



Charter Schools Accountability and Support  
2012-2013

**ACHIEVEMENT FIRST ENDEAVOR CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

**2012 – 2013 SCHOOL YEAR**

## Part 1: School Overview & History

### School Overview and History

Achievement First Endeavor Charter School (AF Endeavor) is an elementary, middle, and high school serving approximately 672 students<sup>1</sup> in grades K-2 and 5-11 during the 2012-2013 school-year. It opened in 2006-2007, and is under the terms of its second charter. The school's projected full grade span is K-12, which it's expected to reach in 2014-2015.<sup>2</sup> The school is located in private<sup>3</sup> facilities in Brooklyn within CSDs 13 and 17.<sup>4</sup> The elementary (grades K-2) and middle (grades 5-8) schools are currently housed in a private facility in District 13, and the high school (grades 9-11) is currently housed in a separate private facility in District 17.<sup>5</sup>

The table below details the school's performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report.<sup>6</sup>

**Progress Report Results for Achievement First Endeavor**

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall	A	C	A	A
Progress	A	C	A	A
Performance	A	C	B	A
Environment	A	B	A	A
Closing the Achievement Gap	4.5	2.5	7	4.3

**High School Progress Report Results for Achievement First Brooklyn High School**  
(which included Achievement First Endeavor)

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

Achievement First Endeavor Charter School enrolls new students in grades K through 2, 5, 6, and 9 through 11. There were 1,396 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2013 lottery.<sup>7</sup>

The average attendance rate for the 2012-2013 school-year to date is 97.9%.<sup>8</sup> The average attendance rate for the 2012-2013 school year to date is 97.7% for the elementary school (grades K-4), 97.8% for the middle school (grades 5-8), and 98.3% for the high school (grades 9-11).<sup>9</sup>

On the 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey, the school scored Above Average on the Safety & Respect section, Above Average on the Communication section, Average on the Engagement section, and Above

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

<sup>2</sup> NYC DOE internal data.

<sup>3</sup> NYC DOE internal data.

<sup>4</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

<sup>5</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

<sup>6</sup> NYC DOE Progress Report – <http://schools.nyc.gov/progressreport>

<sup>7</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form.

<sup>8</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form.

<sup>9</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form.

Average on the Academic Expectations section. Sixty-four percent of the school's parents, 93.0% of the school's teachers, and 97.0% of the school's eligible students responded to the survey.<sup>10</sup>

AF Endeavor was renewed in 2010-2011 for a period of 5 years consistent with the terms of its renewal application, with the following conditions:

- The school must demonstrate improved student achievement by scoring in the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal, in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal, and in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> years after renewal.

The current school Principal for the elementary school, Stephanie Blake, has been at the school since it opened in 2010. The middle school leadership, including the Principal (Tom Kaiser), Director of Operations, Dean of Students, Director of Student Life, and Math Academic Dean, remains the same as the previous school year. The current school leadership for the high school, including the Principal (Paul Adler), Academic Dean of Special Services (Melissa Duphiney), Academic Dean of Math, Dean of Upper School and Director of School Operations, has been in the same roles for the past year. However, the high school does have a new Academic Dean of Humanities and a new Dean of Culture.

The Achievement First Endeavor Charter School is part of the Achievement First (AF) Network, a Charter Management Organization (CMO). The CMO provides an overarching Chief Academic Officer and a Regional Superintendent, school support, teacher and staff recruitment, talent development, back office support, curriculum and assessment, among other services. The school pays a management fee of 10% of its public revenue to the CMO for these services.

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<sup>10</sup> NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

## Part 2: Annual Review Process Overview

### Rating Framework

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability & Support Team (CSAS) performs a comprehensive review of each NYC DOE-authorized charter school to investigate three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization; and is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations? To ascertain matters of sustainability and strategic planning, CSAS inquires about the school's plans for its next charter term.

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

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

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

### Essential Questions

#### *Is the school an academic success?*

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

- Overall NYC DOE Progress Report score,
- New York State ELA and Math results and/or New York State Regents exams,
- ELA and Math proficiency compared to the district for elementary and middle schools, and graduation rates compared to the city for high schools,
- New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) or other approved alternate assessments, and
- Performance data pertaining to college and career readiness.

Academic success is rated as **Demonstrated, Partially Demonstrated, or Not Yet Demonstrated**. If a school does not yet have a NYC DOE Progress Report, it is rated as Not Yet Demonstrated.

#### *Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?*

To assess whether a school is a fiscally sound, viable organization, CSAS focuses on three areas: Governance Structure & Organizational Design, School Climate & Community Engagement, and Financial Health. This includes an analysis of the school's audited financial statements, based on the NACSA (National Association of Charter School Authorizers) Financial Framework<sup>11</sup>.

CSAS also considers a variety of supporting materials and data, including but not limited to the following:

- Board of Trustee bylaws,
- Board of Trustee meeting minutes,
- Annual Reports submitted by schools to New York State Education Department (NYSED),
- NYC DOE School Survey,
- Data collection sheets provided by schools,
- Student, staff, and Board turnover,

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance\\_Framework\\_Fall\\_2012\\_Draft.pdf](http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance_Framework_Fall_2012_Draft.pdf), page 38-59

- Authorized enrollment numbers, and
- Annual financial audits.

A school's Governance Structure & Organizational Design and Climate & Community Engagement are rated as **Developed, Partially Developed, or Not Yet Developed**. A school's Financial Health is rated to indicate whether there are concerns about the near-term financial obligations and the financial sustainability of the school.

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

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

**Staff Representatives**

The following staff representatives participated in the review of this school's documents as detailed above:

- Daree Lewis, DOE
- Maria Campo, DOE
- Jorge Cruz, DOE

## Part 3: Findings

### Summary of Findings

Based on CSAS review, the following findings were made. To date, AF Endeavor:

- has demonstrated academic achievement and progress for its elementary and middle grades. (pp. 7-10),
- has demonstrated academic achievement and progress for its high school grades. (pp. 7-8, 12),
- has a developed governance structure and organizational design. (p. 13),
- has developed a stable school culture. (p. 13),
- is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices. (p.14),
- is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others (p.15),
- plans to launch its third grade programming, focus on writing excellence in the middle grades and spend more time on college-level texts in high school. (p.16).

This review included a document review, a self-evaluation completed by the school, and follow up communication via phone and email.

## **Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?**

To date, the school has demonstrated academic achievement and progress for its elementary and middle grades.

- Achievement First Endeavor Charter School was renewed in 2010-2011 for a period of 5 years, which is consistent with the terms of its renewal application, with the following conditions: The school must demonstrate improved student achievement by scoring in the 25th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal (2010-2011), in the 50th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal (2011-2012), and in the 75th percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th years after renewal. The school has been successful at reaching this measure for the first two years of the charter term.
- In 2011-2012, the school's performance on New York State assessments demonstrated academic achievement and progress:
  - Achievement:
    - In 2011-2012, 49.4% of its students in its tested grades (3-8) scored at Level 3 or 4 on the New York State ELA assessment and 91.8% of its students scored at Level 3 or 4 in the New York State Math assessment.
    - For the past four years, the school's overall 2011-12 proficiency scores were substantially above its district of location, CSD 17. In 2011-12 the school outperformed its district by 21 percentage points in ELA and by 42.9 percentage points in Math.
    - The school earned a grade of A for Performance on its 2011-2012 Progress Report.
  - Progress:
    - Overall proficiency scores increased by 14.8 percentage points in ELA and 10.5 percentage points in Math from the prior year: 34.2% to 49.0% in ELA and 81.3% to 91.8% in Math.
    - The school received an Overall Grade of A on its 2011-12 NYC DOE Progress Report, with an A in Student Progress. The school's Student Progress grade has been an A for the last two years of the school's charter term.
- Achievement First Endeavor received 4.3 Closing the Achievement Gap points on its 2011-2012 Elementary/Middle School Progress Report.

AF Endeavor students in grades 9-11 are part of Achievement First Brooklyn High School, which has three years of ungraded NYC DOE High School Progress Reports. It has demonstrated academic achievement and progress for its high school grades.

- Achievement First Brooklyn High School has not yet received a graded NYC DOE High School Progress Report because its first graduating cohort does not graduate until the end of the 2012-2013 school year. Its first graded PR will be released in the fall of 2013 for the 2012-2013 school year.
- As reported in its 2011-2012 NYC DOE High School Progress Report (ungraded), Achievement First Brooklyn High School students took seven Regents exams, in English, Math, Science and History with the following test-taker results:
  - Integrated Algebra, 96% passing
  - Geometry, 97% passing
  - Comprehensive English, 100% passing
  - U.S. History, 100% passing
  - Global History, 94% passing
  - Chemistry, 67% passing
  - Physics, 94% passing.
- According to the same report, among Comprehensive English Regents exam takers 86% achieved the CUNY-identified college-ready threshold; among Math Regents exams takers 50% of Integrated Algebra and 34% of Geometry achieved the college-ready threshold.
- According to the same report, 86.2% of first-year and 84.5% second-year students at Achievement First Brooklyn High School earned 10+ credits and 90.5% of third year students earned 10+ credits.

#### Progress Toward Attainment of Academic Goals<sup>12</sup>

- The school, according to its 2011-2012 Annual Report to the New York State Education Department, met 8 of 12 of its applicable elementary/middle school grades-specific Progress Toward Attainment of Academic Goals as identified in the school's charter.
- According to the same report, the school also met 1 of 1 applicable high school-specific Progress Toward Attainment of Academic Goals as identified in the school's charter.

Based on document review, the following was noted:

- School leadership reported that the Achievement First Network has updated all interim assessments to align with the Common Core in Reading and Math.
- School leadership reported that at the high school level, there are differentiated goals and teaching approaches for all learners. Additionally, there are strategic intervention groups for our lowest skilled readers, writers and mathematicians.

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<sup>12</sup> Goal analysis is considered a neutral point for the purposes of this evaluation.

**Achievement First Endeavor Charter School**  
**Percent of Students Scoring Level 3/4 - Whole School**

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School		27.1	34.2	49.0
CSD 13*		31.5	34.6	38.9
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School		58.9	81.3	91.8
CSD 13*		37.7	45.1	48.9

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

**Percent of Students Scoring Level 3/4 - By Grade**

Grade 3

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School				
CSD 13*				
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School				
CSD 13*				

Grade 4

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School				
CSD 13*				
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School				
CSD 13*				

Grade 5

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School		27.7	24.4	46.7
CSD 13*		42.1	45.9	51.9
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School		51.2	74.4	82.2
CSD 13*		51.1	57.6	60.5

## Grade 6

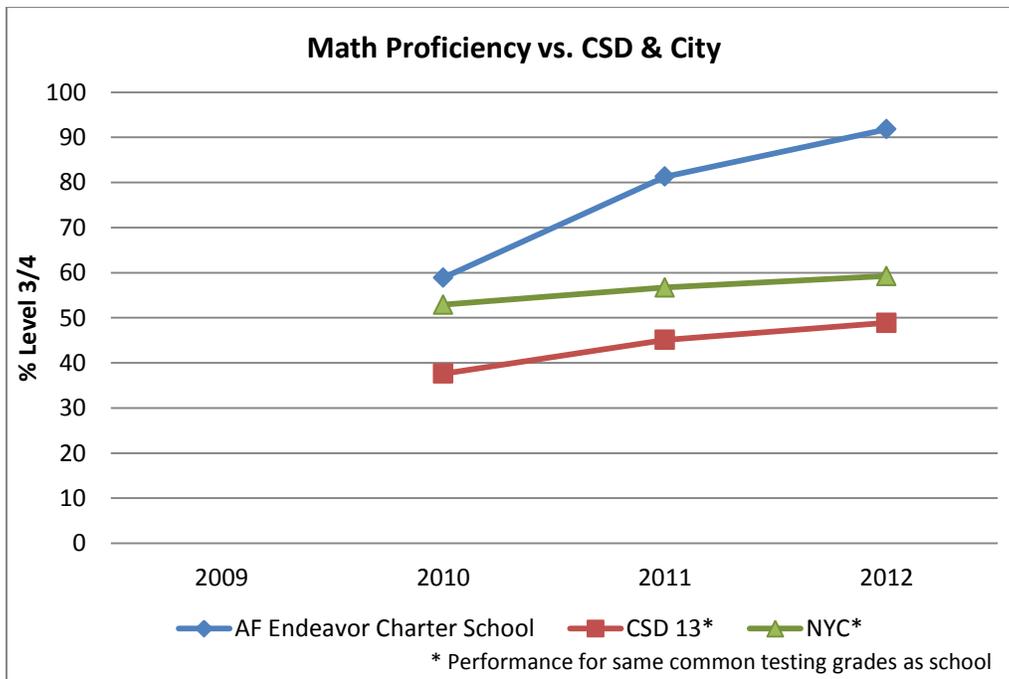
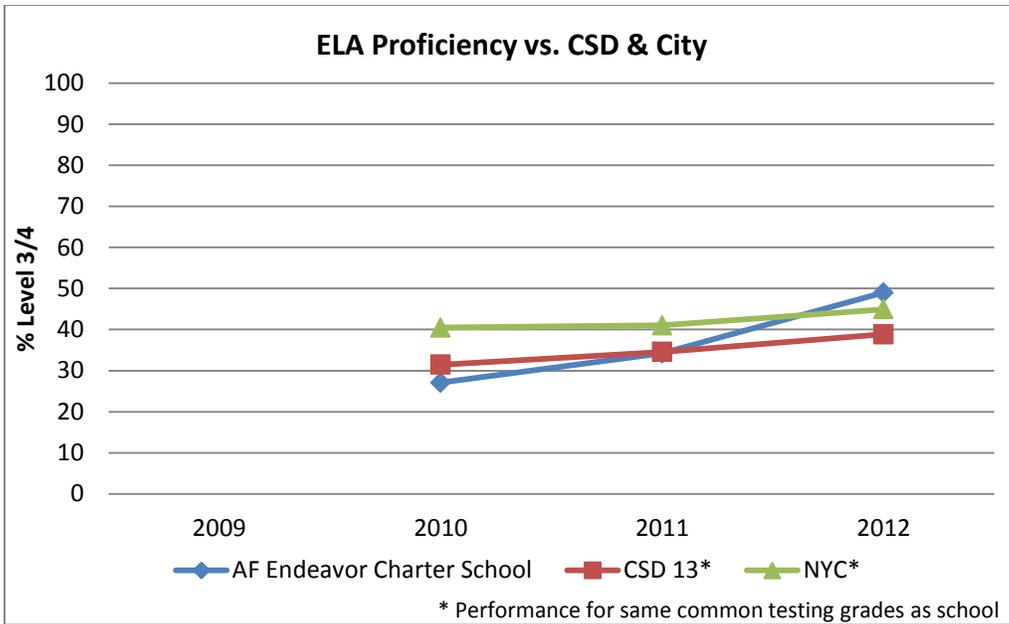
<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School		18.3	47.4	49.4
CSD 13*		27.3	36.6	37.7
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School		48.2	86.8	94.3
CSD 13*		37.9	42.4	46.1

## Grade 7

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School		31.8	30.6	54.8
CSD 13*		29.9	27.5	35.7
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School		74.2	72.6	97.3
CSD 13*		36.4	43.1	47.1

## Grade 8

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School		32.4	35.0	43.2
CSD 13*		26.6	28.2	30.1
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First Endeavor Charter School		66.2	93.3	97.7
CSD 13*		25.2	37.4	41.8



<b>2011-2012 High School Regents Performance Results</b>			
<b>Achievement First HS</b>			
<b>Regents Exams</b>	<b>Average Score</b>	<b>% Passing</b>	<b>% at college ready threshold</b>
<b>Mathematics</b>			
Integrated Algebra	79	96%	50%
Geometry	77	97%	34%
Algebra 2/Trig	.	.	.
<b>ELA</b>			
English	84	100%	86%
<b>Social Studies</b>			
US History	90	100%	
Global History	84	94%	
<b>Science</b>			
Chemistry	68	67%	
Physics	78	94%	
Earth Science	.	.	
Living Environment	.	.	
<b>Languages</b>			
Languages Other Than English	.	.	

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

### **Governance Structure & Organizational Design**

To date, the Board of Trustees has a developed governance structure and organizational design.

- There are eight voting members, more than the required number, with two officers and a parent representative.
- A review of the Board minutes submitted by the time of the review indicated that the Board was on track to have the six meetings required by the charter and bylaws.
- Over the school year, the Board has had no turnover, with five of the eight members serving for more than three years.
- There are clear lines of accountability between Board and school leadership as evidenced by minutes, organizational charts and staff rosters.
- The finance committee is active, as per the minutes. As per the school, the Education & Accountability and Principal Evaluation committees are active, but activities and reports are not documented in the minutes.
- The Board consistently achieved quorum at each meeting, as recorded in meeting minutes.

### **School Climate & Community Engagement**

To date, the school has developed a stable school culture.

- According to the school's ACR Data Collection Forms, 12 of 65 instructional staff from the end of the 2011-2012 school year did not return or were asked not to return, for an instructional staff attrition rate of 18.5%
- On its 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey, AF Endeavor, compared to K-12 schools citywide, earned an Above Average satisfaction results for the Academic Expectations, Communication and Safety & Respect sections, and Average results on the Engagement section.
- The school's survey participation results were above citywide averages for all three constituencies: Parents (64% to 53%), Teachers (93% to 82%) and Students (97% to 82%).
- According to the school's 2011-2012 Annual Report to the New York State Department of Education, student attrition over the 2011-2012 school year was about 17%.
- The school leadership for the elementary, middle and high school grades remained stable.

#### **Progress Toward Attainment of Accountability Goals<sup>13</sup>**

- Student daily attendance (2012- Feb 2013) is 97.7% for the Elementary grades, 97.8% for the Middle School grades and 98.3% in High School, all of which are higher than the CSD average. The school is exceeding the attendance goal which is outlined in the school's charter.

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<sup>13</sup> Goal analysis is considered a neutral point for the purposes of this evaluation.

## **Financial Health**

Overall, to date, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices.

Based on the school's 2011-2012 Audited Financial Statements:

- The school is in a strong position to meet all of its liabilities in the next 12 months.
- The school will continue to require philanthropic contributions to cover all expenses until it achieves full scale.
- The school is meeting its enrollment target, indicating a stable budget.
- The school is meeting its debt obligation.
- The school is operating at a surplus, indicating an ability to create a strong reserve to support ongoing growth.
- The school debt-to-asset ratio indicates that it has more assets than it has liabilities.
- The school has a cash flow that trended downward from FY 2011 to FY 2012.
- An independent audit performed showed no material findings.

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

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

The Board is in compliance with:

- Board membership size falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws.
- The Board has held the required number of board meetings.
- The Board makes Board minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to and at Board meetings by posting them temporarily on the school website.
- All Board members have submitted financial disclosure forms, included in the school's 2011-2012 Annual Report, and do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.
- The Board has provided timely submission of accountability reporting documents on time.

The school is in compliance with:

- The school has submitted required documentation for the safety plan and AED/CPR certification compliance.
- The school has submitted required documentation for the safety plan, compliance with AED/CPR certification, teacher certification, and appropriate insurance documents.
- The school has all appropriate and required insurance documents.
- All staff has the required fingerprint clearance.
- Staff is either certified or highly qualified, and those without a certification of designation fall under the 30%/5 requirement.

The school is out of compliance with:

- Some staff members do not have the required fingerprint clearance.
- The school's current immunization rate is below the required threshold established by the NYC Department of Health of 98.8%.
- The school has not submitted evidence of required escrow account.

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

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

- The school will be launching its 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The school reported that the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade model will differ from the K-2 model as it will have departments for core subjects. There will be 1 reading teacher, 1 writing teacher, 1 math teacher, and 1 science/Social Studies teacher that will teach their subject class to 4 sections of students. There will also be 3 special education/support teachers for grade 3 to serve the population students with ICT placements.
- In the middle grades, the school leadership reported that they will continue toward the goal of matching the achievement levels of the state's top school districts by focusing on creating a common vision for writing excellence.
- At the high school level, leadership indicated a need to spend more time in the first and second years of high school on college-level texts.

## Part 4: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

### The CSAS Accountability Framework

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

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

#### 1. Is the School an Academic Success?

##### 1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

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

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

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

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

##### 1b. Mission and Academic Goals

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

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

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

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

### **1c. Responsive Education Program**

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

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

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

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

### **1d. Learning Environment**

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

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

- Provide opportunities for students to actively engage in their own learning and in the life of the school
- Have a formal or informal character education, social development, or citizenship program that provides opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens

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

- School mission and articulated values
- Student management plan (code of conduct, school values, discipline policy, positive incentive system, etc.)
- Student attendance and retention rates
- Student discipline data
- DOE School Survey student results
- DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results
- Self-administered satisfaction survey results
- Leadership, staff, and, if appropriate, student interviews
- Classroom observations
- Scheduled student engagement opportunities (e.g., student advisory, internships, student government, student led conferences, peer tutoring, peer mediation, etc.)

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

### 2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

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

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

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

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

### 2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

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

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

- DOE School Survey satisfaction parent, teacher, and, if appropriate student results
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs

## **2c. Financial and Operational Health**

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

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

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

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

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

#### 3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

- Implemented the key features of their charter as described in the original charter and as modified in approved revisions to their charter, including but not limited to mission, academic program, school organization, grade configuration, enrollment, goals, etc.
- Ensure that update-to-date charter is publicly available to staff, parents, and school community
- Implemented comprehensive academic, behavioral, oversight, management, and operational policies and procedures that are substantially aligned with the charter and the school's stated mission and vision

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

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

#### 3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have:

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

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

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

#### 3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

- Safe and secure facilities with no significant compliance concerns with applicable regulations
- Consistently clean annual audits, up-to-date escrow accounts, and have completed all other financial reporting as required
- Boards that meet requirements for size, meeting frequency, public notice, applicable open-meeting and conflict of interest regulations, as well as complying with NYC DOE CSAS's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members.
- Informed NYCDOE 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

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

##### **4a. School Expansion or Model Replication**

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

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

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

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

##### **4b. Organizational Sustainability**

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

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

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

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

#### **4c. School or Model Improvements**

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

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

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

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