to the oversight work before the committee. School leadership might do something similar with new staff or new parents to the school to ensure they understand the school's performance accountability. Along with the school's charter, the framework can be a very useful tool to ensuring that the school community is on the same page when it comes to mission, goals, program, and accountability.

How will the CSAS team use the framework?
The framework will provide guidance to the CSAS team for accountability related interactions between CSAS and the schools the NYC DOE authorizes. It will:

- inform our preparation for Annual Comprehensive Review;, in particular, helping us review performance and required documentation from the school in order to target visit discussion questions.
- help us prepare for specific interactions with charter schools (attending a Board meeting, following up when appropriate on charter revision requests, submission of required reporting documentation, etc.).
- guide the renewal process, including our review of Renewal Applications, Renewal Visit documentation, and the Renewal Visit and Report, the last of which will include the Renewal Team's recommendation to the Chancellor.

The framework provides a comprehensive picture of what success looks like for each Essential Question. It is not, however, a checklist where each item of each indicator and strand earns points for or against renewal and where a total is taken and scores above this line are renewed and those below it are not. Schools are too complex and circumstances too nuanced for such a strict formulaic calculation. How each question plays into a renewal decision is discussed below. The use of the different elements of the framework in renewal decisions is designed to ensure that charter schools are held accountable for performance, but that their autonomy in determining how they get their results is respected. With that in mind, strands directly related to academic performance, financial or operational health, and compliance are more important than others, with academic performance being most important. Other strands are not unimportant; for one, they provide schools an opportunity to make the strongest case they can for renewal in circumstances where the performance results are mixed, inconsistent or the data is not yet robust enough to be conclusive (one-three years of data).

Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?
There are four strands within this Essential Question: 1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement, 1b. Mission and Academic Goals, 1c. Responsive Education Program, and 1d. Learning Environment. 1a is about outcomes, the school's academic performance, and it is the primary strand in the framework. If the

school is clearly and consistently demonstrating strong academic attainment and/or consistent and significant progress academically, then absent financial management or compliance issues the school will be renewed.

Strands 1b-d describe common characteristics of successful academic schools. They will help the school and CSAS prepare for Annual Comprehensive Reviews and Renewals but they are means to the ends of academic attainment and improvement. During an Annual Comprehensive Review or Renewal the framework elements here will help identify areas of strength or for growth within the feedback we provide the schools. In terms of a renewal judgment, what matters are the school's academic results. When the results are categorically positive (all A's or B's on Progress Reports, particularly A's or B's in the Student Progress and Performance sections of the PR; consistently meeting or surpassing the school's academic goals in its Annual Report, etc.), we don't need to probe as deeply into the means because the results speak for themselves.

Other elements of the framework (1b-d and Essential Questions 2 and 3) become more important in renewal decisions when academic results are mixed or inconsistent or when academic accountability data (state test results, graduation rates, etc.) are lacking or represent only a year or two of documented results. ("Mixed" means a school meets or exceeds some academic performance measures but fails to meet others; "inconsistent" means that its academic performance fluctuates from year to year.) In those instances the presence or absence of the conditions for success will provide additional evidence for a renewal, renewal with conditions, or non-renewal decision.

When academic results are consistently poor (multiple D's or F's on the PR) or inconsistently poor and mediocre (never higher than a C but including D's or F's), the other elements of the framework are largely moot because academic performance is categorically unacceptable.

Essential Question 2: Is the School a Fiscally Sound, Viable Organization?
There are three strands with this Essential Question: 2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design, 2b. School Climate and Community Engagement, and 2c. Financial and Operational Health. Like the strands associated with 1b-d, the strands in Essential Question 2 are means to an end. If executed well, the school has the capacity and resources, supported by diligent oversight, to accomplish its academic goals. The framework elements here can help the school and CSAS prepare for Annual Comprehensive Review or Renewal visits and, as appropriate, would contribute to the visited school's identified areas of strengths or areas for growth.

If there are no or only minor concerns around these strands a school with a very strong academic performance would be renewed. If there are one or more serious concerns then the renewal might have conditions related to the areas of concerns or even risk non-renewal.

If the school's performance is mixed or inconsistent the school's performance in the strands here will have more impact on the renewal decision. In these instances, CSAS looks at the examples of evidence linked to the indicators with these strands to make a judgment on the school's capacity for consistent improvement. The school might then be renewed with clear academic conditions that if not met in the early years of the next charter term could result in probation and lead to revocation if not successfully addressed. If the financial and operational review did not give evidence for such a judgment the school would not be renewed at that time.

Again, if the school consistently fails to meet any or most of its charter goals and/or has failed to establish a record of academic progress for students continuously enrolled at the school and/or has failed to establish a record of outperforming peer schools during its charter term it may result in a non-renewal determination.

If there are financial, operational, or governance problems that violate law or jeopardize the school's continued financial existence, the school may not be renewed even if its academic results were positive.

Essential Question 3: Is the School in Compliance with its Charter, Federal and State Law and all Applicable Regulations.
There are three strands with this Essential Question: compliance with 3a. Approved Charter and Agreement, 3b. Applicable Federal and State Law, and 3c. Applicable Regulations. NYC DOE authorized charter schools should always strive to be in full compliance with their charters and all applicable laws and regulations. That said, compliance issues may occur and should be addressed directly and in good faith as they occur. During renewal, schools should reflect on their standing, address any newly discovered issues, and/or report on progress toward full compliance. Material and substantive compliance violations that go unaddressed and/or unresolved may result in non-renewal.

Essential Question 4: What Are the School's Plans for its Next Charter Term?
There are three strands for this Essential Question: 4a. School or Model Change, 4b. Organizational Sustainability, and 4c. School or Model Improvements. This Essential Question concerns a school's plans for significant changes in its charter for the next charter term. These may include expansion, or model improvements, such as replacing a core curriculum program, and whether the school has the capacity to take on these changes successfully and, even if significant model or program changes are not being proposed, does it have the capacity to sustain its performance through the next charter term. So changes in governance or school leadership would be addressed here. Current performance concerns would be largely addressed in the previous three Essential Questions so the evaluation of the elements related to this Essential Question would not likely impact a decision to renew or not but would impact whether a change, such as a request to expand to new grades, were approved with renewal.

CSAS reserves the right to not renew a school based on current and past performance, regardless of the school's plans for its next charter term.

CSAS Monitoring Visits

Rationale

The NYC DOE CSAS team has developed a comprehensive monitoring plan for conducting ongoing oversight of schools to provide feedback on their progress toward meeting their goals and thus toward renewal. CSAS views the purpose of monitoring visits as twofold:

1. To gather data on a school's educational environment, board capacity, leadership, and operational/financial viability to be able to make informed renewal decisions; and
2. To provide schools with formative feedback and support.

For schools that demonstrate strong student progress and achievement, smooth operations, effective leadership, highly satisfied parents, effective internal controls, and most importantly, an ability to self-reflect and constantly improve, an Annual Comprehensive Review visit may not be necessary each year. Therefore, those schools that have demonstrated continued success through strong performance results, sound operational/financial practices, and strong Board capacity may not receive an Annual Comprehensive Review each year. Instead they may receive a shorter, more informal pop-in visit.

The chart below outlines the different types of visits that CSAS conducts. This section contains information on the protocols for each type of visit, the documentation required, and the potential outcomes of the visits.

Visit Type	Year of Charter	Visit Length	Additional Notes
Pop-In Visit	All (may occur in addition to or in place of an Annual Comprehensive Review)	1-3 hours	CSAS reserves the right to "pop in" to any school over the course of the year for an informal visit. These visits may be "social" pop-ins or "oversight" pop-ins. Please see pages 20-21 for more details.
Annual Comprehensive Review Visit	All (may occur in addition to or in place of a pop-in visit; typically does not occur during a renewal year, pending CSAS's discretion)	½ -1 day with potential for follow-up	All DOE-authorized schools are eligible for this visit. Please see pages 22-25 for more information.
Renewal Visit	Timing of visit varies depending on charter expiration date—typically occurs in spring of 4th year or fall of 5th year of charter term	2-3 days	All schools that are up for renewal will receive a more thorough visit from the CSAS team. Please see pages 26-32 for more information.

Pop-In Visits

Overview

The CSAS team reserves the right to conduct multiple types of pop-in visits over the course of the school year. These may include social pop-ins (including visits to non-DOE authorized schools located in DOE facilities), oversight pop-ins (2-3 hour visits for DOE-authorized schools), or additional visits to follow up on parent complaints, probationary status, or other areas of concern. School leaders may or may not be informed of visit times in advance.

Social Pop-Ins

Social pop-ins are brief and informal and usually occur during the first few weeks of instruction. For NYC charter schools that are not authorized by the DOE, pop-ins are opportunities for the CSAS team to check in with school leaders regarding operational support and co-location/facility issues at the start of the school year. For DOE-authorized charter schools, these visits are opportunities for school leadership to chat with CSAS staff about the successes and challenges of opening weeks; CSAS staff to preliminarily observe the school's educational environment and academics; and school leadership and CSAS staff to discuss the school's plans for the year. These visits are usually conducted by one to two CSAS team members and last about one hour. The CSAS team will not request any pre-visit documentation before social pop-ins, and generally will not follow up with any formal or informal communication. For NYC charter schools that are not authorized by the DOE, pop-ins are opportunities for the CSAS team to check in with school leaders regarding operational support and co-location/facility issues at the start of the school year.

Oversight Pop-Ins

Oversight pop-in visits may occur throughout the school year. Cohorts may decide to conduct an oversight pop-in at a particular school rather than a formal Annual Comprehensive Review visit if the school has recently been visited for a renewal and/or if the school demonstrates continual high levels of performance. Schools will typically be informed of a targeted week for the pop-in visit, but not of the actual date. (Cohorts will request input regarding "black-out dates" the window during which the school will be unable to host a visit due to testing, field trips, or absence of school leaders.)

Oversight pop-in visits generally consist of a meeting with school leadership and short classroom observations with an instructional leader, and conclude with a brief summary conversation. Except in exceptional circumstances or when following up with a school on probation, a formal report will not be generated in response to these visits. The CSAS team will not request any pre-visit documentation before the pop-in visit, but may ask to view documents on site. These visits are usually conducted by one to four CSAS team members and last 2-3 hours.

Protocol for Pop-In Visits

Because oversight pop-in visits are not pre-scheduled, the meeting with school leadership may include only the school leader or some of the school leadership team, depending on availability. Questions for the pop-in visit will be framed around the four essential questions of the CSAS Accountability Framework and may include questions about other documentation that the school has submitted to CSAS, such as the annual retention report.

School leaders should make teachers and assistants aware that their classrooms may be visited during the visit. School leaders should also make teachers aware that the visit is a check-in on the school's progress, not of the individuals or of individual teachers' practices. Reviewers will not provide feedback to teachers;

reviewers may speak with students while they are observing a lesson, if appropriate, but will not interrupt the lesson. Reviewers may ask students about what work they are completing during a group activity, about a recently completed task, or other questions relevant to the review. Reviewers will not provide instruction to students at any point.

Annual Comprehensive Review Visits

Overview

The NYC DOE CSAS conducts an Annual Comprehensive Review of all the charter schools it authorizes, some of which will receive an accompanying visit. The purpose of the visit is to assess progress toward the school's goals as well as the school's performance in relationship to the DOE's Accountability Framework. Unlike CSAS's pop-in visits, the Annual Comprehensive Review visit is planned in advance and requires the school to prepare documentation and set up interviews in advance.

The visit consists of classroom observations and interviews with school leadership, operations team members, administrators (e.g. Special Education & ELL coordinators, if requested), and teachers. CSAS may request a separate meeting with the school's Board, but this will generally not take place on the day of the visit. Visits usually begin with a meeting with the leadership team during which school leadership talks through their self-evaluation and members of the CSAS team asks questions, and end with a debrief during which the CSAS visit lead shares feedback from the visit. More information may be found in the sample schedule on pages 24-25.

Prior to the visit, school leaders should expect to hear from a member of their cohort team with more details about the targeted visit date for the school, a sample schedule for the day, and a list of requested documentation. Members of your cohort team will be in touch with you throughout the weeks prior to the visit to discuss the following topics:

1) Confirmation of the visit date
2) Scheduling key activities of the visit (interviews with teachers, school leaders; debrief meeting)
3) Any school questions regarding documentation, etc.
4) Directions, space accommodations and any other logistical matters

This annual review is an opportunity for CSAS to observe the school's daily practices, implementation, processes, and routines. While documentation should be available on site, the school should not collect documents for review in a location outside of where they are usually organized (except as outlined below). Although the team reviews various documents, the school should not prepare any *additional* binders or folders of information for the visit team, unless specifically requested.

Please note that the school should make available for the visit team a room of its own where it can work and discuss observations in privacy during its visit. CSAS requests the use of this room without disruption during the lunch period and the afternoon internal visit team debrief period.

After the Annual Comprehensive Review, CSAS will issue a report containing the findings of the visit. All schools will be given the opportunity to review the report for factual errors and submit requested corrections. Once CSAS has incorporated the appropriate revisions, it will finalize the reports and post to the DOE public website. These reports will be used as evidence toward renewal decision-making.

Visit Team Composition

The annual visit team is comprised of (in most cases) between two and four representatives of the CSAS office, along with other consultants or members of other Department of Education offices (such as the Division of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners) as needed. Team members focus on different areas, based on their area of expertise and knowledge base.

Protocol for Annual Comprehensive Review Visits

The leadership team meeting in the morning generally begins the visit with an opportunity for schools to answer questions from the CSAS visit team regarding their self-evaluation and other sources of data. Schools are allowed to define the composition of their leadership team for the purpose of the morning and afternoon debrief; these always include the school leader or head of school and, if the school has a formal leadership team, the CSAS prefers they all be included in the meeting if possible. However, schools sometimes choose to include additional staff, such as a director of curriculum, representative(s) from the charter management organization (CMO), if applicable, and/or consultants or coaches who have a critical support role with the school. Board members may also attend these meetings. The individuals who will be participating in the leadership team meetings should be discussed during the pre-visit phone call.

Unlike in pop-in visits, we include teacher interviews on the Annual Comprehensive Review visit schedule. Members of the visit team conduct small group interviews (generally 1-2 teachers per group) of approximately 20 minutes per interview. CSAS requests to meet with a range of teachers from different grade levels, different subjects taught, and with a range of experience / years at the school. CSAS also generally meets with the school's operations team and may request separate meetings, such as with the school's SPED coordinator or dean of students. These details will be discussed during the pre-visit phone call with the visit lead.

The protocol for classroom observations is similar to the guidelines for pop-in observations, but these visits may be longer in duration (10-20 minutes, although this may vary depending on the specific lesson and activity that students are completing). Schools should have a member of the instructional leadership team available to accompany CSAS staff on all classroom visits and debrief each observation afterward. The CSAS visit lead will review expectations for these observations with the school leader prior to the visit.

School leaders should make teachers and assistants aware that their classrooms may be visited. Review team members may review student work, lesson plans, rubrics, and other documentation present in the classroom during time slated for observations. School leaders should also make teachers aware that the visit is a check-in on the school's progress, not of individuals or of individual teachers' practices. Reviewers do not provide feedback to teachers; reviewers may speak with students while they are observing a lesson, if appropriate, but will not interrupt the lesson. Reviewers may ask students about what work they are completing during a group activity, about a recently completed task, or other questions relevant to the review.

At the end of the day, the CSAS visit team will reconvene with school leadership for a debrief meeting in which CSAS will share its preliminary findings regarding the school's performance in areas related to the Accountability Framework's four essential questions. These are generally the "headlines" of the Annual Comprehensive Review report, but may vary in number or wording in the final report. In addition, CSAS may include additional evidence from documentation or observations in the final report.

Documentation for Annual Comprehensive Review Visits

The following documents should be emailed to CSAS prior to the visit. This list may be subject to change; you should expect to hear from one of your cohort members in advance of the visit to discuss required documentation. Links to templates are available **on the CSAS website.**

1. **School Self-Evaluation Form** (use CSAS template)
2. **School Data Collection Form** (use CSAS Template)
3. **Roster of all Instructional Staff, Non-Instructional Staff, and Board Members** (use CSAS Template)
4. **School Organizational Chart**, including job titles, staff names, and lines of reporting
5. **A list of the school's fire and bus drill dates for 2013-14***

*Applicable to schools in private space ONLY

6. **School Safety Plan***
   *Applicable to schools in private space ONLY
7. **Special Education Compliance Check** (use CSAS template)
8. **Board minutes** for all meetings held up to this point during the 2013-14 school year
9. **Mid-Year Fiscal Check-In** for Year-to-Date Period Ending 12/31/13
   - Profit and Loss statement for the Year-To-Date period ending 12/31/13 (please indicate Board Approved Budget vs. Year to Date Performance and Revised Budget)
   - Statement of Cash flows Year-To-Date period ending 12/31/13
   - Balance Sheet (balances on 12/31/13)
   - Statement of Functional Expenses for Year-To-Date period ending 12/31/13

NOTE► All documents are required each year for the Annual Comprehensive Review, regardless of whether or not a school will receive a related visit.

Other Visit Documentation

The following is a list of possible documentation to be reviewed or discussed during the visit. The team reviews curricular and other documents where they are typically located, as they are normally arranged, stored or organized (except as outlined above). Again, this list is subject to change and the review team may request to see additional documentation not included in the list below.

- ☐ Attendance Policy
- ☐ Curricular maps/pacing guides – explanation of academic program
- ☐ Lesson plans
- ☐ Professional development plans
- ☐ Program information for special needs and ELL students
- ☐ Explanation of internal assessment program and any relevant samples
- ☐ Student Performance Data
- ☐ Internal satisfaction surveys
- ☐ Current building safety documents
- ☐ Staff evaluation tools and documents
- ☐ Any other relevant documentation, as requested

Annual Comprehensive Review Visit Sample Schedule

The visit schedule for any given school is dependent on their individual school schedules, the availability of staff to speak with visit team members, and other school-specific variables. CSAS reserves the right to change or modify this schedule at any point prior to or during the day of the visit.

Sample Schedule*

Time	Activity
8:00 – 8:15	Arrival
8:15-9:30	Meeting and Interview with School Leadership • Introduction and Visit Purpose (CSAS)—5 minutes • Q & A—70 minutes

9:30-12:00	Classroom Visits and Interviews with Teachers and Administrators (i.e. Special Ed./ELL Coordinators, Director of Operations, Data Manager)
12:00-1:00	Team Lunch Meeting (Schools should NOT order/buy lunch)
1:00-2:00	Flexible Time (Additional data gathering, additional meetings, and/or additional classroom visits as necessary)
2:00-2:45	Internal Debrief (DOE Staff)
2:45-3:30	Meeting and Debrief with School Leadership

*This schedule is subject to change and is meant to provide an outline of the activities to be conducted. The details of the visit at any particular school will be determined in collaboration with the Principal/School Leader during the pre-visit phone call.

**Additionally, some schools, depending on size or circumstance, may require a longer (1.5-2 day) visit.

Renewal Visits

Overview

The NYC DOE does not automatically grant charter renewal, and no charter operator is entitled to renewal. Rather, a school must prove that it has earned renewal and is worthy of continuing the privilege of educating New York City students. To make such determinations, the Department analyzes the school's renewal application, which is built around the four essential questions of the NYC DOE's Accountability Framework and includes a retrospective analysis of the school's prior track record as well as a prospective plan for the school. In reviewing this information, a school must be able to demonstrate that it can satisfy the four essential questions of the CSAS's Accountability Framework:

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 laws and regulations?
4. What are the school's plans for its next charter term?

While the academic performance of students is the foremost determining factor of a school's success, a school's ability to demonstrate an effective educational program, a financially and operationally viable organization, and a strong learning community with support from stakeholders are important factors that inform a renewal decision. For more information on how the CSAS makes renewal recommendations to the Chancellor, please see the CSAS Accountability Framework overview on pages 5-15.

Statutory Basis for Renewal

The New York State Charter Schools Act ("the Act") states the following regarding the renewal of a school's charter:

> **§2851.4**: Charters may be renewed, upon application, for a term of up to five years in accordance with the provisions of this article for the issuance of such charters pursuant to section twenty-eight hundred fifty-two of this article; provided, however, that a renewal application shall [also] include:
> (a) A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in the charter.
> (b) A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private. Such statement shall be in a form prescribed by the Board of Regents.
> (c) Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school required by subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty-seven of this article, including the charter school report cards and the certified financial statements.
> (d) Indications of parent and student satisfaction. Such renewal application shall be submitted to the charter entity no later than six months prior to the expiration of the charter; provided, however, that the charter entity may waive such deadline for good cause shown.
> (e) The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the board of regents or the board of trustees of the state university of New York, as applicable, of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program which shall be considered by the charter entity prior to approving such charter school's application for renewal. When developing such targets, the board of regents and the board of trustees of the state university of New York shall ensure (1) that such enrollment targets are comparable to the enrollment figures of such

categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the charter school is located; and (2) that such retention targets are comparable to the rate of retention of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the proposed charter school would be located.

Renewal Process Overview

This section outlines the basic sequence of events for a renewal. It is meant only to show the general structure of the renewal process. A specific timeline will be discussed during the renewal process with each individual school.

Renewal Component	Component Description
Renewal Kickoff Phone Call	A member of CSAS will discuss the process and specific timeline for the renewal process.
Renewal Application Due	The school submits the Renewal Application to CSAS.
CSAS Review and Clarification	CSAS members review the Renewal Application and, if necessary, request clarifying information from the school.
Pre-Visit Documentation Submission Due	The school submits documentation that will help the NYC DOE Renewal Inspection Team prepare for the site visit.
Renewal Site Visit	The NYC DOE Renewal Team will visit the school for 2 to 3 days to verify and augment the information presented by the school in its written application.
Public Hearing	Per the New York State Charter Schools Act, a public hearing must be held to solicit comment on the possibility of the charter renewal.
Chancellor's Decision/Report of Findings	Based on a recommendation from CSAS, the Chancellor makes a decision as to whether to recommend charter renewal, the term of the new charter, and any renewal conditions. If the Chancellor decides not to renew the charter, the decision is final and no decision is made by the Board of Regents.
Submission to the New York State Education Department (NYSED)	If the Chancellor recommends renewal, CSAS will submit a new charter agreement and a letter from the Chancellor to NYSED for review.
Renewal Decision by Board of Regents	NYSED will consider the Chancellor's recommendation for the proposed renewal charter and decide to reject or to recommend the proposed charter to the New York State Board of Regents. The Board of Regents will vote to approve or deny the proposed charter renewal agreement and, if approved, will issue a charter for the term specified.[2]

[2] In order to align charter expirations to the academic year, going forward charter expiration dates will be June 30 of a given school year. Your cohort Senior Director will discuss this as part of the renewal process.

Renewal Site Visit Overview

CSAS schedules and conducts a comprehensive 2- or 3-day visit after receiving the school's Renewal Application. The purpose of the visit is to assess the quality and performance of the school in relationship to the NYC DOE CSAS Accountability Framework. Additionally, the visit is meant to supplement and verify the information presented in the school's renewal application. The renewal visit should be viewed as one component leading to a renewal determination.

The main focus of the renewal visit is Essential Question 1: "Is the School an Academic Success?" Strands included under academic success address the following areas: Academic Attainment and Improvement; Mission and Academic Goals; Responsive Education Program; and Learning Environment. For more information on the evidence that CSAS looks at in making renewal determinations, please see the Accountability Framework on pages 5-15.

While the visit focuses on Essential Question 1, there is also on-site review of elements related to Essential Questions 2 and 3, including school governance, financial practices, stakeholder satisfaction, and compliance. Most review in these areas is completed through a thorough examination of submitted and historical documentation. These important aspects of the school provide further evidence around the goals that were set in the charter.

The renewal visit consists of 2-3 days of classroom observations, interviews with school staff, teachers and students, as well as extensive document review. The renewal team may also request additional interviews with Board members or attend scheduled Board meetings. Within a month before the full renewal team convenes at the school, the visit lead conducts a phone conference with the school leader to review the proposed visit schedule and talk through required documentation. School leaders review the proposed visit schedule, make any necessary changes, and ask any remaining questions about the visit.

The renewal visit is an opportunity for the CSAS visit team to observe the school's daily practices, implementation, processes, and routines. Similar to the protocols for Annual Comprehensive Review visits, while documentation should be available on site, the school should not collect documents for review in a location outside of where they are usually organized or prepare any additional binders of information specifically for the visit team. Also similar to the protocols for Annual Comprehensive Review visits, CSAS requests that the school make a meeting room available for the CSAS team to eat lunch and debrief without disruption.

CSAS recommends that all school staff and parents be made aware of the renewal process and of the importance of this milestone in the life of a charter school. The CSAS office will send letters to families explaining the renewal process and inviting them to submit feedback on the proposed renewal of the school. CSAS staff may also call a random selection of parents in order to gauge parents' perspectives on the school.

Visit Team Composition

The renewal visit team is comprised of (in most cases) between four and six CSAS representatives and consultants or members of other Department of Education offices (such as the Division of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners) as needed. Team members focus on different areas, based on their area of expertise and knowledge base. Additionally, district superintendents are invited to join the renewal review process if available.

Protocol for Renewal Visits

Renewal visits begin with a leadership team meeting in the morning during which CSAS asks the leadership team questions based on their renewal application and other supporting documentation. As in Annual Comprehensive Review visits, schools are allowed to define the composition of their leadership team for the purpose of the morning and afternoon debrief; these always include the school leader or head of school and, if the school has a formal leadership team the CSAS prefers they all be included in the meeting if possible. However, schools sometimes choose to include additional staff, such as a director of curriculum, representative(s) from the charter management organization (CMO), if applicable, and/or consultants or coaches who have a critical support role with the school. Board members may also attend these meetings; however, bear in mind that the renewal process does include an independently scheduled board (or Board chair) interview. The leadership meeting is usually longer on Day 1 but CSAS may request an additional morning meeting with the leadership team on Day 2 depending on the progress of the Day 1 visit.

Similar to Annual Comprehensive Review visits, teachers should be made available to meet with the visit team during individual or small group interviews. CSAS requests to meet with a range of teachers from different grade levels, different subjects taught, and with a range of experience / years at the school. CSAS will also meet with the school's operations team and may request separate meetings, such as with the school's SPED coordinator or dean of students. These details will be discussed during the pre-visit phone call with the visit lead.

In addition to teacher interviews, CSAS also asks to schedule time for student interviews during the renewal visits. This can occur during students' lunch/recess periods or at any other time of the day that is least disruptive for students. CSAS requests to meet with a range of students from different grade levels and who have spent different amounts of time at the school. Students' anonymity will be preserved and no students will be identified by name either in the renewal report or during debrief meetings with the leadership team.

The protocol for classroom observations is similar to the guidelines for Annual Comprehensive Review visit observations, but these visits are generally longer in duration (15-20 minutes, although this may vary depending on the specific lesson and activity that students are completing). Schools should have a member of the instructional leadership team available to accompany CSAS staff on classroom visits and debrief each observation afterward. The CSAS visit lead will review expectations for these observations with the school leader prior to the visit.

School leaders should make teachers and assistants aware that their classrooms may be visited for longer periods of time than on previous visits. Review team members may review student work, lesson plans, rubrics, and other documentation present in the classroom during time slated for observations. Teachers do not need to be available to speak with the visit team during classroom observations.

School leaders should also make teachers aware that the renewal visit is an evaluation of the school, not of individuals, and not of individual teachers' practices. Renewal visit team members may speak with students while they are observing a lesson. Teachers should make students aware of this possibility. The renewal report will not include names, and will make a concerted effort to protect the anonymity of all teachers and students observed.

At the end of each day, the CSAS visit team will reconvene with the school leadership for a debrief meeting. On Day 1, this debrief meeting is generally short and consists of a summary of what was observed and any additional requests for Day 2 (e.g., documentation to review, particular subjects or grade levels in which CSAS would like to do additional observations, elements of the schedule that need to be adjusted). On Day 2, the visit team will provide a debrief that includes a discussion of next steps.

Documentation for Renewal Visit

Schools are not required to submit any additional documentation for the renewal visit beyond that which is required for the renewal application. CSAS reserves the right to request specific updated or additional documentation as necessary.

Other Renewal Documentation

The following is a list of possible documentation to be reviewed during the renewal visit. While the team will be looking at various documents, the school should not prepare any additional binders of information specifically for the visit. If the team reviews documents other than those listed, they will do so where the documents reside within the school site.

- ☐ Curricular maps/pacing guides – explanation of academic program
- ☐ Lesson plans
- ☐ Professional development plans and schedules
- ☐ Program information for special needs students
- ☐ ELL program information
- ☐ Attendance policy
- ☐ Faculty meeting minutes
- ☐ Recent parent newsletters
- ☐ Explanation of internal assessment program and any relevant samples
- ☐ Student performance data
- ☐ Board minutes
- ☐ Current building safety documents: occupancy permit, fire inspection, safety inspection
- ☐ Staff evaluation tools and documents

Visit Schedule

The visit schedule for any given school is dependent on their individual school schedules, the availability of staff to speak with CSAS visit team members, and other school-specific variables. In general, schools should expect to build in time for the following:

- Meeting with school leadership team at the beginning of the visit
- Extensive classroom observations, accompanied by member of instructional leadership team
- Individual or small-group teacher interviews (mixed subjects / years of experience)
- Student interviews (mixed grades)
- Interviews with members of school administration (e.g. operations team, SPED/ELL coordinator, deans of school culture)
- Debrief meetings at the end of each visit day

Again, the CSAS visit lead will reach out to the school to confirm details of the visit and build a schedule for each day.

The renewal visit team will meet at the end of each day to discuss preliminary findings and prepare for the following day, and will then debrief with the leadership team. As discussed above, the debrief on Day 2 will be longer and will provide an opportunity for the review team to discuss the school's performance across the four essential question of the CSAS Accountability Framework.

Renewal Hearing

The renewal hearing is another important part of the renewal process. CSAS staff will reach out to the school to schedule a public hearing at the school; public notice should be distributed at least two weeks before the hearing is conducted. The school is responsible for providing hearing date, time, and location (if not at the school) to CSAS; securing an extended use permit and translation services (if needed); backpacking the hearing notice; informing staff of the hearing; posting hearing notice in school and on school website; and providing a school representative for the hearing. CSAS is responsible for compiling the hearing notice; distributing the public hearing notice to DOE Communications, Office of Public Affairs, Division of Family and Community Engagement, Office of Space Planning, and Community Education Councils; facilitating the hearing, including materials; and posting the hearing notice on the DOE website. CSAS will consider community feedback from the renewal hearing as one piece of evidence in making the renewal recommendation.

Renewal Outcomes

After the CSAS site visit, the CSAS team will release a draft report of their findings from the visit. These reports may include evidence from classroom observations, leadership interviews, assessment results, School Survey results, public hearings and other community feedback, as well as a variety of other data. Schools will be given the opportunity to correct factual errors in the report. If the CSAS determines that renewal is not warranted, the school will be informed in writing of the reasons for the non-renewal. If CSAS approves the renewal application, prior to the school's charter expiration date, CSAS will send their renewal report and recommendation along with the school's renewal application and other supporting evidence to the Board of Regents for its approval.

The CSAS team may recommend three potential outcomes for charter schools applying for renewal: full-term renewal, short-term renewal with conditions, or non-renewal. More information on each type of renewal is below.

Full-Term Renewal, With or Without Conditions

In cases where a school has demonstrated exceptional results with its students, a five-year renewal will be granted. A school must show that its program has clearly and consistently demonstrated strong academic attainment and/or consistent and significant academic progress, has demonstrated financial stability, has attained sufficient board capacity, and has an educationally sound learning environment in order to gain this type of renewal. Conditions may be attached to this type of renewal for reasons of compliance or operational concern.

Short-term Renewal with Conditions

In cases where a school is up for renewal of its initial charter and has no or two years or fewer of state-assessment results, or where a school has demonstrated mixed academic results or concerns about organizational viability, a short-term renewal with conditions may be considered. In limited circumstances a school not in its initial charter or in its initial charter with more than three years of state assessment data may be considered for a short-term renewal with conditions *if* the school's most recent academic results are very good (for example, an A or B on the NYC DOE Progress Report) while the previous year's results may have been poor (D or F).

In these cases, renewal is contingent upon changes to the prospective application and/or new charter, new performance measures, or all of these elements. These may include mandated changes to curriculum,

leadership, or board governance structure that are intended to yield improved academic outcomes during the next chartering period.

Non-Renewal

Renewal is not automatic. Schools that have not demonstrated significant progress or high levels of student achievement and/or are in violation of their charter may not be renewed.

Reporting Requirements for Chancellor-Authorized Charter Schools

The CSAS team's monitoring plan includes collecting and reviewing a variety of documentation on schools' academic performance, fiscal and organizational viability, and compliance with their charters and applicable laws. Charters authorized by other entities have their own set of reporting requirements to their own authorizers. Please reach out to your cohort's Director of Oversight with any questions, unless otherwise specified. If you are unsure which cohort your school is in and/or which Director of Oversight you should contact, please see **this cohort list**.

Unless otherwise specified, all items must be submitted to charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov. Please put your school's name in the subject line of your email. Additionally, please note that the CSAS mailbox cannot accept emails from non-DOE email addresses if they contain more than 10 megabytes worth of attachments. If you receive a bounce-back message after emailing your documents, please check to see if your email submission contains more than 10 MBs worth of attachments. If it does, please either re-size the files or re-send the submission in multiple, smaller emails.

Ongoing Reporting Requirements

The following documents MUST be sent to CSAS as applicable throughout the year.

Requirement	Notes	Submission Method	CSAS Template Required?
Criminal Incident Report	Submit to CSAS and Special Commissioner of Investigations (SCI)	Email directly to your cohort's Director of Oversight. If you are unsure of your cohort, please see **this cohort list**.	No
Requests for Charter Revisions (Material and Non-material)	Please see section on "Charter Revisions" (pages 42-43) for more information on the process for submitting official charter revisions.	Email directly to your cohort's Director of Oversight. If you are unsure of your cohort or Director of Oversight, please see **this cohort list**.	No
Board Trustee Additions and Resignations/Removals (Must be submitted within 5 business days of addition or resignation/removal)	**New Board members cannot vote until approved by CSAS.** Notifications of Board member additions must be accompanied by: 1. A **Current Resume** for the prospective new member 2. **CSAS Board Member Questionnaire** (CSAS template must be used) 3. **NYSED Disclosure of Financial Interest Form** (NYSED template, accessed via its Review Room Portal, must be used) 4. **Board minutes** indicating that the Board has	Email directly to your cohort's Director of Oversight. If you are unsure of your cohort, please see **this cohort list**.	YES. Links to CSAS templates are **here**. Link to NYSED Review Room Portal is **here**.

	approved the addition of the new member Approval of a new Board member by CSAS must be followed by submission of an updated **Board Roster** (**CSAS template** must be used).		

Other Change Notifications

Note that there are several changes to instructional approach, governance policies, leadership/Board composition, and fiscal status which charters are required to notify their authorizer about within a strict deadline:

60 days prior to occurrence:

- Change of facility

30 days prior to occurrence:

- Significant change in the Charter School's curriculum or instructional approach;
- Change in the Charter School's by-laws;
- Change in the Charter School's code of ethics; and
- Change in management agreement.

Within 5 business days of occurrence:

- Additions to or removals of members of the board of trustees;
- Hiring or dismissal of the director/principal of the Charter School;
- Execution of contracts or incurring of debt in excess of $50,000; and,
- Receipt of a summons and/or complaint in which either the Charter School or any member of the board of trustees (acting in his or her capacity as a member of the board of trustees) is named a party to the action or matter.

Required Public Postings

Effective February 2, 2012, Section 104 of the Open Meetings Law requires public bodies to give notice of all public meetings: to news media, by posting in one or more designated public locations, and by posting on the school's website when the school has the ability. Additionally, Section 103 of the Open Meetings Law requires that all documents to be discussed during at a board meeting, or any other public meeting, be **made available upon request to the public prior to or at the meeting**. This means that all documents that will be discussed in a board meeting including, but not limited to, agendas, meeting minutes, financial statements, school policies, etc. must be made available to the public. Please note that the opinion of the Committee on Open Government is that "Optimally, the record will be made available online; if that cannot be done, the record can be made available in paper form in response to a request." This law not only applies to board meetings, but any public meeting that the school holds. For more information regarding these changes in the law, please visit http://www.dos.ny.gov/coog/RecordsDiscussedatMeetings.html.

In addition, New York State statute requires that the following documents be posted and regularly updated as applicable on schools' websites:

- **2012-13 NYSED Annual report (with Board member personal contact information redacted)**
- **Audited financial statements**

Calendar of Reporting Requirements for 2013-14

This calendar includes reporting requirements **for NYC DOE-authorized schools only.** These deadlines are subject to change; however, schools will be held responsible for submitting required documents by their deadlines regardless of any changes.

Schools will be notified of any deadline changes via the **CSAS Weekly Communication**. If you wish to be added to the recipient list for the CSAS Weekly Communication, contact your cohort's Senior Director.

Please reach out to your cohort's Director of Oversight with any questions, unless otherwise specified. If you are unsure which cohort your school is in, please see **this cohort list**.

2013-14– Calendar of Reporting Requirements for Chancellor-Authorized Charter Schools ONLY			
AUGUST 1			
Requirement		**Submission Method**	**CSAS Template Required?**
2012-13 NYSED Annual Report, including Disclosure of Financial Interest Forms for all Board members**		**SED's Review Room Portal** **This must also be posted on the school's website as required by New York Charter School Law	No
SEPTEMBER 30			
Requirement	**Notes**	**Submission Method**	**CSAS Template Required?**
Project Save – School Safety Plan*	Submit one copy to CSAS and SED. *This requirement is only applicable for schools in DOE facilities.	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line. Email to: **charters@mail.nysed.gov**.	No
School Year Calendar	Submit one copy by this deadline. Re-submit this to CSAS if it is revised at any point during the course of 2013-14.	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line.	No
Copy of escrow agreement as per charter agreement	Submit one copy of either: 1. The legal escrow agreement established between the school and an attorney/law firm; or 2. The school's most current bank statement that clearly shows the established escrow minimum amount requirement of $70,000	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line.	No
Certificate of Occupancy*	*This only applies for schools not in traditional DOE space, or for schools changing facilities.	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line.	No

2013-14– Calendar of Reporting Requirements for Chancellor-Authorized Charter Schools ONLY			
Certificate of Liability Insurance		Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line.	No
2013-14 Staff Handbooks	Submit one copy by this deadline. Re-submit this to CSAS if it is revised at any point during the course of 2013-14.	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line.	No
OCTOBER 18			
Requirement	**Notes**	**Submission Method**	**CSAS Template Required?**
2013-14 Board of Trustees Meeting Calendar for 2013-14	Submit one copy by this deadline. Re-submit this to CSAS if it is revised at any point during the course of 2013-14.	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line.	No
2013-14 Board of Trustees Roster	Submit one copy by this deadline using the CSAS template. Re-submit this to CSAS if it is revised at any point during the course of 2013-14.	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line.	YES. Link to template is **here**.
Current Family & Student Handbooks, including policies on discipline, parent complaints, promotion, and graduation	Submit one copy by this deadline. Re-submit this to CSAS if it is revised at any point during the course of 2013-14. If your school disseminates policies for parent complaint, promotion, and graduation separately from policies in the Family & Student Handbook, please attach these discrete policies along with the Handbook.	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line.	No; however, all policies outlined here must be included.
Discipline Compliance Checklist	Submit one copy by this deadline using the CSAS template. Re-submit this to CSAS if it is revised at any point during the course of 2013-14.	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line.	YES. Link to template is here.
Operational Policies and Procedures	Submit one copy by this deadline. Re-submit this to CSAS if it is revised at any point during the course of 2013-14.	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line.	No

NOVEMBER 1			
Requirement	**Notes**	**Submission Method**	**CSAS Template Required ?**
Staff Fingerprint Clearance Screen Shot and Signed Assurance Form	1. Submit a screen shot from the TEACH system that shows fingerprint clearance information for all current staff members, both instructional and non-instructional. 2. Submit a hand-signed Assurance Form acknowledging the accuracy of this information.	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line.	Yes, for item 2. Link to template is **here**.
Annual Independent Financial Audit**	Include with your audit all of the following that apply: • Management Letter • Management Letter Response • Corrective Action Plan • Federal Single Audit (A-133) Form 990 Please combine into one document if possible. **Additionally, please ensure that these files are not password-protected by the auditor.** **This must also be posted on the school's website as required by New York Charter School Law	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line.	No
2012-13 NYSED Annual Report Appendix A: Progress Toward Charter Goals**	**This must also be posted on the school's website as required by New York Charter School Law	**SED's Review Room Portal**	No
DECEMBER 1			
Requirement	**Notes**	**Submission Method**	**CSAS Template Required ?**
Lottery information	Schools should submit the following: 1. Charter School Application	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.go**	No; however,

	Deadline 2. Lottery Drawing date 3. Copy of the School Application 4. School Recruitment Plan including: • Timeline of outreach and promotional activities • Communication plan (e.g., notifying public of application procedures and lottery drawing, for example) • Discussion of recruitment activities (include any significant changes from previous year) • Specific outreach activities for English language learners (ELLs) and students requiring Special Education (SPED) services • Lottery process (e.g., electronic, in person, manual, etc.) Please refer to **NYSED Guidelines on the NYS Charter School Uniform Applications** Form[3] for additional guidance on New York State requirements pertaining to charter school admissions applications.	v. Include your school's name in the subject line.	all information outlined here must be included.
JANUARY 31			
Requirement	**Notes**	**Submission Method**	**CSAS Template Required?**
Annual Comprehensive Review Documents*	***This requirement does not apply to schools undergoing the renewal process during the 2013-14 school year. If you are unsure whether or not this applies to your school, please contact your cohort's Senior Director.** Schools should submit the following: 1. **School Self-Evaluation Form** (use CSAS template) 2. **School Data Collection**	Email to: **charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov**. Include your school's name in the subject line.	YES, for items 1, 2, 3, and 7. Link to templates is here.

[3] http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/documents/NYSCSUniformAppFormDirectionstoCSforUseNov2011.pdf

	Form (use CSAS Template) 3. **Roster of all Instructional Staff, Non-Instructional Staff, and Board Members** (use CSAS Template) 4. **School Organizational Chart,** including job titles, staff names, and lines of reporting 5. **A list of the school's fire and bus drill dates for 2013-14*** *Applicable to schools in private space ONLY 6. **School Safety Plan*** *Applicable to schools in private space ONLY 7. **Special Education Compliance Check** (use CSAS template) 8. **Board minutes** for all meetings held during the 2012-13 school year and up to this point during the 2013-14 school year 9. **Mid-Year Fiscal Check-In** for Year-to-Date Period Ending 12/31/13 • Profit and Loss statement for the Year-To-Date period ending 12/31/13 (please indicate Board Approved Budget vs. Year to Date Performance and Revised Budget) • Statement of Cash flows Year-To-Date period ending 12/31/13 • Balance Sheet (balances on 12/31/13) • Statement of Functional Expenses for Year-To-Date period ending 12/31/13		

Notices of Concern, Deficiency, and Early Engagement Status

Based on the outcomes of oversight visits, documentation collected, or other data points (e.g., audits, Progress Reports, investigations), schools may be placed on early engagement status, which indicates that there is official concern about a school's performance or operations. Reasons may be related to the school's renewal, academic performance, fiscal/operational viability, and/or compliance with its charter and applicable laws. The early engagement list may be shared publicly and the associated notices may also be made publicly available.

The chart below outlines the different types of notices that CSAS may issue to schools based on the severity of the offense, and the possible outcomes/consequences of each type of notice.

* Please note that the statuses outlined in the table below are not step-by-step processes. CSAS reserves the right to place schools at any status without going through each potential status in sequential order. For example, a Notice of Concern may be elevated to a Notice of Probation or a school may receive a Notice of Probation without receiving earlier notices, based on the severity of the offense. CSAS also reserves the right to determine what steps schools need to take in order to change or exit early engagement status.

Status*	**Possible Triggers**	**Possible Outcomes / Consequences**
Notice of Concern	Evidence of weak performance or lack of appropriate fiscal/operational oversight	Letter to the Board Chair and School Leader detailing areas of concern and expected action(s)
Notice of Deficiency	Failure to comply with applicable laws Failure to comply with conditions of the charter	Letter to the Board and School Leader detailing areas of deficiency Depending on the situation, CSAS may require a response letter from the Board and School Leader, outlining steps and timeline for correcting the identified deficiency/deficiencies.
Notice of Probation	Serious violation of the law Material and substantial violation of the charter, including fiscal mismanagement. Academic performance has violated or risks violating the standards set forth in section 2855(1)(a) of the Charter Law.	Letter to the Board and School Leader to serve as notification of probationary status and terms of probation Creation of a Remedial Action Plan (RAP), as per Article 56 (with specific improvement objectives and timelines) Board and School Leader to monitor and report on progress against RAP objectives.
Notice of Extended Probation	Failure to fully meet the terms outlined in the primary probation notice and/or Remedial Action Plan, despite meaningful and timely progress	Letter to the Board and School Leader to serve as notification of extended probationary status and terms of extended probation

	Extra time frame needed to evaluate the effect of made changes	CSAS to review and modify RAP, when necessary
Notice of Intent to Revoke	Serious violation of the law Material and substantial violation of the charter, including fiscal mismanagement. Academic performance has violated or risks violating the standards set forth in section 2855(1)(a) of the Charter Law. Finding by CSAS that probationary status would not be the appropriate intervention for the school. or Violation of the terms and conditions of probation or Remedial Action Plan.	Notice stating reasons for proposed revocation to Board and School Leader Opportunity for the school to be heard in response to the notice Recommendation to Chancellor to revoke/not revoke
Notice of Revocation	CSAS office review results in recommendation to revoke	Letter stating reasons for revocation to Board and School Leader Chancellor's decision to revoke charter

The New York State Charter Schools Act ("the Act") states the following regarding the revocation of a school's charter:

S 2855. Causes for revocation or termination
1. The charter entity, or the Board of Regents, may terminate a charter upon any of the following grounds:
(a) When a charter school's outcome on student assessment measures adopted by the Board of Regents falls below the level that would allow the Commissioner to revoke the registration of another public school, and student achievement on such measures has not shown improvement over the preceding three school years:
(b) Serious violations of law;
(c) Material and substantial violation of the charter, including fiscal mismanagement; or
(d) When the public employment relations board makes a determination that the charter school demonstrates a practice and pattern of egregious and intentional violations of subdivision one of section two hundred nine-a of the civil service law involving interference with or discrimination against employee rights under article fourteen of the civil service law; or
(e) Repeated failure to comply with the requirement to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program pursuant to targets established by the board of regents or the board of trustees of the state university of New York, as applicable. Provided, however, if no grounds for terminating a charter are established pursuant to this section other than pursuant to this paragraph, and the charter school demonstrates that it has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students, including outreach to parents and families in the surrounding communities, widely publicizing the lottery for such school, and efforts to academically support such students in such charter school, then the charter entity or board of regents may retain such charter.

Charter Revisions

Charter schools seeking to make changes to the programs, policies, and procedures outlined in their charters are required to request a charter revision from their authorizer and to receive approval before those changes may be implemented at the school. These revisions may be material or non-material in nature. Please see below guidance for more information on differentiating between a material and non-material change, and on the proper process for submitting each type of revision request.

Revision Request Timeline Constraints

Most charter revision requests can be made on a rolling basis; however, revisions involving enrollment increases, changes to grades served, or the district of location must be submitted to the NYC DOE CSAS by **December 15 of the academic year prior to when the proposed change will be implemented**.

However, if a charter school is co-located in an NYC DOE building and wishes to make one of the revisions listed above, the CSAS must receive the revision request by **July 15 of the year before implementation** to ensure that the subsequent space planning and relevant public engagement processes accord with the timeframes required by local and state regulations. For example, if a co-located school would like to make a revision to expand its enrollment by one section per grade beginning in the fall of 2015, the school would need to submit this request before July 15, 2014.

Material vs. Non-material Revisions

Some changes are considered material in nature; these changes require initial approval from the NYC DOE CSAS as well as subsequent approval from the Board of Regents through a vote at one of its monthly meetings. The schedule of Board of Regents meetings can be found at: http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/dates.html .

Additionally, these changes must be put before the school's community through a public hearing to collect comments on the proposed change(s). Material changes include, but are not limited to:

- Educational philosophy, mission, or vision
- Governance or leadership structure that fundamentally effects school's mission, vision, educational philosophy, organizational structure or educational program
- Curriculum model or school design, if fundamentally inconsistent with those in current charter
- Name of the school
- Maximum enrollment (as set forth in current charter)
- Grade configuration or grades served
- Location, if the move involves relocation to another district (in New York City, usually interpreted to be a change in borough)
- Hiring or termination of a management company

Non-material changes and revisions that do not fundamentally alter the school's mission, organizational structure, or educational program must still be submitted to, and be approved by, the NYC DOE CSAS, and then submitted to the Commissioner of Education for consideration and final approval. Non-material changes do not necessitate a public hearing to solicit comment from the school community. Non-material changes include, but are not limited to:

- Supplemental curriculum
- School schedule (length of school year, school week, or school day)
- Student discipline policy/code of ethics or conduct
- Admissions policy or enrollment process

- Personnel policies, complaint policies, student/family/teacher handbooks
- Board of Trustees by-laws
- Goals/Accountability Plan

Revision Request Process

Despite the parameters outlined above, in practice many charter revision requests straddle the line between material and non-material. Because of this, schools that are considering making a material or non-material revision to their charter should begin by contacting their cohort's Director of Oversight to confirm which category the revision falls under.

Once that determination is made, charter revisions follow a clear process:

1. The proposed charter revision is put to a vote during a Board meeting. The school's Board votes to approve or deny the proposed revision and records this in its minutes.
2. The school's Board submits the Board-approved charter revision request to the NYC DOE CSAS including the following components:
    a. A **cover letter** that both outlines a rationale for the revision and includes the following additional information: the contact person's name, position, telephone number, and email; the school name and location; the date/year of school's original charter; the date(s)/year(s) of school's renewal(s); the description of the change(s) being requested (how it differs from the current charter)
    b. **Written indication** (either in Board minutes or in an email) that the person submitting the revision request, if not a Board member, has been authorized to do so by the Board.
    c. The **Board minutes** that record the revision vote
    d. **Revised pages of the current charter**, which show how all affected sections of the current charter will change. Use ~~strikethroughs~~ for deleted text. Use **bold** or *italics* for added text. Submit actual revised pages, <u>not</u> a summation of revised text.
3. **<u>Material Revisions Only</u>**: The school conducts a public hearing in collaboration with the NYC DOE CSAS. The hearing must be held in the CSD where the school is located, and public notice should be distributed at least two weeks before the hearing is conducted.
    a. **School Responsibilities for Hearing:** Providing hearing date, time, and location to the CSAS; securing an extended use permit and translation services (if needed); backpacking the hearing notice; informing staff of the hearing; posting hearing notice in school and on school website; providing a school representative for the hearing
    b. **CSAS Responsibilities for Hearing:** Compiling the hearing notice; distributing the public hearing notice to DOE Communications, Office of Public Affairs, Division of Family and Community Engagement, Office of Space Planning, and Community Education Councils; facilitating the hearing, including materials; posting the hearing notice on the CSAS website
4. The NYC DOE CSAS approves or denies the revision request. Notification is sent to the head of the school's Board and the school's leader.
5. If the request is approved, the NYC DOE CSAS sends its approval to the Commissioner of Education and/or the Board of Regents via the State Education Department for consideration and final approval. The State Education Department will notify the NYC DOE about approval of revision requests.

Acknowledgement of the revision is signed by both the school and the NYC DOE CSAS and kept on file.

Conclusion

The New York State Charter Schools Act of 1998 granted charter schools more autonomy than traditional public schools over their instructional and operational programs in exchange for increased accountability. The NYC DOE CSAS team is dedicated to meeting this challenge by respecting charters' autonomy while simultaneously holding DOE-authorized schools to meet the high standards expected by charter law and outlined in school charters.

Charter schools commit to meeting the purposes of the Charter Schools Act: improving student learning, increasing learning opportunities for all students (and especially those students at risk of academic failure), encouraging the use of different and innovative teaching methods, creating new professional opportunities, providing parents and students with expanded choice, and developing a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding themselves accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results. The CSAS team takes these responsibilities seriously. CSAS believes that the renewal process officially begins as soon as a school is granted its charter: schools should always be working to build a strong track record of success and striving to reflect and improve on past successes and failures. Through a comprehensive monitoring system that includes regular visits and documentation review, CSAS can provide schools with frequent, consistent feedback on the road toward renewal.

If you have questions about any of the information in this document, please contact the Director of Oversight for your cohort. We look forward to working with you to increase high-quality school options for students and families in New York City.