



Charter School Renewal Report  
Charter Schools Accountability and Support  
2012-2013

**BROOKLYN ASCEND CHARTER SCHOOL  
RENEWAL REPORT**

**2012-13 SCHOOL YEAR**

## Part 1: Executive Summary

### **School Overview and History:**

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School is an elementary/middle school serving approximately 725 students from kindergarten through sixth grade in the 2012-2013 school year.<sup>1</sup> The school includes the Lower School, which serves grades K-4, and the Middle School, which serves grades 5-6. The school opened in 2008 with grades K-2. The school is under the terms of its first charter and is has expanded to grades K-6 during its current term, which expires January 14, 2013. If approved for renewal, the school is projected to reach its full grade span, K-12, during the 2018-2019 school year.<sup>2</sup> The school is currently housed in a private facility in District 18.<sup>3</sup> The school enrolls new students in grades K-7. There were 3,800 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2012 lottery.<sup>4</sup> Below are the school's 2012 Progress Report grade and overall assessment results and demographic data for the school and CSD.

The average attendance rate for the 2011-2012 school year to date was 96.7%.<sup>5</sup> The school scored Average on the Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement, and Safety & Respect sections of the NYC DOE School Survey in 2011-2012; 66% of the school's parents responded to the survey, and 80% of the school's teachers.<sup>6</sup> The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.<sup>7</sup>

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School is part of the Ascend Learning network, a charter management organization (CMO). The CMO provides back office support, curriculum assessment; student assessment data gathering, and technology support, among other services.

	2011-12 PR overall grade	2012 ELA, 3+%	2012 Math, 3+%	FRL %	SWD %	ELL %
School <sup>8</sup>	A	69.1	83.9	79	8.7	0.4
CSD 18 <sup>9</sup>		48	55	71.6	14.7	5

### **Renewal Recommendation:**

In order for a charter school to be renewed it must demonstrate that it has earned renewal and is worthy of continuing the privilege of educating New York City students. While the academic performance of students is the foremost determining factor of a school's success, a school's

<sup>1</sup> Self-reported by school on Renewal Application Renewal Visit Data Collection Form dated 8/31/2012

<sup>2</sup> NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

<sup>3</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

<sup>4</sup> Self-reported by school on Renewal Application Renewal Visit Data Collection Form dated 8/31/2012

<sup>5</sup> Self-reported by school on Renewal Application Renewal Visit Data Collection Form dated 8/31/2012

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

<sup>7</sup> New York State Education Department - [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov)

<sup>8</sup> Proficiency rates from <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>.

Demographics from ATS 11/20/12.

<sup>9</sup> CSD ELA and Math data from NYC DOE website and measures average performance of common grades only. Demographics from ATS 11/26/12 data pull.

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.

Based on the evaluation of the renewal application, renewal visit, historical annual reports and visits, performance on Progress Reports, comparisons to the CSD, and other factors, the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Accountability & Support team (NYC DOE CSAS) recommends a **Full-Term Renewal** of the charter for Brooklyn Ascend.

## Part 2: Renewal Decision and Findings

### **Renewal Framework:**

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.

The Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team may recommend four potential outcomes for charter schools applying for renewal: full-term renewal, renewal with conditions, short-term renewal, or non-renewal.

### ***Full-Term Renewal***

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 yielded strong student performance and progress, has met the majority of its charter goals, has demonstrated financial stability, has attained sufficient board capacity, and has an educationally sound learning environment in order to gain this type of renewal.

### ***Renewal with Conditions***

In cases where a school has demonstrated mixed academic results or concerns about organizational viability, renewal is contingent upon changes to the prospective application or new charter, new performance measures, or both. These may include changes to curriculum, leadership, or board governance structure that are intended to yield improved academic outcomes during the next chartering period.

### ***Short-Term Renewal***

In cases where a school is up for renewal of its initial charter and has fewer than two years of state-assessment results, a renewal of three-years or fewer may be considered. In very 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 if the school's most recent year results are 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).

### ***Non-Renewal***

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

### **NYC DOE CSAS Renewal Recommendation:**

Based on the evaluation of the renewal application, renewal visit, historical annual reports and visits, performance on Progress Reports, comparisons to the CSD, and other factors, the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Accountability & Support team (NYC DOE CSAS) recommends a **Full-Term Renewal** of the charter for Brooklyn Ascend for reasons that include the following:

1. The first listed objective of charter schools, in accordance with the NY Charter Schools Act of 1998, is to improve student learning and achievement (Education Law Section 2850(2)(a)).  
Brooklyn Ascend has demonstrated student progress and achievement for the following reasons:
  - i. The school received an A grade on 2011-12 Progress Report, including an A in the Performance and Progress sections.

- ii. 83% of students scored at/above Level 3<sup>10</sup> on NYS Math exam, compared to only 55% in the school's district (comparing common testing grades only).<sup>11</sup>
- iii. The school has implemented initiatives to continue student achievement growth in ELA. From 2010-11 to 2011-12 the percent of students scoring L3/4 increased 15 percentage points to roughly 68%, placing ELA performance in top 15% of peer schools.<sup>12</sup> Relevant grades in the school's district only averaged 48% proficiency.<sup>13</sup>
- iv. The school has made progress towards achieving its charter goals, meeting 8 of 9 in this most recent year of the charter, while making progress on the ninth goal.<sup>14</sup>

2. In accordance with Education Law Section 2852(2)(b), a charter applicant must demonstrate the ability to operate the school in a educationally and fiscally sound manner.

Brooklyn Ascend has proven to be an effective and viable organization:

- i. Leadership team has added additional members to provide more consistent support of instruction and professional growth for teachers.
- ii. Organizational structure provides a variety of resources for teachers to ensure quality instruction and school leadership takes immediate action to correct subpar performance of teachers.
- iii. Supported by Ascend Learning, Inc., a charter management organization that has been in existence for five years. Ascend Learning's model includes using an off-the-shelf curriculum and operating in a private space.
- iv. Environment is safe, orderly, and supportive of learning. 2011-12 School Survey responses met or exceeded citywide averages in three of four categories.<sup>15</sup>
- v. The school receives support from the community and has impressive family outreach, with a waitlist of over 3,800 students.<sup>16</sup>

3. In accordance with Education Law Section 2853(1)(f), the board of trustees of the charter school shall have final authority for policy and operational decisions of the school.

The board of Brooklyn Ascend has proven to be partially effective for the following reasons:

- i. School has adequate enrollment revenue to sustain day-to-day operations with positive cash flow and a positive end of year balance.
- ii. Has not met the requirements for the number of annual board meetings.
- iii. Board has a diversity of relevant skill sets and background experiences to ensure focus on academic and operational success.

---

<sup>10</sup> 2011-12 Progress Report.

<sup>11</sup> <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>.

<sup>12</sup> 2010-11 Progress Report: 53% at/above L3; 2011-12 Progress Report: 68% at/above L3.

<sup>13</sup> <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>.

<sup>14</sup> Self-reported in Charter Renewal Application documents.

<sup>15</sup> 2011-12 School Survey.

<sup>16</sup> Self-reported to NYC DOE.

4. In accordance with Education Law Section 2855(1)(b) and Education Law Section 2855(1)(c), a charter may be terminated or revoked in the event of serious violations of law, and/or material and substantial violations of the charter.

Brooklyn Ascend has been in substantially in compliance with its charter and applicable laws and regulations, with the exception of not meeting the annual number of required board meetings.

5. As defined by Part 4 of the NYC DOE CSAS Accountability Framework, a school is to be assessed on its plan for its next charter term.

Brooklyn Ascend has demonstrated viable plans for its next term for the following reasons:

- i. Planning to implement the SABIS instructional software as management tool, in order to monitor academic performance at the school in real time. The software allows instructional managers to examine detail on individual classrooms, units and students.
- ii. Implementing integrated co-teaching (ICT) at the school. Each ICT classroom will have a certified special education teacher and certified general education to facilitate the provision of integrated services. Students with disabilities will thus receive intervention throughout the school day in real time, which will help eliminate learning gaps from forming in the first place.

## **Part 3: Charter School Goals**

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School has sufficiently met the goals set forth in its charter agreement. Please see the table of Charter Goals.

Please note that information in this section is provided by the school, and may vary from data reported by the NYC DOE because, among other reasons, the NYC DOE reports on all students, while certain school goals may only apply to students falling under a given criteria. All data errors, discrepancies, or omissions in this section are not the responsibility of the NYC DOE.

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School

Goal	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
<b>Absolute</b>				
Each year, 75 percent of 3 <sup>rd</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> graders will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination	n/a	Did not meet goal. Discussed in depth in narrative.	Did not meet goal. Discussed in depth in narrative.	Met partially. Fewer than 75% of students in grades 3 and 5 scored proficient, and more than 75% in grade 4 scored proficient.
Each year, 75 percent of 3 <sup>rd</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> graders will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Mathematics examination	n/a	Did not meet goal. Discussed in depth in narrative.	Did not meet goal. Discussed in depth in narrative.	Goal met.
For the 2008-09 through 2011-12 school years, each cohort of students will reduce by one-half the gap between percent passing the Math Regents examination and the previous cohorts' passing rate on the Math Regents examination.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Value-Added</b>				
For the 2007-2008 through 2011-2012 school years, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's state ELA exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's state ELA exam	n/a	n/a	Not met. Grade 3 students met this goal. Grade 4 students were 9 points below meeting this goal.	Met partially. Grade 4 students met the goal by more than 12 points, and grade 5 students were short by more than 8 points.

Goal	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
For the 2007-08 through 2011-12 school years, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State Math exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's state Math exam	n/a	n/a	Met.	Met.
<b>Comparative</b>				
Each year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the state ELA exam in each tested grade will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools. <sup>1</sup>	n/a	n/a	Met.	Met.
Each year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the state math exam in each tested grade will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools	n/a	n/a	Met partially. The school performed approximately 5 points below the CSD18 average in Math.	Met partially. The school performed approximately 5 points below the CSD18 average in Math.
Each year, the percent of each cohort of students passing the ELA Regents examination will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Each year, the percent of each cohort of students passing the Math Regents examination will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

<sup>1</sup> Similar schools are defined as schools within CSD 18.

Goal	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
<b>AYP Status</b>				
Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State ELA exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the state's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system	n/a	Met.	Met.	n/a
Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State Math exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the state's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.	n/a	Met.	Met.	n/a
Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State Science exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the state's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Each year, the school will make Adequate Yearly Progress in ELA, Math, and Science, and in the school's graduation rate.	n/a	Met; except graduation rate is n/a.	Met; except graduation rate is n/a.	Met; except graduation rate is n/a.

<b>Graduation Rates</b>				
Each year, at least 75% of each student cohort graduates after five years of beginning the upper school.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Goal	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
<b>Alternative/Internal Assessment Indicators</b>				
Fewer than 10% of students who have enrolled by their ninth grade year will drop out of school before their cohort graduates (exclusive of students who move out of the school district or transfer to another school).	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
100% of students in the school will apply to, and be accepted for, admission at a minimum of one institution of higher learning by June 1 of the year of their graduation.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Student Engagement</b>				
Each year, the school will have a daily student attendance rate of at least 95 percent.	Met.	Met.	Not met.	Met.
Each year, 95 percent of all students enrolled during the course of the year return the following September.	n/a	Retention records not available.	Met.	Met.

Alternative/Internal Assessment Indicators				
90% of graduates of the school surveyed will respond that they believe they were "prepared" or "very prepared" to succeed academically in college by virtue of attending the school. (Students will be asked to respond on a scale of "very prepared," "prepared," "neither prepared nor unprepared," and "unprepared.")	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Adherence to Contract Terms				
Each year, the school will comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations and contract terms including, but not limited to, the New York Charter Schools Act, the New York Freedom of Information Law, the New York Open Meetings Law, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.	Met.	Met.	Met.	Met.

Goal	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
<b>Enrollment Stability</b>				
Each year, student enrollment will be within 15% of full enrollment as defined in the school's contract.	Met.	Met.	Met.	Met.
<b>Infrastructure</b>				
Upon completion of the school's first year of operation and every year thereafter, the school will undergo an independent financial audit that will result in an unqualified opinion and no major findings.		Met. Auditors identified deficiencies, but no material weaknesses. All deficiencies were addressed prior to the subsequent audit.	Met. Auditors identified deficiencies, but no material weaknesses. All deficiencies were addressed prior to the subsequent audit.	Met.
Each year, the school will operate on a balanced budget and maintain a stable cash flow.	Met.	Met.	Met.	Met.
<b>Culture</b>				
In a survey, 90% of upper school students will "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement, "I feel safe from abuse, harassment, and violence while attending the school."	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
In an annual survey, 95% of all parents will "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement, "My children are safe at the school."	Met.	Met.	Met.	Met.

Goal	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Each year, parents will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the school's Parent Survey in which at least 80% of parents provide a positive response to each of the survey items.	Partially met. Parents nearly universally expressed satisfaction, but fewer than 80% responded.	Partially met. Parents nearly universally expressed satisfaction, but fewer than 80% responded.	Partially met. Parents nearly universally expressed satisfaction, but fewer than 80% responded.	Partially met. Parents nearly universally expressed satisfaction, but fewer than 80% responded.
<b>Internal Assessment Indicators</b>				
The Board will provide an effective forum for public input into the governance of the school by holding at least ten Board or standing committee meetings per year (all of which will conform to the standards of the Open Meeting Law) and by making available the minutes of all such meetings upon request. Additionally, the Board will allot a set amount of time before every full meeting when citizens can sign up to address Board members. Executive sessions will be called as needed.	Partially Met. The board provided an effective forum and adhered to all requirements, but only four meetings were held (plus four additional pre-opening meetings) rather than ten. Six meetings are required as per the bylaws.	Partially Met. The board provided an effective forum and adhered to all requirements, but only five meetings were held rather than ten. Six meetings are required as per the bylaws.	Partially Met. The board provided an effective forum and adhered to all requirements, but six meetings were held rather than ten, as required by the bylaws.	Partially Met. The board provided an effective forum and adhered to all requirements, but six meetings were held rather than ten, as required by the bylaws.

## Part 4: Charter School Performance Data

### Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - Whole School<sup>17</sup>

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	49.1	53.4	69.1	
CSD 18*	43.6	46.0	48.2	
NYC*	46.5	49.6	51.2	
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	43.4	58.3	83.9	
CSD 18*	48.8	51.8	55.1	
NYC*	54.3	58.6	62.6	

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

#### Grade 3

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	49.1	53.8	63.9	
CSD 18	43.6	42.1	45.7	
NYC	46.5	48.1	49.0	
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	43.4	51.9	81.9	
CSD 18	48.8	46.7	49.1	
NYC	54.3	54.8	57.0	

#### Grade 4

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Brooklyn Ascend Charter School			52.9	76.3
CSD 18			49.9	49.2
NYC			51.0	52.4
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Brooklyn Ascend Charter School			68.6	85.0
CSD 18			56.9	56.9
NYC			62.3	65.7

<sup>17</sup> All data from NYC DOE website.

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>.

\*CSD and City data represent the average performance of the same testing grades of the school.

Grade 5

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Brooklyn Ascend Charter School				66.7
CSD 18				49.8
NYC				52.2
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Brooklyn Ascend Charter School				85.2
CSD 18				54.0
NYC				65.2

## Part 5: Brooklyn Ascend Charter Renewal Visit



**Department of  
Education**

*Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor*

Charter School Renewal Visit Report  
Charter Schools Accountability and Support  
2012-2013

# **BROOKLYN ASCEND CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL VISIT REPORT**

SEPTEMBER 2012

## Part A: Executive Summary

### Renewal Visit Overview:

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team conducts renewal visits of charter schools authorized by the NYC DOE. The renewal visit is designed to address four questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization; is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations; and what are the school's plans for its next charter term? The visits are conducted by representatives of CSAS and may also include the district superintendent and other DOE staff or consultants. The visits last the duration of two to three school days. The renewal visit begins with a meeting with the school leadership team. Afterward, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. They also review academic and operational documents. Additionally, reviewers meet with one or more of the school's Board representatives and speak to a sampling of the school's parents. Areas of evaluation include, but are not limited to: academic goals and mission; curriculum and instruction; school culture and learning environment; assessment utilization; parent engagement; government structures and organizational design; community support; special populations; and safety and security. The renewal visit is intended to provide a snapshot of the school and reflects what was observed at the time of the visit.

The following experts participated in the review of this school on September 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012:

- Rick Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSAS
- Daree Lewis, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSAS
- Laurie Price, Chief of Staff, NYC DOE CSAS
- Laurie Pendleton, Consultant to NYC DOE CSAS

## Part B: Renewal Visit Observations

### Areas of Strength

- The school has made steady and consistent progress towards meeting the performance goals set forth in their charter.
  - The ambitious goal of 75% of their students scoring at or above Level 3 on the New York State Mathematics examination was met in all three grades who have scores for the 2011-2012 school year.
  - Although not currently meeting their goal of 75% at Level 3 or above, the school's scores for the ELA exam have had impressive gains year over year.
- The school's leadership reports the implementation of a number of initiatives to continue student achievement growth in ELA.
  - The school has increased their focus on the Guided Reading program and provides explicit training, observation, and feedback to ensure quality implementation.
  - The Middle School will also initiate a Guided Reading program based on the results of the Mock Exam.

- The hiring of Associate Teachers allows the Lead Teacher the opportunity to teach struggling students during an intensive instructional period. These additional teachers also provide two teachers in every classroom for the hour-long Guided Reading period in the Lower School.
- The school believes that using the I-Ready test preparation materials earlier in the year will provide multiple opportunities for students to transfer their skills to a testing environment. The school has created a scope and sequence that integrates the I-Ready test preparation materials into the daily coursework for grades 3-5.
- The school has a structured approach to the SABIS academic curriculum that is consistently delivered across classrooms.
  - On the day of the visit, various components of the SABIS model of Teach, Class Practice, Individual Practice, and Check, were in evidence in all classrooms observed.
  - Lesson objectives were clearly posted and referred to by the teachers in the majority of the classrooms.
  - Ascend Learning reports they continue to work with SABIS to ensure that the curriculum aligns with both New York State and Common Core State Standards and is meeting the needs of their students. The Middle School has adjusted their humanities and science curricular programs to incorporate an additional focus on non-fiction texts.
- The school has a strong approach to the use of academic data to track student progress.
  - Beginning in third grade, the SABIS Academic Monitoring System (AMS) provides feedback to students, parents, and teachers in Mathematics and English Language Arts. The data reports accompanying these assessments provide teachers with the ability to analyze individual responses at the student, classroom, and grade level.
  - Beginning in grade one students take monthly Periodic Exams that are cumulative and provide teachers with information regarding how well students have maintained mastery of all content taught.
  - This information is used by teachers in planning instruction as well as informing grouping for intensive instruction.
- The school has adapted their organizational structure to allow them to provide a variety of resources for teachers to ensure quality instruction.
  - The leadership team has added additional members to provide more consistent support of instruction and professional growth for teachers.
  - Teachers interviewed report they receive consistent feedback and coaching which encourages them to be more reflective of their practice and leads to improvement in their teaching practice. They welcome this feedback and find it meaningful, timely, and useful.
  - The school's leadership takes immediate action to correct subpar performance of teachers by providing clear guidance on needed improvements and, when improvement is not evident, replacing teachers when necessary.

- The school's Summer Institute was differentiated to provide additional opportunities for experienced staff members. The school's leadership described a forward-thinking approach to teacher training by having experienced teachers model lessons with Ascend students. These lessons were projected via Skype into a training room allowing facilitated discussion of the lesson. This approach allowed experienced teachers the opportunity to take a more senior role in the training.
- The school's environment is safe, orderly, and supportive of learning.
  - The school's facilities are beautiful and welcoming and set the tone for learning. The artwork on display in the Middle School is linked to the school's Humanities program and is regularly used as a teaching tool.
  - The school's Leadership Team includes a Dean of Students who has the primary responsibility for shaping and sustaining the school's culture and coaches teachers to strengthen classroom culture and to implement techniques from Doug Lemov's, *Teach Like a Champion*, and the *Responsive Classroom*. The Dean also provides support to "high touch" students who need regular monitoring and support throughout the day.
  - On the day of the visit, teachers were observed using "warm/strict" tones as well as other Lemov techniques and classroom schedules indicated the use of Morning Meeting, a key component of the Responsive Classroom. During the site visit, teachers were observed intentionally teaching procedures and routines, a key element of the Responsive Classroom during the first six weeks of school. Teachers interviewed were supportive of these measures and have found them useful in the creation of the culture endemic of the school.
  - There is consistency of behavioral norms from classroom to classroom and a continuum of behavioral expectations between the Lower and Middle Schools. The Middle School has taken a thoughtful approach to behavioral expectations by providing additional opportunities for students to make thoughtful decisions about their learning and to take ownership for their behavior.
  - Students interviewed were positive about the culture at both the lower and middle schools. They reported that although the school has provided information on bullying, "it is not a problem here". Students also reported that their classmates help each other and teachers are, "here to help us learn."
  - Middle School students interviewed were particularly supportive of the Student Life Organization. One student explained, quite fluently, how the ability to participate in these activities encouraged her to improve her behavior. What was most encouraging about this exchange was the student's ability to tie her improved behavior to her ability to be more successful in school. Another student shared that SLO is where, "we get to have fun and share our talents."
  - The school's use of Prefects, students who support the academic work of fellow students, appears to be very popular among the students. Those students who are not Prefects find their support helpful and feel that, "they can ask the Prefects questions they may not want to ask the teacher." Students who serve as prefects find the role helpful to their own development as well. They "like helping others." And report that,

“It’s hard to not just give them the answer. You have to find a way to explain the work to them so they understand it.”

- The school benefits from sound operational and financial practices.
  - The school has adequate enrollment revenue to sustain day to day operations with positive cash flow and a positive end of year balance.

### **Areas for Growth**

- The school should continue to work on improving instruction.
  - Although students were mostly engaged in the task during classroom observations, there was not clear evidence that cognitive engagement was of the highest level.
  - In classrooms observed, there was an overwhelming reliance on lower-level questioning techniques, with teachers often missing the opportunity to ask probing, follow up questions that would engage the student on a deeper cognitive level and encourage them to think about their thinking.
  - The majority of instruction observed was teacher directed with little peer-to-peer learning and few opportunities for students to discuss their thinking with their peers.
  - There was little evidence that the school was continually striving to reach the highest and lowest performing students throughout the instructional day as opposed to restricting such support to an intervention period.
- The school should continue to search for ways to ensure the teaching model is sustainable.
  - The teacher turnover at the school remains fairly high at 47% and teacher responses to the DOE’s survey represent some dissatisfaction with the way teachers are treated. For example, 30% of teachers who answered the survey disagree with the statement, “In my school, it’s easy to speak up about what is on your mind.” And 52% disagree with the statement, “I wouldn’t want to work in any other school.”
  - Many teachers interviewed reported the workload and expectations were unsustainable and felt that the turnover could be attributed to the lack of a work-life balance.
  - Teachers interviewed expressed concern with the amount of turnover and its impact on the ability for the school to continue to move forward. One teacher said, “If we have a solid team and a sustainable life style, we will be able to build.”
  - A teacher interviewed reported they felt undervalued by the charter management organization (Ascend Learning, Inc.) and that some people feel there will be repercussions for taking personal or sick time for themselves or their families.
- The school should focus on meeting all requirements of compliance.
  - The school has not met the requirements for the number of board meetings required.
  - The school’s elementary population includes 0% ELL students, which is lower than the district average of 7%.
  - The school’s elementary population includes 7.2% Special Education students, which is lower than the district average of 14.2%.

- The school's ELL and SPED percentages are below the districts. The school is encouraged to expand recruitment and attract a more representative demographic of students.
- To be in compliance with their Charter Goals, the school needs to increase parent participation in DOE surveys.

## Part 6: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

### **A. Statutory Basis for Renewal**

The Charter Schools Act of 1998 (“the Act”) authorizes the creation of charter schools to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently of existing schools and school districts in order to accomplish the following objectives:

- 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;
- Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- 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.<sup>18</sup>

When granted, a charter is valid for up to five years. For a school chartered under the Act to operate beyond the initial charter term, the school must seek and obtain renewal of its charter.<sup>19</sup>

A school seeking renewal of its charter must submit a renewal application to the charter entity to which the original charter application was submitted.<sup>20</sup> As one such charter entity, the New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”) institutes a renewal application process that adheres to the Act’s renewal standards:

- A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in its charter;
- 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;

---

<sup>18</sup> See § 2850 of the Charter Schools Act of 1998.

<sup>19</sup> See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

<sup>20</sup> See generally §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4).

- Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school including the charter school report cards and certified financial statements;
- Indications of parent and student satisfaction.

Where the NYCDOE approves a renewal application, it is required under the Act to submit the application and a proposed charter to the Board of Regents for its review and approval.<sup>21</sup>

### **B. NYCDOE's Charter Renewal Process**

The expiration of charters and their renewal based on a compelling record of success is the linchpin of charter school accountability. The NYCDOE's processes and procedures reflect this philosophy and therefore meet the objectives of the Act.<sup>22</sup>

In the final year of its charter, a Chancellor-authorized charter school seeking renewal must demonstrate its success during the initial charter term and establish goals and objectives for the next charter term. Ultimately, the renewal process offers an opportunity for the school community to reflect on its experiences during its first term, to make a compelling, evidence-based case that it has earned the privilege of an additional charter term, and, if renewed, to build an ambitious plan for the future.

Consistent with the requirements of § 2851(4) of the Act, a school applying for renewal of its charter must use data and other credible evidence to prove its success, a case that can be organized into four questions:

1. Has your school been an academic success?
2. Has your school been a viable organization?
3. Has your school complied with applicable laws and regulations?
4. What are the school's plans for its next charter term?

A school will answer these overarching questions by demonstrating that its students have made significant academic progress and that the school has met the goals and objectives pledged in its initial charter. In addition, the school will describe challenges it has faced during its charter term, the strategies that were used to address those challenges, and the lessons learned.

This report contains the findings and recommendations of the NYCDOE regarding a school's application for charter renewal. This report is based on a cumulative record of the school's progress during its charter term, including but not limited to oversight visits, annual reports, and formal correspondence between the school and its authorizing entities, all of which are conducted in order to identify areas of weakness and to help the school to address them.

---

<sup>21</sup> § 2852(5)

<sup>22</sup> The NYCDOE charter renewal application is available on the Office of Charter Schools website at <http://www.nycenet.edu/OurSchools/Region84/Creation/default.htm>.

Additionally, the NYCDOE incorporates into this report its findings from the renewal application process, which includes a written application, completion of student achievement data templates, and a school visit by the Charter Schools Accountability and Support team of the NYCDOE (“NYCDOE CSAS”).

The NYCDOE CSAS then prepares a draft report and provides a copy to the school for its review and comment. The draft contains the findings, discussion, and the evidence base for those findings. Upon receiving a school’s comment, the NYCDOE CSAS reviews its draft, makes any appropriate changes, and reviews the amended findings to make a recommendation to the Chancellor. The Chancellor’s final decision, and the findings on which that decision is based, is submitted to the Board of Regents for a final decision.

## Part 7: CSAS Accountability Framework

Throughout the Renewal Process and the life of each school's charter, the NYCDOE Charter Schools Accountability and Support uses the following Accountability Framework to monitor Charter School success:

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

There is no strict, number-driven point scale for applying the framework to a school's overall performance record. Although academic performance is primary, the NYC DOE takes into account a wide variety of detail (as indicated by the framework strands and available evidence detail) when evaluating a school.

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. 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 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-meeting laws 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 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:

- 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
- 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 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, 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 Site Visit 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

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law:

- 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<sup>23</sup> or are making documented good faith efforts to reach

<sup>23</sup> School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

comparable percentages for enrollment and retention

- 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 with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- 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**

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 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

## 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

# Part 8: NYC DOE School Progress Reports

Please see the attached progress reports for this school.



## Progress Report 2011-12

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	
PRINCIPAL:	Brandon Sorlie
DBN:	84K652
ENROLLMENT:	568
SCHOOL TYPE:	Elementary
PEER INDEX*:	48.71

\*See p. 6 for more details on Peer Index.

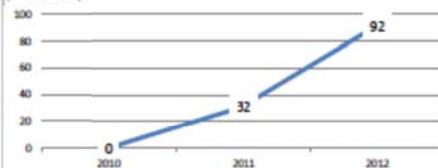
PROGRESS REPORT			
A	OVERALL SCORE	74.6	out of 100
	OVERALL PERCENTILE	92	This school's overall score is greater than or equal to that of 92 percent of elementary schools.
<p>For elementary, middle, and K-8 schools, the percent of schools receiving top grades was set in advance. Schools with average English and Math performance in the top third citywide cannot receive a grade lower than a C. Schools in their first year, in phase out, or with fewer than 25 students with progress results receive a report with no grade or score.</p>			
Progress Report Grades - Elementary			
GRADE	SCORE RANGE	% OF SCHOOLS	
A	64.7 or higher	25% of schools	
B	49.8 - 64.6	36% of schools	
C	35.8 - 49.7	30% of schools	
D	25.6 - 35.7	7% of schools	
F	25.5 or lower	2% of schools	

**Overview** Each school's Progress Report (1) measures student year-to-year progress, (2) compares the school to peer schools, and (3) rewards success in moving all children forward, especially children with the greatest needs.

CATEGORY	SCORE	GRADE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Student Progress</b>	43.1 out of 60	A	Student Progress measures how much individual students improved on state tests in English and Math between 2011 and 2012, compared to other students who started at the same level and weights the results of the 2012 3rd grade tests.
<b>Student Performance</b>	20.1 out of 25	A	Student Performance measures student results on the 2012 state tests in English and Math.
<b>School Environment</b>	9.6 out of 15	B	School Environment measures student attendance and a survey of the school community rating academic expectations, safety and respect, communication, and engagement.
<b>Closing the Achievement Gap</b>	1.8 (16 max)		Schools receive additional credit for exceptional graduation and college/career readiness outcomes of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who enter high school at a low performance level.
<b>Overall Score</b>	74.6 out of 100	A	The overall grade is based on the total of all scores above. Category scores may not add up to total score because of rounding.

### Performance Over Time

Percentile rank of this school's overall Progress Report score for the past three years:



The Progress Report is a one-year snapshot of a school's performance. The Progress Report methodology has evolved over time in response to school and community feedback, changes in state policy, and higher standards. For a description of methodology changes, visit:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/ProgressReport>

### Progress Report Implications

Strong Progress Report results are the basis for recognition and potential rewards for school leaders, and poor results are an important factor in determining whether schools require intensive support or intervention. For more information, see:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/SupportandIntervention.htm>

### State Accountability

The school's current status: **In Good Standing**

This designation is determined by the New York State Department of Education under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver. More information on New York State accountability can be found here:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/accountability/default.htm>

GRADE	<b>A</b>	GRADE	SCORE RANGE	Student Progress represents 60% of the total score. The grade is based on growth percentiles, a measure of how much individual students improved on state tests in English and Math between 2011 and 2012, and on early grade progress, a weighted measure of 3rd grade students' test results based on their demographic indicators of need.
		A	38.8 or higher	
		B	29.8 - 38.7	
		C	21.5 - 29.7	
		D	15.3 - 21.4	
F	15.2 or lower			

SCORE **43.1**  
(out of 60)

	THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	COMPARISON TO CITY SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 25%)	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
<b>English</b>							
Median Adjusted Growth Percentile (n=129)	67.0		65.0%		61.8%	10.00	6.42
Median Adjusted Growth Percentile for School's Lowest Third (n=44)	78.5		77.5%		75.4%	10.00	7.70
Early Grade Progress (n=85)	2.7		55.6%		63.9%	10.00	5.77
<b>Mathematics</b>							
Median Adjusted Growth Percentile (n=129)	74.0		77.6%		78.9%	10.00	7.79
Median Adjusted Growth Percentile for School's Lowest Third (n=42)	79.0		82.9%		82.5%	10.00	8.28
Early Grade Progress (n=85)	3.2		69.4%		78.6%	10.00	7.17
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>						60.00	<b>43.13</b>

**How To Interpret These Charts**

To determine the number of points earned, this school's 2011-12 results on each metric are compared to the historical results of peer schools and all schools serving the same grade levels citywide. The comparison to peer schools is worth 75% of the points for each metric and the comparison to all schools citywide is worth 25% of the points. The bars represent the range of results for the peer and city comparison schools for 2009-10 and 2010-11 that are within two standard deviations of the average. The percent of the range that is shaded is the school's share of possible points. The share is multiplied by the weight (75% or 25%) and the possible points for the metric to determine the points earned.

**Score Calculation Example**

FORMULA	(	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	x	0.75	+	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	x	0.25	)	x	POINTS POSSIBLE	=	POINTS EARNED
EXAMPLE	(	60%	x	0.75	+	80%	x	0.25	)	x	10	=	6.50

GRADE	<b>A</b>	GRADE	A	16.1 or higher
		B	12.4 - 16.0	
		C	8.9 - 12.3	
		D	6.4 - 8.8	
		F	6.3 or lower	
SCORE	<b>20.1</b>			
				(out of 25)

The Student Performance grade is based on results on the 2012 state tests in English and Math. Student Performance represents 25% of the total score. State test metrics evaluate the percent of students who reach or exceed proficiency (Level 3 and 4) and students' average proficiency rating.

	THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	COMPARISON TO CITY SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 25%)	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
<b>English</b>							
Percentage of Students at Level 3 or 4 (n=220)	68.2%		85.3%		78.7%	6.25	5.23
Average Student Proficiency (n=220)	3.11		80.3%		71.7%	6.25	4.88
<b>Mathematics</b>							
Percentage of Students at Level 3 or 4 (n=220)	82.7%		82.2%		81.4%	6.25	5.13
Average Student Proficiency (n=220)	3.52		78.6%		75.8%	6.25	4.87
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>						25.00	<b>20.11</b>

**How To Interpret These Charts**

To determine the number of points earned, this school's 2011-12 results on each metric are compared to the historical results of peer schools and all schools serving the same grade levels citywide. The comparison to peer schools is worth 75% of the points for each metric and the comparison to all schools citywide is worth 25% of the points. The bars represent the range of results for the peer and city comparison schools for 2009-10 and 2010-11 that are within two standard deviations of the average. The percent of the range that is shaded is the school's share of possible points. The share is multiplied by the weight (75% or 25%) and the possible points for the metric to determine the points earned.

COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)

PERCENT OF RANGE

Share of comparison range covered by the school's result

0% of range | 50 | 100% of range

Average value among comparison schools

**Score Calculation Example**

FORMULA:  $(\text{PERCENT OF PEER RANGE} \times 0.75) + (\text{PERCENT OF CITY RANGE} \times 0.25) \times \text{POINTS POSSIBLE} = \text{POINTS EARNED}$

EXAMPLE:  $(60\% \times 0.75) + (80\% \times 0.25) \times 6.25 = 4.06$

GRADE	<b>B</b>	GRADE	SCORE RANGE
		A	9.7 or higher
		B	7.4 - 9.6
		C	5.3 - 7.3
		D	3.8 - 5.2
F	3.7 or lower		

School Environment represents 15% of the total score. The School Environment grade is based on student attendance and results of the NYC School Survey, on which parents and teachers rate academic expectations, safety and respect, communication, and engagement.

SCORE **9.6**  
(out of 15)

THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	COMPARISON TO CITY SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 25%)	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
-----------------------	---	-----------------------	---	-----------------------	-----------------	---------------

School Survey Results

Academic Expectations	8.1		46.2%		50.0%	2.50	1.18
Communication	7.7		50.0%		57.1%	2.50	1.29
Engagement	7.5		39.3%		42.9%	2.50	1.01
Safety and Respect	8.4		50.0%		57.7%	2.50	1.30
Attendance Rate	96.4%		98.0%		88.8%	5.00	4.79

TOTAL POINTS 15.00 9.57

**How To Interpret These Charts**

To determine the number of points earned, this school's 2011-12 results on each metric are compared to the historical results of peer schools and all schools serving the same grade levels citywide. The comparison to peer schools is worth 75% of the points for each metric and the comparison to all schools citywide is worth 25% of the points. The bars represent the range of results for the peer and city comparison schools for 2009-10 and 2010-11 that are within two standard deviations of the average. The percent of the range that is shaded is the school's share of possible points. The share is multiplied by the weight (75% or 25%) and the possible points for the metric to determine the points earned.

**Score Calculation Example**

FORMULA:  $(\text{PERCENT OF PEER RANGE} \times 0.75 + \text{PERCENT OF CITY RANGE} \times 0.25) \times \text{POINTS POSSIBLE} = \text{POINTS EARNED}$

EXAMPLE:  $(60\% \times 0.75 + 80\% \times 0.25) \times 2.5 = 1.63$

Schools receive additional credit for exceptional gains by students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students starting with the lowest proficiency citywide. A school earns additional credit when each high-need student meets the success criteria for an eligible metric. The number of points will depend on the percentage of the school's population that is in the high-need group, the percentage of that group that is successful, and a "fixed point value" based on how difficult it is to achieve the success criteria. Additional Credit can only improve a school's Progress Report score. It cannot lower a school's score. Elementary schools are eligible for points on 16 additional credit metrics while middle and K-8 schools are eligible for points on up to 17 metrics, each of which is worth up to one point. (In the table below, "-" in 'This School's Results' indicates that a school has fewer than 5 eligible students in one of the categories.)

CATEGORY	THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	POPULATION PERCENTAGE	FIXED POINT VALUE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
<b>Percent at Level 3 or 4</b>					
<b>English</b>					
Self-Contained (n=2)	-	-	0.326	1.00	-
Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) (n=0)	-	-	0.113	1.00	-
Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) (n=12)	41.7%	5.5%	0.174	1.00	0.40
<b>Mathematics</b>					
Self-Contained (n=2)	-	-	0.119	1.00	-
Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) (n=0)	-	-	0.065	1.00	-
Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) (n=12)	33.3%	5.5%	0.103	1.00	0.19
<b>Percent at 75th Growth Percentile or Higher</b>					
<b>English</b>					
English Language Learners (n=0)	-	-	0.021	1.00	-
Lowest Third Citywide (n=23)	56.5%	17.8%	0.013	1.00	0.13
Self-Contained/ICT/SETSS (n=7)	57.1%	5.4%	0.022	1.00	0.07
Black and Hispanic Males in Lowest Third Citywide (n=15)	60.0%	11.6%	0.026	1.00	0.18
<b>Mathematics</b>					
English Language Learners (n=0)	-	-	0.019	1.00	-
Lowest Third Citywide (n=40)	57.5%	31.0%	0.016	1.00	0.29
Self-Contained/ICT/SETSS (n=7)	42.9%	5.4%	0.028	1.00	0.07
Black and Hispanic Males in Lowest Third Citywide (n=22)	50.0%	17.1%	0.035	1.00	0.30
Movement from SC/ICT/SETSS to Less Restrictive Environments (n=13)	0.54	2.3%	0.105	1.00	0.13
English Language Learner Progress (n=2)	-	-	0.026	1.00	-
				<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>1.76</b>

## PEER INDEX CALCULATION

The Peer Index is used to sort schools on the basis of demographics. A higher Peer Index indicates a higher need population. The Peer Index operates on a 1-100 scale and is calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{FORMULA} \quad ( \text{Economic Need Index} \times 30 ) + ( \% \text{ Students with Disabilities} \times 30 ) + ( \% \text{ Black/Hispanic} \times 30 ) + ( \% \text{ English Language Learners} \times 10 ) = \text{PEER INDEX}$$

$$\text{FOR THIS SCHOOL} \quad ( 0.60 \times 30 ) + ( 7.4\% \times 30 ) + ( 94.4\% \times 30 ) + ( 0.4\% \times 10 ) = 48.71$$

Note: the Economic Need Index is calculated as follows:  $(1.0 \times \text{Percent Temporary Housing}) + (0.3 \times \text{Percent HRA-eligible}) + (0.3 \times \text{Percent Free Lunch Eligible})$

PEER GROUP FOR: Brooklyn Ascend Charter School

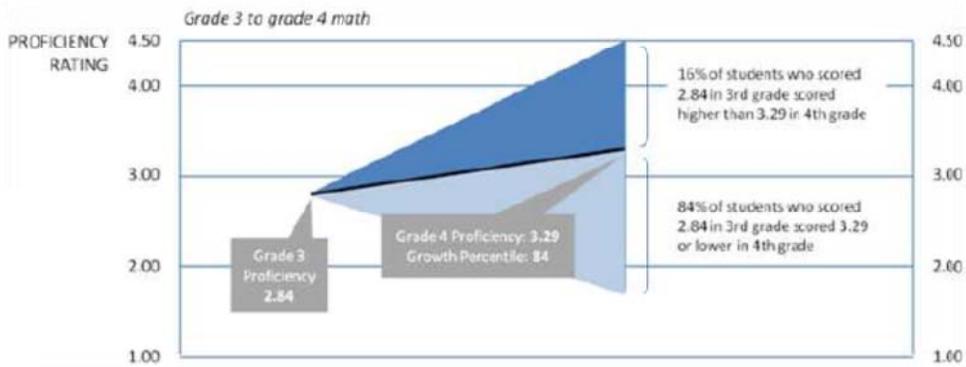
Each school's performance is compared to the performance of schools in its peer group. Peer schools are those New York City public schools with a student population most like this school's population, according to the Peer Index. Each elementary and middle school has up to 40 peer schools and each K-5 school has up to 30 peer schools.

DBN	SCHOOL	PEER INDEX	ECONOMIC NEED INDEX	% IEP	% BLACK or HISPANIC	% ELL
29Q035	P.S. 035 Nathaniel Woodhull	44.89	0.65	10.4%	89.5%	14.5%
24Q199	P.S. 199 Maurice A. Fitzgerald	44.91	0.63	12.9%	58.8%	44.1%
15K295	P.S. 295	45.10	0.54	27.2%	62.5%	18.8%
84X378	Icahn Charter School 2	45.46	0.51	7.1%	91.3%	5.2%
02M002	P.S. 002 Meyer London	46.15	1.08	15.0%	14.5%	48.0%
13K020	P.S. 020 Clinton Hill	46.55	0.53	16.3%	84.7%	4.2%
22K139	P.S. 139 Alexine A. Fenty	46.67	0.65	10.6%	72.2%	24.1%
30Q212	P.S. 212	46.76	0.59	14.4%	76.4%	17.8%
15K131	P.S. 131 Brooklyn	47.53	0.72	10.2%	61.2%	45.2%
03M075	P.S. 075 Emily Dickinson	47.53	0.57	17.2%	78.9%	15.4%
29Q132	P.S. 132 Ralph Bunche	47.61	0.48	12.1%	97.9%	1.5%
84X718	Bronx Charter School for Better Learning	47.80	0.50	10.1%	99.0%	0.8%
19K159	P.S. 159 Isaac Pitkin	47.83	0.77	9.4%	66.8%	17.7%
27Q254	P.S. 254	47.88	0.62	15.5%	78.3%	10.9%
01M019	P.S. 019 Asher Levy	47.89	0.58	22.0%	76.4%	11.1%
28Q082	P.S. 082 Hammond	48.21	0.74	11.9%	65.6%	28.0%
18K115	P.S. 115 Daniel Mucatel School	48.27	0.57	9.0%	93.4%	5.2%
29Q015	P.S. 015 Jackie Robinson	48.42	0.57	10.2%	93.2%	1.8%
27Q097	P.S. 097 Forest Park	48.45	0.66	12.9%	76.4%	17.6%
27Q060	P.S. 060 Woodhaven	48.67	0.68	12.3%	77.5%	13.7%
<b>84K652</b>	<b>Brooklyn Ascend Charter School</b>	<b>48.71</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>94.4%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
30Q017	P.S. 017 Henry David Thoreau	48.85	0.66	21.1%	65.7%	30.1%
84Q170	Peninsula Preparatory Academy Charter School	48.86	0.54	13.4%	94.5%	3.2%
20K164	P.S. 164 Caesar Rodney	49.03	0.74	22.9%	59.8%	21.8%
27Q306	New York City Academy for Discovery	49.04	0.66	16.5%	75.8%	15.5%
22K119	P.S. 119 Amersfort	49.10	0.59	13.0%	88.0%	10.4%
18K208	P.S. 208 Elsa Ebeling	49.12	0.55	12.2%	94.4%	5.4%
84Q341	Riverton Street Charter School	49.16	0.56	9.0%	98.8%	0.0%
10X056	P.S. 056 Norwood Heights	49.17	0.75	14.6%	68.2%	17.0%
84X398	Bronx Community Charter School	49.18	0.62	14.0%	86.4%	4.9%
11X121	P.S. 121 Throop	49.27	0.58	13.1%	91.4%	4.0%
31R022	P.S. 022 Graniteville	49.34	0.64	21.6%	75.3%	9.3%
27Q066	P.S. 066 Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis	49.42	0.64	18.1%	74.7%	24.8%
06X119	P.S. 119	49.42	0.77	13.0%	67.0%	24.0%
28Q050	P.S. 050 Talfourd Lawn Elementary School	49.43	0.75	13.0%	70.7%	18.2%
05M318	Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School	49.58	0.58	9.9%	97.2%	0.5%
02M051	P.S. 051 Eliz Howe	49.67	0.66	25.3%	69.4%	14.9%
84X517	Leadership Prep Bedford Stuyvesant Charter School	49.91	0.56	10.6%	99.1%	1.9%
06M368	Hamilton Heights School	50.18	0.62	9.0%	85.8%	30.9%
30Q112	P.S. 112 Dutch Kills	50.22	0.72	18.3%	69.2%	23.3%
84K626	ACHIEVEMENT FIRST BROWNSVILLE CHARTER SCHOOL	50.38	0.65	6.2%	96.3%	0.0%
PEER GROUP AVERAGES		48.28	0.64	13.9%	78.5%	14.8%

The Progress Report for elementary and middle schools focuses on students' growth to proficiency and beyond, regardless of their starting point. The Progress Report measures individual students' growth on state English and Math tests using growth percentiles.

**1 GROWTH PERCENTILES**

A student's growth percentile compares his or her growth to the growth of all students in the City who started at the same level of proficiency the year before. It is a number between 0 and 100 which represents the percentage of students with the same score on last year's test who scored the same or lower than the student on this year's test. For example, a student with a growth percentile of 84 earned a score on this year's test that was the same or higher than 84 percent of the students in the City who had the same score as he did last year.



**2 ADJUSTED GROWTH PERCENTILES**

To evaluate a school on its students' growth percentiles, the Progress Report uses an adjusted growth percentile. Growth percentile adjustments are based on students' demographic characteristics and reflect average differences in growth compared to students with the same starting proficiency level. The adjustments are made to students' ending proficiency rating as follows:

CATEGORY	ADJUSTMENT
Students with Disabilities (Self-contained)	+0.25
Students with Disabilities (ICT)	+0.15
Students with Disabilities (SETSS)	+0.10
Economic Need Index (per 0.10)	+0.005

Note: "Students with Disabilities" for purposes of adjustments is based on the most restrictive setting of students over the last four school years.

**3 MEDIAN ADJUSTED GROWTH PERCENTILES**

The Progress Report evaluates a school based on its median adjusted growth percentile, the adjusted growth percentile of the middle student when all the students' adjusted growth percentiles are listed from lowest to highest.

This page provides more granular data on students' state exam scores. It disaggregates these scores by grade and subject for 2011-12. While the numbers here do not individually count for points, the detailed deconstruction should provide deeper insight into 2011-12 student performance.

State Exam Scores by Grade	AVERAGE STUDENT PROFICIENCY	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS AT LEVEL 3 OR LEVEL 4	MEDIAN ADJUSTED GROWTH PERCENTILE
<b>Mathematics</b>			
3rd Grade (n = 85)	3.42	80.0%	.
4th Grade (n = 81)	3.59	84.0%	77.0
5th Grade (n = 54)	3.57	85.2%	73.0
<b>English</b>			
3rd Grade (n = 85)	3.10	62.4%	.
4th Grade (n = 81)	3.14	75.3%	67.0
5th Grade (n = 54)	3.06	66.7%	65.0
<b>Science</b>			
4th Grade (n = 81)	3.65	87.7%	.

<b>Brooklyn Ascend Charter School</b>	
PRINCIPAL:	Keisha Sykes/Brandon Sorlie
DBN:	84K652
ENROLLMENT:	428
SCHOOL TYPE:	Elementary
PEER INDEX:	51.35
(see p. 6 for more details on peer index)	

OVERALL GRADE

# C

OVERALL SCORE

## 36.7

out of 100

PERCENTILE RANK

## 32

This school's overall score is greater than or equal to that of 32 percent of Elementary schools.

### Overall Grades - Elementary

GRADE	SCORE RANGE	% of Schools
A	56.7 or higher	25% of schools
B	40.6 - 56.6	35% of schools
C	25.7 - 40.5	30% of schools
D	18.3 - 25.6	7% of schools
F	18.2 or lower	3% of schools

For elementary, middle, and K-8 schools, the percent of schools receiving top grades was set in advance. Schools with average English and Math performance in the top third citywide cannot receive a grade lower than a C. Schools in their first year, in phase out, or with fewer than 25 students with progress results receive a report with no grade or score.

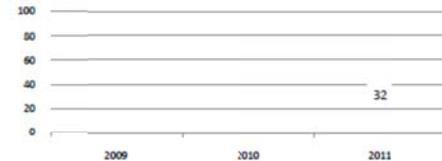
## Overview

Each school's Progress Report (1) measures student year-to-year progress, (2) compares the school to peer schools and (3) rewards success in moving all children forward, especially children with the greatest needs. Strong Progress Report results are the basis for monetary rewards for school leaders, and poor results are an important factor in determining whether schools require intensive support or intervention. For more information, see [schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/Support+and+Intervention.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/Support+and+Intervention.htm).

CATEGORY	SCORE	GRADE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Student Progress</b>	<b>19.3</b> out of 60	<b>C</b>	Student Progress measures how much individual students improved on state tests in English and Math between 2010 and 2011, compared to other students who started at the same level.
<b>Student Performance</b>	<b>9.2</b> out of 25	<b>C</b>	Student Performance measures student results on the 2011 state tests in English and Math.
<b>School Environment</b>	<b>8.1</b> out of 15	<b>B</b>	School Environment measures student attendance and a survey of the school community rating academic expectations, safety and respect, communication, and engagement.
<b>Closing the Achievement Gap</b>	<b>0.0</b> (15 max)		Schools receive additional credit for exceptional gains by students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students starting with the lowest proficiency citywide.
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>36.7</b> out of 100	<b>C</b>	The overall grade is based on the total of all scores above, including additional credit for closing the achievement gap. Category scores may not add up to total score because of rounding.

## Performance over time

Percentile rank of this school's overall Progress Report score for the past three years:



The Progress Report is a one-year snapshot of a school's performance. The Progress Report methodology has evolved over time, in response to school and community feedback, changes in state policy, and higher standards. In 2009-10, New York State raised the cutoff for proficiency on English and Math tests, and the Progress Report introduced growth percentiles. For a description of methodology changes, visit [schools.nyc.gov/ProgressReport](http://schools.nyc.gov/ProgressReport).

## Other accountability measures

These measures are separate from the Progress Report, and are an important part of school accountability in New York City and State.

### Quality Review

The school's most recent Quality Review Score:

The Quality Review is an observational evaluation conducted by an experienced educator, focused on how well a school is organized to educate its students.

### State Accountability

The school's current status:

**In Good Standing**

2010-11

This status is determined by the New York State Department of Education under the No Child Left Behind Act.

GRADE	<b>C</b>	GRADE	SCORE RANGE	Student Progress represents 60% of the total score. The grade is based on growth percentiles, a measure of how much individual students improved on state tests in English and Math between 2010 and 2011, compared to other students who started at the same level. The section evaluates growth percentiles for all students, and students in the school's lowest third. An explanation of growth percentiles is at the end of this report.
		A	34.0 or higher	
		B	24.3 - 33.9	
SCORE		C	15.4 - 24.2	
		D	10.9 - 15.3	
	F	10.8 or lower		

	THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	COMPARISON TO CITY SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 25%)	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
--	-----------------------	---	-----------------------	---	-----------------------	-----------------	---------------

**English**

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile (n=50)	58.5		34.8%		18.5%	15	4.61
Median Adjusted Growth Percentile for School's Lowest Third (n=23)	69.0		47.2%		35.9%	15	6.66

**Mathematics**

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile (n=50)	49.5		15.3%		11.0%	15	2.13
Median Adjusted Growth Percentile for School's Lowest Third (n=18)	62.5		41.1%		35.0%	15	5.94

TOTAL POINTS	60	19.34
--------------	----	-------

**How To Interpret These Charts**

To determine the number of points earned, this school's 2010-11 results on each metric are compared to the historical results of peer schools and all schools serving the same grade levels citywide. The comparison to peer schools is worth 75% of the points for each metric and the comparison to all schools citywide is worth 25% of the points. The bars represent the range of results for the peer and city comparison schools for 2008-09 and 2009-10 that are within two standard deviations of the average. The percent of the range that is shaded is the school's share of possible points. The share is multiplied by the weight (75% or 25%) and the possible points for the metric to determine the points earned.

This school's result: 80

0% of range: 30

Average value among comparison schools: 75

100% of range: 100

Share of comparison range covered by the school's result: 60%

**Score Calculation Example**

FORMULA:  $( \text{PERCENT OF PEER RANGE} \times 0.75 + \text{PERCENT OF CITY RANGE} \times 0.25 ) \times \text{POINTS POSSIBLE} = \text{POINTS EARNED}$

EXAMPLE:  $( 60\% \times 0.75 + 80\% \times 0.25 ) \times 15 = 9.75$

GRADE	<b>C</b>	GRADE	SCORE RANGE	Student Performance represents 25% of the total score. The Student Performance grade is based on results on the 2011 state tests in English and Math. The section evaluates the percent of students who reach or exceed proficiency (level 3 and 4), and the average proficiency rating of students.
		A	14.1 or higher	
SCORE	9.2 (out of 25)	B	10.1 - 14.0	
		C	5.8 - 10.0	
		D	1.6 - 5.7	
		F	1.5 or lower	

English

	THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	COMPARISON TO CITY SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 25%)	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
Percentage of students at level 3 or 4 (n=132)	53.0%		39.8%		42.8%	6.25	2.53
Average Student Proficiency (n=132)	2.95		40.2%		43.1%	6.25	2.56

Mathematics

Percentage of students at level 3 or 4 (n=132)	58.3%		36.1%		39.4%	6.25	2.31
Average Student Proficiency (n=132)	3.11		27.7%		30.6%	6.25	1.78

TOTAL POINTS 25 9.18

**How To Interpret These Charts**

To determine the number of points earned, this school's 2010-11 results on each metric are compared to the historical results of peer schools and all schools serving the same grade levels citywide. The comparison to peer schools is worth 75% of the points for each metric and the comparison to all schools citywide is worth 25% of the points. The bars represent the range of results for the peer and city comparison schools for 2008-09 and 2009-10 that are within two standard deviations of the average. The percent of the range that is shaded is the school's share of possible points. The share is multiplied by the weight (75% or 25%) and the possible points for the metric to determine the points earned.

COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)

This school's result: 80

Average value among comparison schools: 75

60% of range

PERCENT OF RANGE: 60%

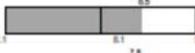
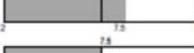
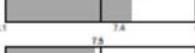
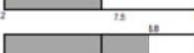
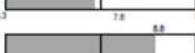
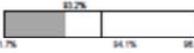
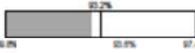
Share of comparison range covered by the school's result

**Score Calculation Example**

FORMULA:  $( \text{PERCENT OF PEER RANGE} \times 0.75 + \text{PERCENT OF CITY RANGE} \times 0.25 ) \times \text{POINTS POSSIBLE} = \text{POINTS EARNED}$

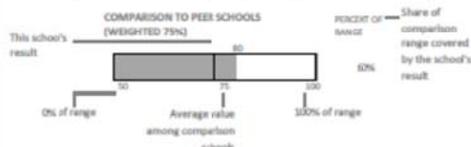
EXAMPLE:  $( 60\% \times 0.75 + 80\% \times 0.25 ) \times 6.25 = 4.06$

GRADE	<b>B</b>	GRADE	SCORE RANGE	School Environment represents 15% of the total score. The School Environment grade is based on student attendance and results of the NYC School Survey, on which parents and teachers rate academic expectations, safety and respect, communication, and engagement.
		A	8.5 or higher	
		B	6.0 - 8.4	
		C	3.8 - 5.9	
		D	2.7 - 3.7	
SCORE	8.1	F	2.6 or lower	
	(out of 15)			

	THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	COMPARISON TO CITY SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 25%)	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
<b>School Survey Results</b>							
Academic Expectations	8.5		68.2%		70.0%	2.5	1.72
Communication	7.8		61.5%		65.4%	2.5	1.56
Engagement	7.5		50.0%		46.2%	2.5	1.23
Safety and Respect	8.8		75.0%		77.3%	2.5	1.89
Attendance Rate	93.2%		31.3%		44.7%	5	1.73
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>						15	<b>8.13</b>

**How To Interpret These Charts**

To determine the number of points earned, this school's 2010-11 results on each metric are compared to the historical results of peer schools and all schools serving the same grade levels citywide. The comparison to peer schools is worth 75% of the points for each metric and the comparison to all schools citywide is worth 25% of the points. The bars represent the range of results for the peer and city comparison schools for 2008-09 and 2009-10 that are within two standard deviations of the average. The percent of the range that is shaded is the school's share of possible points. The share is multiplied by the weight (75% or 25%) and the possible points for the metric to determine the points earned.



**Score Calculation Example**

FORMULA:  $(\text{PERCENT OF PEER RANGE} \times 0.75 + \text{PERCENT OF CITY RANGE} \times 0.25) \times \text{POINTS POSSIBLE} = \text{POINTS EARNED}$

EXAMPLE:  $(60\% \times 0.75 + 80\% \times 0.25) \times 2.5 = 1.63$

Schools receive additional credit for exceptional gains by students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students starting with the lowest proficiency citywide. A school earns full additional credit when its results are in the top 20% of schools citywide. It earns half credit when its results are in the top 40%. Additional Credit can only improve a school's Progress Report score. It cannot lower a school's score. Elementary, middle, and K-8 schools are eligible for points on 15 additional credit metrics, each of which is worth up to 1 point. (In the table below, "." indicates that a school has fewer than 15 eligible students in a category.)

CATEGORY	THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	TOP 20% CUTOFF	TOP 40% CUTOFF	POINTS EARNED
<b>Percent at level 3 or 4</b>				
<b>English</b>				
Self-Contained (n=2)	.	12.0%	6.5%	.
CTT (n=2)	.	33.3%	22.6%	.
SETSS (n=6)	.	35.3%	22.7%	.
<b>Mathematics</b>				
Self-Contained (n=2)	.	29.4%	16.7%	.
CTT (n=2)	.	56.8%	42.4%	.
SETSS (n=6)	.	60.0%	41.7%	.
<b>Percent at 75th Growth Percentile or Higher</b>				
<b>English</b>				
English Language Learners (n=2)	.	48.5%	42.7%	.
Lowest Third Citywide (n=6)	.	54.3%	47.4%	.
Self-Contained/CTT/SETSS (n=3)	.	57.1%	50.0%	.
Black and Hispanic Males in Lowest Third Citywide (n=5)	.	52.9%	46.8%	.
<b>Mathematics</b>				
English Language Learners (n=2)	.	55.0%	44.0%	.
Lowest Third Citywide (n=18)	<b>38.9%</b>	52.9%	43.0%	.
Self-Contained/CTT/SETSS (n=3)	.	52.8%	44.3%	.
Black and Hispanic Males in Lowest Third Citywide (n=8)	.	50.0%	40.7%	.
Movement of students with disabilities to less restrictive environments (n=9)	.	0.28	0.20	.
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>				<b>0.0</b>

## PEER INDEX CALCULATION

The Peer Index is used to sort schools on the basis of demographics. A higher Peer Index indicates a higher need population. The Peer Index operates on a 1-100 scale and is calculated using the following formula:

FORMULA ( % eligible for free lunch x 30 ) + ( % students with disabilities x 30 ) + ( % Black/Hispanic x 30 ) + ( % English language learners x 10 ) = PEER INDEX

FOR THIS SCHOOL ( 65.7% x 30 ) + ( 7.2% x 30 ) + ( 97.9% x 30 ) + ( 0.9% x 10 ) = 51.35

PEER GROUP FOR: Brooklyn Ascend Charter School

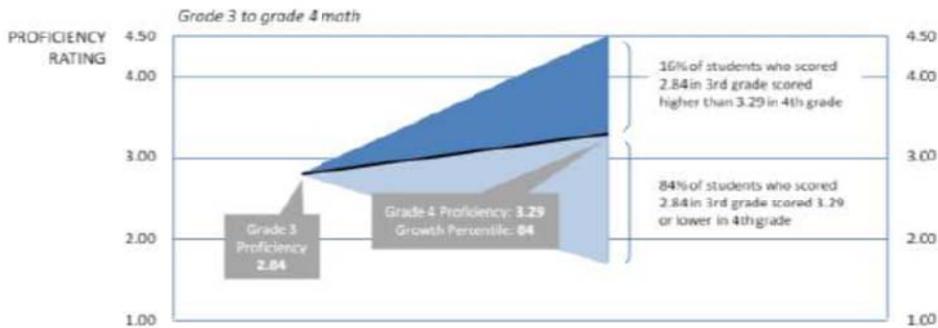
Each school's performance is compared to the performance of schools in its peer group. Peer schools are those New York City public schools with a student population most like this school's population, according to the peer index. Each elementary and middle school has up to 40 peer schools and each K-8 school has up to 30 peer schools.

DBN	SCHOOL	PEER INDEX	% FREE LUNCH	% IEP	% BLACK or HISPANIC	% ELL
15K094	P.S. 094 The Henry Longfellow	49.25	90.5%	8.0%	47.3%	55.0%
19K159	P.S. 159 Isaac Pitkin	49.44	77.3%	11.4%	71.0%	15.4%
01M019	P.S. 019 Asher Levy	49.48	61.5%	24.0%	75.7%	11.3%
13K020	P.S. 020 Clinton Hill	49.84	62.8%	19.9%	88.5%	2.9%
15K130	P.S. 130 The Parkside	49.88	94.2%	17.8%	50.7%	10.8%
06M368	Hamilton Heights School	50.08	63.7%	8.1%	85.4%	29.1%
29Q132	P.S. 132 Ralph Bunche	50.12	56.5%	11.7%	98.1%	2.4%
84K702	Community Partnership Charter	50.23	56.0%	13.3%	98.2%	0.0%
31R022	P.S. 022 Graniteville	50.31	72.5%	20.2%	72.3%	8.1%
22K119	P.S. 119 Amersfort	50.38	64.2%	11.6%	88.8%	9.9%
29Q015	P.S. 015 Jackie Robinson	50.44	63.4%	13.4%	91.1%	0.8%
10X056	P.S. 056 Norwood Heights	50.49	81.3%	12.4%	67.3%	21.8%
11X121	P.S. 121 Throop	50.52	63.6%	11.9%	91.3%	4.9%
84M320	Manhattan Charter School	50.57	64.4%	14.4%	89.8%	0.0%
11X096	P.S. 096 Richard Rodgers	50.84	70.5%	14.1%	81.4%	10.2%
14K250	P.S. 250 George H. Lindsay	50.97	66.1%	11.2%	87.6%	14.8%
30Q017	P.S. 017 Henry David Thoreau	51.05	77.4%	17.0%	64.8%	32.9%
27Q060	P.S. 060 Woodhaven	51.21	74.9%	12.6%	77.9%	15.9%
84K517	Leadership Prep Bedford Stuyvesant Charter School	51.25	61.0%	9.5%	99.8%	1.8%
30Q151	P.S. 151 Mary D. Carter	51.27	75.4%	20.0%	68.4%	21.3%
<b>84K652</b>	<b>Brooklyn Ascend Charter School</b>	<b>51.35</b>	<b>65.7%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>97.9%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
06M366	Washington Heights Academy	51.39	65.1%	10.2%	86.4%	28.8%
11X178	P.S. 178 - Dr. Selman Walsman	51.82	53.1%	23.3%	94.8%	4.7%
84K701	Brooklyn Charter School	51.89	59.0%	14.0%	100.0%	0.0%
84Q170	Peninsula Preparatory Academy Charter School	51.94	65.9%	12.1%	94.2%	2.6%
30Q212	P.S. 212	51.98	71.8%	15.1%	79.4%	20.7%
22K134	P.S. K134	52.01	92.9%	15.6%	60.1%	14.3%
22K139	P.S. 139 Alexine A. Fenty	52.05	79.1%	12.5%	73.3%	25.7%
15K038	P.S. 038 The Pacific	52.11	66.7%	21.9%	81.4%	10.8%
84X718	Bronx Charter School for Better Learning	52.21	62.5%	12.1%	99.2%	0.8%
18K115	P.S. 115 Daniel Mucatel School	52.45	70.9%	8.2%	93.8%	5.7%
11X160	P.S. 160 Walt Disney	52.49	41.2%	36.1%	95.8%	5.8%
22K198	P.S. 198 Brooklyn	52.51	66.3%	12.0%	95.3%	4.4%
29Q036	P.S. 036 Saint Albans School	52.62	59.3%	17.5%	97.8%	2.2%
27Q066	P.S. 066 Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis	52.67	74.5%	16.6%	75.1%	28.1%
19K346	P.S. 346 Abe Stark	52.72	67.7%	14.0%	93.4%	1.9%
27Q254	P.S. 254	52.73	80.0%	15.2%	75.8%	14.3%
20K164	P.S. 164 Caesar Rodney	53.11	86.6%	24.0%	57.9%	25.7%
15K131	P.S. 131 Brooklyn	53.24	88.3%	11.8%	62.1%	45.8%
28Q082	P.S. 082 Hammond	53.30	89.2%	13.3%	64.7%	31.4%
84M351	Harlem Success Academy 1 Charter School	53.32	64.2%	14.9%	96.7%	5.9%
	PEER GROUP AVERAGES	51.36	70.1%	14.7%	81.9%	13.6%

The Progress Report for elementary and middle schools focuses on students' growth to proficiency and beyond, regardless of their starting point. The Progress Report measures individual students' growth on state English and Math tests using growth percentiles.

**1 GROWTH PERCENTILES**

A student's growth percentile compares his or her growth to the growth of all students in the City who started at the same level of proficiency the year before. A student's growth percentile is a number between 0 and 100, which represents the percentage of students with the same score on last year's test who scored the same or lower than the student on this year's test. For example, a student with a growth percentile of 84 earned a score on this year's test that was the same or higher than 84 percent of the students in the City who had the same score as he did last year.



**2 ADJUSTED GROWTH PERCENTILES**

To evaluate a school on its students' growth percentiles, the Progress Report uses an adjusted growth percentile. Growth percentile adjustments are based on students' demographic characteristics, and reflect average differences in growth compared to students with the same starting proficiency level. The adjustments are made to students' ending proficiency rating as follows:

CATEGORY		ADJUSTMENT
Special Education	Self-contained	+0.25
Special Education	CTT	+0.15
Special Education	SETSS	+0.10
Title I Free Lunch		+0.01 per 10% of students eligible

Note: special education program for purposes of adjustments is based on the most restrictive setting of students over the last four school years.

**3 MEDIAN ADJUSTED GROWTH PERCENTILES**

The Progress Report evaluates a school based on its median adjusted growth percentile, the adjusted growth percentile of the middle student when all the students' adjusted growth percentiles are listed from lowest to highest.

Progress Report Grade

**B**

**What does this grade mean?**

Schools are assigned letter grades based on their overall Progress Report score. Monetary bonuses may be given to principals and teachers at high-scoring schools. Schools that get Ds and Fs, or 3 Cs in a row, may face consequences, including change in school leadership or school closure.

**How did this school perform?**

- This school's overall score for 2009-10 is 33.2
- This school performed better than 50% of all Early Childhood schools citywide.

**This Progress Report is for:**

SCHOOL	Brooklyn Ascend Charter School (84K652)
SCHOOL LEADER	Kaleha Sykas
ENROLLMENT	248
SCHOOL TYPE	K-3
PEER INDEX	53.20

Category	Calculated Score		Category Grade
School Environment	12.4 out of 15		A
Student Performance	7.2 out of 25		B
Student Progress	11.3 out of 30		B
Additional Credit	2.3 (12 max)		
Score	33.2 out of 70		B

**How scores translate to grades:**

- Schools receive letter grades based on their overall score
- K-3 schools with an overall score between 26.9 - 55.7 receive a letter grade of B
- 35.7% of K-3 schools earned a B in 2009-10

**K-3 Table - Overall Grades**

Grade	Score range	City summary
A	55.8 or higher	28.6% of K-3 schools
B	26.9 - 55.7	35.7% of K-3 schools
C	21.0 - 26.8	21.4% of K-3 schools
D	20.2 - 20.9	7.1% of K-3 schools
F	20.1 or lower	7.2% of K-3 schools

**In This Report:**

Each school's Progress Report (1) measures student year-to-year progress, (2) compares the school to peer schools and (3) rewards success in moving all children forward, especially children with the greatest needs. The Progress Report measures four areas:

**School Environment**

uses parent, teacher and secondary student surveys and other data to measure necessary conditions for learning: attendance, academic expectations, communication, engagement and safety and respect.

**Student Performance**

measures student skill levels in English Language Arts and Math.

**Student Progress**

measures student performance in English Language Arts and Math compared to expected performance.

**Closing the Achievement Gap**

gives schools additional credit for exemplary progress with NCLB sub-groups.

The second page provides specific information about how the school performed in each of these areas.

**Quality Review Score**

This school has not received a Quality Review.

**State Accountability Status**

Based on its performance, this school's State accountability status is:

**In Good Standing (2009-10)**

This status is determined by the New York State Department of Education under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. It is separate from the school's Progress Report Grade.

**Additional Information**

**Closing the Achievement Gap**

Schools earn additional credit when their high-need students make the greatest progress in the City. These gains are based on students attaining higher than expected levels of proficiency on the third grade ELA and Math tests. We refer to this as "beating the odds". Schools earn additional credit for any one of the four student groups if the students perform beyond expected when compared to other Childhood schools Citywide.

This component can only improve a school's Progress Report grade. It cannot lower a school's grade.

Credit	"BTO" Progress Value	Student Group
-	-	ELA - "Beat the Odds" Progress Measure
-	-	English Language Learners
-	-	Self-Contained/CTT/SETSS
-	-	Hispanic Students
+1.5	1.97	Black Students
-	-	Math - "Beat the Odds" Progress Measure
-	-	English Language Learners
-	-	Self-Contained/CTT/SETSS
0.00	0.00	Hispanic Students
+0.75	1.21	Black Students

(-) indicates less than 10 students in this category

**Peer Schools**

Each school's performance is compared to the performance of schools in its peer group. Peer schools are those New York City public schools with a student population most like this school's population. Each school has up to 40 peer schools.

For Early Childhood Schools, peer schools are determined based on the percentage of students at each school that are English Language Learners, Special Education, Black/Hispanic and Title I eligible. An Early Childhood School's peer group can include Elementary, K-8, and Early Childhood schools. No matter what grades a school serves, only the 3rd grade test results are included in the calculations.

The peer schools for Brooklyn Ascend Charter School are:

DBN	School Name	DBN	School Name
84M311	Harlem Success Academy 1 Charter School	84M705	Amber Charter School
30Q111	P.S. 151 Mary D. Carter	10X295	P.S. 056 Sheila Mencher
29Q111	P.S. 181 Brookfield	84K359	The UT Charter School
27Q041	P.S. 045 Clarence Witherspoon	15K131	P.S. 131 Brooklyn
84K717	Carl C. Icahn Charter School	11X089	P.S. 089 Bronx
18K208	P.S. 208 Elsa Ebeling	11X076	P.S. 076 The Bennington School
27Q254	P.S. 254	84X209	South Bronx Charter School For Int'l. Culture & The Arts
27Q027	P.S. 297 Forest Park	84M284	Harlem Children's Zone/Promise Academy Charter School
21K228	P.S. 238 Anne Sullivan	25Q201	P.S. 201 The Discovery School for Inquiry and Research
30Q171	P.S. 171 Peter G. Van Aalst	21K188	P.S. 188 Michael E. Berly
28Q048	P.S. 048 William Wordsworth	24Q068	P.S. 068 Cambridge
84M311	Harlem Children's Zone/Promise Academy II	22K152	School of Science & Technology
29Q118	P.S. 118 Sunrise	22C315	P.S. 315
11K105	P.S. 105 Sen Abraham Bernstein	84X185	The Bronx Lighthouse Charter School
28Q010	P.S. 030 Queens	08X072	P.S. 072 Dr. William Dorney
84K318	Achievement First East New York School	16K021	P.S. 021 Conspus Attucks
30Q222	P.S. Q222 - Fire Fighter Christopher A. Sanabria School	08X036	P.S. 036 Unionport
18K114	P.S. 114 Ryder Elementary	08X182	P.S. 182
84K344	South Bronx Classical Charter School	30Q148	P.S. 148 Queens
29Q018	P.S. 038 Roosevelt	11X087	P.S. 087 Bronx
84K652	Brooklyn Ascend Charter School		

The Progress Report is a key component of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's and Chancellor Joel I. Klein's Children First reforms. The Progress Report is designed to assist administrators, principals and teachers in accelerating the learning of all students. The Progress Report also enables students, parents and the public to hold the NYC Department of Education and its schools accountable for student achievement and improvement and for ensuring a high quality education for every student in NYC's public schools. If you have any questions or comments about the Progress Report, please visit <http://schools.nyc.gov/AccountabilityTools/report/> or send us an email at [pr\\_support@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:pr_support@schools.nyc.gov).

# Results by Category

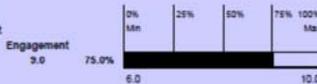
SCHOOL: Brooklyn Ascend Charter School (BKASZ)  
SCHOOL LEADER: Kalisha Sykes

Early Childhood

## HOW TO INTERPRET THIS CHART

A school is evaluated by asking how far its score in each category has moved along the range of scores for all schools. These charts show that movement as a percentage. In the example to the right, the school's score is 75% of the way from the lowest to the highest score in the City.

If a school performs at the top end of the range, the bar will be fully shaded. If a school performs at the low end of the range, the bar will not be shaded. If a school performs in the middle of the range, half the bar will be shaded.



In this example, the school's engagement is 9.0. This is 75% of the way from the lowest engagement at any school (6.0) to the highest engagement (10.0).

Below, the green charts on the left compare the school to its peer group. The blue charts on the right compare the school to schools Citywide. Peer scores count three times as much as City scores. Peer and City ranges are based on the outcomes of schools from 2009-09 and 2009-10.

## School Environment

Comprises 15 points of the Overall Score

This Year's Score:  
0.827 x 15 = 12.4

### Survey Scores (10 points)

Academic Expectations:

Communication:

Engagement:

Safety and Respect:

Attendance (5 points)

Your School's Score	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	Number of students
	Peer Min				Peer Max	City Min				City Max	
8.8	80.8%	5.7			9.3	85.7%	7.0			9.1	
8.2	80.6%	5.7			8.8	81.5%	6.0			8.7	
7.9	68.8%	5.7			8.9	65.4%	5.2			8.3	
9.0	83.3%	6.5			9.5	84.6%	5.8			9.4	
95.0%	94.9%	90.2%			96.1%	81.2%	55.9%			97.4%	

## Student Performance

Comprises 25 points of the Overall Score

This Year's Score:  
0.288 x 25 = 7.2

### English Language Arts

Percentage of Students at Proficiency (Level 3 or 4):

Mediar Student Proficiency (1.00-4.50):

### Mathematics

Percentage of Students at Proficiency (Level 3 or 4):

Mediar Student Proficiency (1.00-4.50):

Your School's Score	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	Number of students
	Peer Min				Peer Max	City Min				City Max	
50.9%	38.7%	22.0%			96.6%	41.1%	17.0%			99.4%	55
3.03	51.9%	2.47			3.55	52.2%	2.32			3.68	55
47.3%	-0.4%	47.8%			100.0%	1.7%	46.4%			100.0%	55
2.87	23.8%	2.46			4.18	24.4%	2.43			4.23	55

## Student Progress

Comprises 30 points of the Overall Score

This Year's Score:  
0.377 x 30 = 11.3

### English Language Arts

"Beat the Odds" Progress Measure

### Mathematics

"Beat the Odds" Progress Measure

Your School's Score	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	Number of students
	Peer Min				Peer Max	City Min				City Max	
1.89	49.8%	0.73			3.06	54.8%	0.68			2.89	55
1.15	23.2%	0.37			3.73	26.3%	0.32			3.47	55

## Part 9: Historic Accountability Reports



Charter School Renewal Report  
Charter Schools Office  
2011-2012

### **BROOKLYN ASCEND CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT**

**FEBRUARY 2012**

## Part : Executive Summary

### **School Overview and History:**

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School is an elementary/middle school serving approximately 567 students from kindergarten through fifth grade in the 2011-2012 school year.<sup>24</sup> The school opened in 2008 with grades K-2. The school is under the terms of its first charter and is projected to expand to grades K-6 during its current term, which expires January 14, 2013. If approved for renewal, the school is projected to reach its full grade span, K-12, during the 2018-2019 school year.<sup>25</sup> The school is currently housed in a private facility in District 18.<sup>26</sup>

The school enrolls new students in grades K-5. There were 2,744 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2011 lottery.<sup>27</sup> The student body includes 79.9% Free and Reduced Lunch students, compared to 72.5% in the district; 7.2% special education students, compared to 14.2% in the district; and 0.4% English language learners, compared to 5.5% in the district.<sup>28</sup> The average attendance rate for the 2011-2012 school year to date was 96.7%.<sup>29</sup> The school scored Above Average on the Academic Expectations, Communication, and Safety & Respect sections of the NYC DOE School Survey in 2010-2011, and Average on the Engagement section; 54% of the school's parents responded to the survey, and 85% of the school's teachers.<sup>30</sup>

The school earned a C on its NYC DOE Progress Report in 2010-2011, and a B in 2009-2010.<sup>31</sup> The school has outperformed its Community School District in ELA for each of the past two years and in Math in 2010-2011. The school has outperformed the city averages in ELA in each of the past two years.<sup>32</sup> The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.<sup>33</sup>

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School is part of the Ascend Learning network, a charter management organization (CMO). The CMO provides back office support, curriculum assessment; student assessment data gathering, and technology support, among other services.

### **Annual Review Process Overview:**

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

The following experts participated in the review of this school on February 29, 2012:

- Sonya Hooks, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSO

---

<sup>24</sup> Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 2/17/2012

<sup>25</sup> NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

<sup>26</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

<sup>27</sup> Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 2/17/2012

<sup>28</sup> NYC DOE ATS system as of 4/3/2012

<sup>29</sup> Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 2/17/2012

<sup>30</sup> NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

<sup>31</sup> NYC DOE Progress Report – <http://schools.nyc.gov/progressreport>

<sup>32</sup> NYC DOE website – <http://schools.nyc.gov/> (search: test results); District and city averages are for the grade levels corresponding to the school's testing grades in specified years

<sup>33</sup> New York State Education Department - [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov)

- Laurie Price, Director of Operations, NYC DOE CSO
- Angela Chubb, Consultant

## Part 2: Findings

### Areas of Strength:

- The school has well defined intervention programs to support all students and provides students at all academic levels with opportunities for growth.
  - The school leaders began planning earlier in the academic year to address struggling students and developed a consistent approach to address skill weaknesses across all grade levels.
  - The school developed a Kindergarten Task Force that works together to create formative assessments for each Kindergarten classroom. The task force is made up of Kindergarten staff and some support personnel.
  - The school holds regular grade level meetings for all teachers and “re-teaching” lessons for specific skills identified through data collection.
  - The school holds small group tutoring sessions in each classroom as pull-asides.
  - School leadership reported that data tools provided by Ascend Learning are improved from last year and provide more insight into student skill acquisition. These improvements include DAKS (SABIS curriculum assessments) and 2 full mock exams.
- The school displays a positive, safe, and productive learning environment with strong attention paid to behavior management.
  - On the day of the visit, the school, teachers and students were observed to share a common language of learning, and behavior norms were communicated in each classroom.
  - Interviewed teachers commented on the school's strong commitment to and focus on student behavior.
  - Observed classroom teachers were using positive language to support student learning, redirecting student behavior with agreed upon non-verbal cues and signals.
  - The school added a Director of Student Life to focus on the leadership development of students and helping students become invested in their own learning. New programs have been designed to help students put their leadership roles into practice across the school, including having students act as Prefects in each classroom.
  - Core Values are implemented across the school. Teachers explicitly teach the Ascend Learning Core Values during morning motivation, morning meeting and character education lessons. The school utilizes shared language to teach these values.
- The school has developed an Associate Teacher Program to support learning.
  - The program provides support for the lead classroom teacher with one associate teacher assigned to each grade level.
  - The program allows two teachers to work together to meet the needs of all students with both teachers sharing the instructional responsibilities for all students.
  - The program allows time for small group instruction within in each lesson; one teacher is able to pull a small group while the other provides direct instruction for the class.
  - The program provides authentic professional development for new teachers and on-the-job training.

- The program serves as a “grow your own” teacher recruitment initiative. Currently, school leadership plans for two of the Kindergarten associates to take on their own classrooms next year.
- The school has an engaged and supportive family community, with an active Family Association Program.
  - The principal communicates effectively and regularly with parents and families.
  - The school has an established parent organization with targeted roles and responsibilities.
  - There is parent representation on the board and steering committee.
  - The Family Association Program raised \$11,000 for the school.
  - Parents participate in monthly breakfasts with the leadership team to discuss any concerns through an open round-robin discussion led by the principal.
- The school provides a robust professional development plan for all staff members.
  - The school provides a three week summer institute for staff. The institute is focused on procedures, management, and culture. Plans for the upcoming summer include more focus on instruction for returning staff members.
  - Summer professional development is differentiated by grade level (content and curriculum) and delivered by team leaders.
  - The professional development plan is driven by the leadership team and based on results of a staff survey, which indicated staff would like grade-specific professional development focused on instructional practice. Interviewed teachers reported that the focus on management was helpful, but they needed more support with instruction.
  - The school revamped the schedule to create common team planning for grade level lead teachers.

#### **Areas of Growth:**

- The school is encouraged to continue to build upon the established culture and climate that is currently in place.
  - The school should consider displaying student work throughout the hallways and classrooms, including rubrics for scoring and exemplars to demonstrate proficiency and as a way to showcase student work.
  - The school should continue to improve behavior management and the implementation and consistent use of behavior systems in each classroom. In some observed classrooms, there were varying degrees of use of the red/yellow/green school-wide system described in the leadership team meeting.
  - The school should explore ways to balance the focus on behavior with time spent on academics. In observed classrooms, the teachers spent more time redirecting student behavior and managing student behavior than teaching.
- The school is encouraged to continue to focus on effective and consistent instructional delivery in all classrooms and grade levels.
  - Interviewed teachers were not familiar with the academic standards and assessments in other grade levels. The school should explore opportunities for teachers to work on vertical alignment of all academic expectations, particularly as the school continues to add middle school grades.
  - The school should work to improve the pacing and rigor of each lesson through ongoing and frequent observations by the principal and instructional leaders.
  - School leaders are encouraged to explore ways to provide specific feedback to teachers about lesson pace and rigor.
  - In observed classrooms, learning objectives were not consistently posted or communicated. The school should work to ensure clear learning objectives are posted and communicated to students for each lesson.
  - In some observed classrooms, the associate teachers did not appear to have a specific role related to instruction. The school should continue to provide

additional direction and professional development support to associate teachers so that they are used as effectively as possible in each classroom.

- The school is encouraged to provide additional support and training for paraprofessionals as well as clear expectations for expected classroom support models. This may include reaching out to partner agencies that supply paraprofessionals to ensure alignment around job roles and responsibilities.
- Interviewed teachers reported that data collection and usage was not as robust in grades K-2 as in grades 3-5. The school is encouraged to ensure ample assessments are being used to collect data at the K-2 level.
- School leaders reported several challenges with the SABIS curriculum (i.e., not enough exposure to nonfiction texts) that they are working to address. The school is encouraged to continue to put supplemental structures in place to support the SABIS curriculum model.
- The school is encouraged to explore additional strategies to improve student achievement and progress. One of the school's charter goals is to achieve a 'B' on the Student Progress section of the NYC DOE Progress Report. In 2010-2011, the school received a 'C' on the Student Progress section and thus did not meet this goal.

## Part 3: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

### The CSO Accountability Framework

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

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

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

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

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

### 2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

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

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

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

### 3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have:

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

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

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

### 3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

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

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

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

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

### 4a. School Expansion or Model Replication

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

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

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

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

### 4b. Organizational Sustainability

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

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

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

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

### 4c. School or Model Improvements

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

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

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

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



**Department of  
Education**

*Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor*

**Charter School Annual Site Visit Report  
Charter Schools Office  
2010-2011**

**BROOKLYN ASCEND CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT**

**APRIL 2011**

## Part 1: Executive Summary

### School Overview and History:

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School is an elementary/middle/high school serving approximately 428 students from grade kindergarten through grade four in the 2010-2011 school year.<sup>34</sup> The school opened in 2008 with grades kindergarten through two. It has plans to grow to serve students grades kindergarten through twelve.<sup>35</sup> It is currently housed in a private facility in District 18.<sup>36</sup>

The school population comprises 92.4% Black, 3.9% Hispanic, 0.2% White and 0.2% Asian students. 78.2% of students are designated as Title I, compared to 73.0% in the district.<sup>37</sup> The student body includes 2.5% English language learners (ELL) and 7.4% special education students (SPED), compared to district averages of 6.3% designated as ELL and 14.1% receiving SPED services.<sup>38</sup>

The school earned a B on its Progress Report in 2009-2010. The average attendance rate for the 2009-2010 school year was 95.8%.<sup>39</sup> The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.<sup>40</sup>

### Annual Review Process Overview:

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

The following experts participated in the review of this school on April 11, 2011:

- Sonya Hooks, Senior Director, NYC DOE Charter Schools Office
- Richard Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE Charter Schools Office
- Sonia Park, Senior Director, NYC DOE Charter Schools Office

---

<sup>34</sup> NYC DOE ATS system

<sup>35</sup> NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

<sup>36</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

<sup>37</sup> Demographic Data drawn from NYC DOE ATS System on June 30, 2011

<sup>38</sup> NYC DOE ATS system; data pulled June 30, 2011

<sup>39</sup> NYC DOE School Progress Report

<sup>40</sup> New York State Education Department - [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov)

## Part 2: Findings

### Areas of Strength

- The school has a strong, very structured and consistently delivered academic program with a common instructional approach, routines and practices across classrooms.
  - School leadership reports that the SABIS curriculum implementation continues to improve and provides a strong foundation for lesson planning and consistent instructional practice; all observed classrooms provided evidence of adherence to model (“I do, we do, you do”), use of data findings to target classroom instruction, overall instructional pacing (unit and lesson sequencing) and use of classroom print environment.
  - Doug Lemov’s *Teach Like a Champion* pedagogical practices are a school-wide focus and were the focus of the school’s Summer Institute. Interviewed teachers confirmed the focus and some evidence of the practices were observed in visited classrooms.
  - Clearly identified lesson focus was observed in all visited classrooms.
- There is a strong, focused leadership team with additional members added to further support instruction, data use and professional growth.
  - The school added a Director of Data and Analytics, an Extended Learning Coordinator and Grade Team Leaders to staffing structure.
  - Leadership is committed to a “no excuses” approach to school improvement with strong reflective practice routines built into school calendar and schedule.
  - School instructional leaders conduct Power Walks and informal classroom observations to provide teachers frequent, focused feedback on professional practice, including what is praise-worthy and what needs further attention for professional growth.
- Collaboration between administrators and teachers is strong and collegial, and is a positive resource for school performance initiatives.
  - Annual Three-Week Summer Institute is held for staff to prepare for new school year; program adjusted each year in response to performance results and feedback. More teacher-delivered, as opposed to out-sourced, training sessions each year. Interviewed teachers spoke positively of the institute, one saying it has “gotten better every year.”
  - Weekly Friday Professional Development (PD) sessions are held following early release of students at 2PM; these sessions provide opportunities for collaboration and planning.
  - Grade Level Teaming: school added Grade Level Team Leaders to their organization this school year. Team Leaders facilitate Friday early dismissal meetings, providing PD, lesson plan and data discussions, and planning for academic or behavioral interventions within the grade level team. Interviewed teachers praised administration for listening to teachers and adjusting schedule of weekly PD from Monday after school to Friday early release. *Teach Like a Champion* practices implementation is a discussion point in Grade Level teams.
- Strong use of data at the Ascend system-level and the school leadership level, with an evident commitment to a self-reflective, “no-excuses” approach to looking at performance data.
  - School has hired a Director of Data and Analytics to help with data collection, analysis and assessment.
  - A team, including the Director of Data and Analytics, the Dean of Instruction and the Extended Learning Coordinator supports turning data analysis into instructional practice for regular school day instruction and tutoring programs to ensure identified learning gaps are addressed.

- School administers mock assessments every six weeks as well as uses other assessments, STAR and CAT, to monitor student progress and adjust instruction. SABIS redesigned its assessments to better reflect language of state assessments.
- School leadership shared self-evaluation with entire staff for feedback. Teacher interviews were positive about openness of leadership to staff feedback and changes in training as a result. Leadership discussions were frank, without defensiveness, and the school prides itself on being proactive, not reactive.
- The school has strong parental support as evidenced by:
  - High attendance at parent conferences (at two conferences, attendance was approximately 95%) and parent involvement in fundraising and other school improvement and cultural events (i.e., Penny Wars; Saturday Carnival).
  - Monthly PTA meetings are held with approximately 20-30 parents in attendance.
- School benefits from sound operational and financial practices with a long term lease on private space, adequate enrollment revenue to sustain day to day operations with positive cash flow and a positive end of year balance.

### Areas of Growth

- The school should continue to refine its outreach strategies for recruitment of ELL/SPED students and document its efforts for ongoing monitoring of effectiveness in reaching comparable percentages with its CSD.
  - The school's student population currently includes 2.5% ELL students, which is lower than the district average of 6.3%, and 7.4% SPED students, which is lower than the district average of 14.1%.<sup>41</sup>
- School leadership and instructional staff should continue to work on improving instruction, consistent with school's initiative around Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion*:
  - While there was great consistency in lesson structure and all classes consistently identified lesson goals, effectiveness of pacing varied across classrooms. The school should use feedback from its classroom observations and weekly grade level team PD opportunities to improve pacing to a consistent level in all classrooms.
  - School should look for ways to incorporate more strategic differentiation into their instructional model (during independent practice, for example); very little differentiation was observed in classrooms on the day of the visits.
  - Some instances of higher level questioning and thinking were observed but not consistently or effectively in all visited classrooms; school should continue to work on incorporating questioning techniques identified in Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion* to improve practice across classrooms.
  - Observed lessons, despite their consistency, often lacked sufficient rigor to drive the level of achievement Brooklyn Ascend seeks to reach. School leadership and grade level teams should work together to reach a common understanding of instructional rigor and how to consistently incorporate more rigorous instruction in planning and lesson delivery.
  - On the day of the visit a few examples of effective use of Student Prefects were observed. It's a promising practice for effective instruction, student engagement and developing a strong academic culture within the school. The school should continue to advance its implementation of this unique design feature.
- The school should continue its efforts to improve parent engagement in school operations.

---

<sup>41</sup> NYC DOE ATS system; data pulled on June 30, 2011

- It should ensure that its PTA has elected officers who assume responsibilities for agenda setting and running monthly meetings.
- As planned, the school should add a parent representative to its Board of Trustees.
- Regular meetings between school leadership and PTA lead should be scheduled to ensure greater communication and involvement around strategic issues and concerns confronting the school.
- The school should continue to improve its use of data to inform instruction and school improvement efforts.
  - Through professional development and professional collaboration opportunities, improve individual teacher ownership of data analysis and use of data to adjust instruction.
  - Expand focused use of data to non-testing grades.
  - Improve data systems to make use of longitudinal data easier for administrators and teachers.
- The Board of Trustees should continue to monitor school's operational and financial health, particularly as the school reaches enrollment capacity and facilities costs continue to increase.

## Part 3: Framing Questions

### FRAMING QUESTIONS:

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

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

### Annual Site Visit Rubric:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
  - Academic Goals and Mission
    - School components and curriculum align together and holistically support the mission
    - School has high academic expectations and employs strategies for the full range of students served by the school, including those at risk and those with special needs
  - Curriculum and Instruction
    - The educational plan is flexible and is adjusted to meet the performance levels and learning needs of all enrolled students
    - School implements programming to address the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs
    - Teachers demonstrate the use of differentiated instructional techniques to support the varying ways by which students learn
    - School has implemented programming for students who need remediation or acceleration
  - School Culture
    - The culture is strong, intentional, supportive and sustainable and promotes student learning
    - The school motivates all students and respects the diversity of learners and cultures in the community
    - School offers programs, activities or support services beyond academics to address students' social and emotional needs

- School calendar and day are set to provide extra supports to ensure that students are able to meet and exceed academic goals
  - Schedule for communication to parents/students is timely and allows for due process, includes strategies to prepare students for transitions and strategies for those students who are not on schedule, presents a clear and fair system that complies with students' due process rights
  - Structures that foster the development of authentic, sustained, caring, respectful relationships among all stakeholders within school
  - Behavioral expectations and social supports that reflect the school's mission and comply with all applicable laws and regulations
  - Assessment
    - Establishes a culture of continuous improvement and accountability for student learning
    - Develops assessments that shape and inform instruction on an ongoing basis and develop data that's used to gauge student, teacher and school progress through formative and summative assessment
    - Student learning measured with multiple forms of assessments/metrics
    - Develops educational goals and performance metrics that are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission and Time-Specific
    - Develops assessments that are appropriately aligned with curriculum, instruction, and adopted standards
    - Provides evidence of how data will influence instruction, professional development and curricular adjustments
  - Parent Engagement
    - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
    - Capacity to communicate effectively with parents and families
2. Is the School a Viable Organization
- Governance Structures and Organizational Design
    - School has articulated appropriate roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structure for school community members (including Board of Trustees and school leadership)
    - An accountability structure that provides effective oversight of the educational program and fiscal components of the school is in place and utilized
    - Board regularly reviews a data dashboard of student achievement and fiscal management that forms the basis for Board discussions and decisions
    - Board has diverse skill set that lends itself to strong educational / operational oversight
    - Board has an articulated process for ongoing policy development, Board member development and self-evaluation
    - Organizational charts are aligned with mission; roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
    - Board has developed essential strategic partnerships with organizations that support the mission of the school
  - Community Support
    - School Leadership demonstrated responsiveness to the unique needs and interests of the community to be served
    - School has established a presence in the community and has buy in from community members
3. Is the School in Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations
- Special Populations
    - Well-defined plan and sufficient capacity to service the learning needs of Special Education students, English Language Learners
    - School adequately addresses the academic and non academic needs of students in need of remediation, students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and gifted students

- There is a coherent plan for meeting the non-academic needs of students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and other populations
- School employs a process to identify students at risk of not meeting expectations and creates intervention plans and follow up
- School demonstrates a comprehensive recruitment, enrollment and retention approach that is sensitive to the diverse needs of students
- School admission policy and lottery preferences serve to create a student body that reflects community demographics and give a preference to community school district residents
- Safety and Security
  - School is well maintained
  - Transitions and student gatherings are orderly and well supervised
  - Expectations for student behavior are well known and are enforced fairly
  - School is current with all safety recruitments and drills.
  - AED machines are in operation and school staff is trained in CPR



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

BROOKLYN ASCEND  
CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

JUNE 2010

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE  
52 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007

## Part 1: Executive Summary

### School Overview and History:

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School is an elementary/middle/high school serving approximately 250 students from kindergarten through grade 3 in the 2009-2010 school year.<sup>1</sup> The school opened in 2008 with students in kindergarten through grade 2, and will grow to serve students in kindergarten through grade 12.<sup>2</sup> It is currently housed in a private facility in District 18.<sup>3</sup>

The school population comprises 93% Black, 4% Hispanic, 0% White, and 0% Asian students. 83% of students are designated as Title I.<sup>4</sup> The student body includes 1% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%.<sup>5</sup>

The school earned a B on its 2009-2010 Progress Report. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 95.8%.<sup>6</sup>

### Annual Review Process Overview:

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

The following experts participated in the review of this school:

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

---

<sup>1</sup> NYC DOE ATS system

<sup>2</sup> NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

<sup>3</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

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

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

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

## Part 2: Findings

### What the school does well

- The school has developed a cohesive, strength-based instructional and professional development program.
  - Teachers work towards academic achievement through the SABIS approach that promises "to prepare all students for college, equip them with the ability and desire for lifelong learning, and strengthen their civic, ethical and moral values."
  - Teaching strategies focus on best practices, using direct instruction with particular attention to specified pacing charts and frequent testing of point and perfect classroom practice.
  - Staff members look at data to inform instruction and planning during weekly grade-level meetings.
  - Three-week Summer Institute Planning forms the basis for professional development all year. Teachers meet weekly with the Director of Instruction and develop specific goals for two-week periods for review and support. PD includes work with lesson plan templates, whole school systems, social and emotional issues, schoolwide concerns and goals, etc.
  - The Director of Instruction maintains contact with and support of each teacher by visiting the classrooms each week, working on review of lesson plans and teacher practice, holding individual conferences, and articulating strategies that push towards academic and whole school development
  - The Dean of Students and Director of Special Education are in all classrooms frequently to support students and staff working on specific learning and behavioral concerns. The Director and Director of Instruction are presences as well, so that all are working together on overseeing implementation of the direct instruction model and progress toward the specific goals of the school.
  - Currently the school teaches grades K-3, and while the classrooms reflect grade level differences in content, there are consistent teaching strategies and school routines throughout.
- The school employs a rigorous assessment system and strong data tracking tools to monitor student performance and inform teaching and learning.
  - The SABIS instructional program guides instruction, documents progress of each student in each grade through three week and semester cycles, and provides posters and other materials. Student levels and improvement are accessible to staff as they regularly examine and review student achievement.
  - The STAR program includes computer-administered individual reading tests every six weeks.
  - The Terra Nova assessment is administered at the beginning and end of each year.
  - Classroom assessments include writing tests, i.e. letter writing.
  - Students' progress is communicated to parents on a weekly basis and during report card meeting family appointments.
- The school fosters a safe learning environment that encourages student learning and ensures the security of students and faculty.
  - The respectful and collaborative culture in each classroom is evident in the respectful tones that staff and students when interacting with each other.
  - Clear and consistent routines and expectations are evident in the classrooms, the cafeteria, and the hallway transitions; behavior guidelines

- are posted in classroom signs such as "HALLS" (Hands at your sides, Attention forward, Lines are straight, Silence); hand signals are clear, other clapping and finger snapping and gestures are used for appreciation of responses and reminding of focus, etc.
  - Motivational, Study and Behavior Guidelines are posted in each room; students repeat "I am hungry for knowledge to go to college" and "Show what I know" to deepen focus and increase effort.
  - Student work is displayed on classroom walls and on the hallway bulletin boards, reinforcing academic goals and celebrating student achievement.
- The school has developed a strong culture that encourages academic excellence and allows all students to interact in a supportive learning community.
  - The morning meeting/breakfast is used to help students focus on the learning goals for the day: students enter quietly and have breakfast in their class groups; the teacher then leads homework review and inspirational call and response phrases; finally, students help clean up to share in the care of the school community. Students responded easily and quickly when asked to pick up items that had fallen on the classroom floors.
  - Students are guided to resolve conflicts and concerns by using respectful language and tone, both through individual guidance and through the positive role modeling of the adults in the learning community.
  - Routines are implemented clearly in all classrooms, allowing for consistency of expectations throughout the school.
  - Present in all classrooms are posters with agendas and schedules, steps for the writing process, literature titles, number lines, alphabets, vocabulary words, signs for hand signals, word walls, a "bank of knowledge," days of the year and weekdays, hallway behavior guidelines, and Text Talk materials, which support the academic focus and the learning community throughout the school. The rooms also each contain one or two computers.
  - Celebration of student work is evident in hallways through bulletin boards that reflect units of study as in Literature by Faith Ringgold, Prepositions, Organisms, etc. The school's Core Values are also prominently displayed on banners in the hallway.

#### **What the school needs to improve**

- The school should continue to develop additional ways for the students to demonstrate their mastery in different subject areas.
  - The testing program is strong and implemented soundly; consideration may be given to cross-curriculum projects which would help students expand their ways of learning through providing additional ways to deepen critical learning skills.
  - The school should consider moving from informal oral experiences that students lead in classroom subject activities to more formal presentations, in order to support practice in sharing mastery of subject matter, defending using evidence, responding to questions, and "on-the-spot" thinking.
- The school should continue to analyze student work as an indicator of mastery.
  - The school should further develop the process of analyzing sample student work during staff meetings, and using students' work as additional data that can inform ideas for lesson planning.
  - The school should continue displaying more student work in classrooms, and in the hallways to celebrate effort and the value the school places on the energy and effort students demonstrate with their studies.

- The school should continue to work on ways to sustain their consistent expectations and routines through next year's growth.
  - The school should consider developing activities and events that orient students and families to the routines and roles all play in achieving the goals of the school.
  - The school should continue deepening the focus on incorporating new staff into the emerging culture, supporting the learning curve that is natural to new staff becoming a part of a learning community.

## Part 3: Framing Questions

### FRAMING QUESTIONS:

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

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

### Annual Site Visit Rubric:

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

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

# Quality Review Report

## 2008-2009

**Brooklyn Ascend Charter School**

**K652**

**205 Rockaway Parkway  
Brooklyn  
NY 11212**

**Board Chair: Mr. David Graff**

**Dates of review: April 21, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer(s):  
Aamir Raza, Chris Hawkins, Fred Lisker  
&  
Joy Stopher (Cambridge Education)**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Brooklyn Ascend Charter School is serving 213 students from K-2 grade. At full capacity, the school plans to serve K-12 grades. The school population comprises 96% Black and 4% Hispanic students. The student body includes less than 1% English language learners and 7% special education students. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 96%.

### Overall Evaluation

The Brooklyn Ascend Charter School (“BACS”) has high expectations for its students, with the aim to ensure that they are all “college bound”. During its first year, school leaders have worked well with staff to establish the culture of the school, to put clear systems and procedures in place, and to ensure that students are respectful and behave well. Together, they have created a calm, orderly environment for learning. The school is developing good relationships with parents and is actively involving them in understanding and supporting their children’s academic goals. The principal’s knowledge of students and their families is enhancing personal and academic development.

The school has made a good start in its collection and analysis of data and is effectively monitoring the progress of individual students, classes, and grades. It is using data well to support special education students and students who are performing below grade level, putting in detailed action plans for improvement. The school has not extended its analysis of data to look at the performance and progress of different subgroups.

Teachers receive regular professional development and there are increasing opportunities for them to share best practice and reflect on their instruction. Instructional leaders provide good feedback on the lessons they observe and follow up with professional development and discussion. The school does not yet have formalized individual professional development plans or fully developed induction procedures for teachers new to the school. As the school implements its curriculum, leaders are monitoring its effectiveness in meeting the needs of all students. Not all teachers are able to differentiate their instruction sufficiently well to meet the needs of higher achievers or to use a wide range of teaching strategies to engage and motivate students. The use of technology to enhance teaching and learning is limited.

The school is now moving towards creating its plans and priorities for the future and increasing the level of collaboration. The lack of transparency in the respective roles, responsibilities, and lines of accountability among the school’s current leadership arrangements is, to some extent, inhibiting open collaboration and genuine self-reflection. While leaders have been successful in establishing a shared commitment to the culture of the school, the whole school community does not yet share a common vision for the future. Notwithstanding, there is much good practice on which to build in creating the longer term plans and structures designed to enable the school to achieve its overarching goals for student outcomes.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school is collecting and analyzing data well, giving leaders a clear picture of the progress that students are making.
- Special education students and struggling students receive good support.
- The school is developing good relationships with parents and is providing them with information to enable them to support their children.
- There are clear systems and procedures in place to ensure that the school runs smoothly.
- The school has successfully set high expectations for its students.
- The principal's personal knowledge of students and their families supports their personal and academic development.
- Students are respectful and behave well.
- Teachers are receiving a good range of professional development and opportunities to share best practice.
- Instructional leaders are effectively monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and are ensuring consistency in lesson planning.

### Areas of Concern

- As the school develops, clearly define roles, responsibilities, and lines of accountability to support open collaboration and self-reflection.
- Ensure that the entire school community has a shared vision for the future.
- Improve strategic planning by prioritizing goals and building in interim benchmarks and timeframes to measure success and make adjustments.
- Increase the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning.
- Develop a greater range of teaching strategies to engage and motivate all students, whatever their needs.
- Ensure that all teachers differentiate instruction sufficiently well to challenge and meet the needs of higher achieving students.
- Extend data collection and analysis to monitor the performance and progress of subgroups.
- Formalize individual professional development plans for staff and develop induction procedures for teachers new to the school.
- Improve internal financial controls.

## Part 3: Main Findings

**How well the school meets Charter School Office (CSO) evaluation criteria.**

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student’s progress over time.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

School leaders have a clear picture of the progress that students are making through their collection and analysis of assessment data. The school has chosen to implement the SABIS educational system, which has interwoven weekly electronic assessments. It is eager to ensure that the results are consistent with those from other tests such as Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) and TerraNova. In first and second grades therefore, the comprehensive testing includes the weekly periodic tests and end of term tests, as well as six-weekly STAR assessments and TerraNova exams at the beginning and end of the year. The school has created its own internal assessments for kindergarten students, giving it a good set of baseline data from which to measure progress. As well as the analysis of individual student data, the school is able to compare the progress and achievement of students in different classes. The subject data in English, for example, shows much greater variation in student performance in spelling and handwriting than it does in grammar, phonics, reading comprehension and vocabulary. This is supporting the school in targeting the precise areas for improvement. Previous analysis led to the introduction of guided reading. Data analysis extends to math, science, and social studies.

There is very effective monitoring of the performance of special education students and that of struggling students. Students identified as ‘at risk’ receive more targeted instruction in the ‘intensives’ program where their progress is closely monitored. While the school is introducing the use of NYSESLAT for its very small English language learner population, it is not yet monitoring the performance of other subgroups such as by gender or ethnicity.

Teachers meet regularly to discuss data and the dean of instruction is very active in promoting the use of data to drive instruction. There is however, inconsistency in staff confidence to do this. Leaders have identified increased professional development in the use of data as ‘an area for growth’, alongside encouraging teachers who grade exams across the entire grade to present their findings.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The staff worked collaboratively to set the school’s “big goals” which include an ambitious target of one and a half year growth on or above grade level. The school has

chosen to implement a curriculum with an emphasis on goal setting across grade levels and classrooms. While there is some way to go before the school fully develops this across all core subjects with differentiated plans and timeframes, it has made a good start in creating a culture in which the achievement of goals is part of everyday discussion. It is at its best in reading and in the plans for “at risk” students. Parents know which level their child is reading at and where they need to be at the end of the year. Students are in no doubt that they are “college bound” and are aware of the links between that aim and their reading. One kindergarten student said, “We have to read because we need to know words when we go to college”. The school has successfully communicated its high expectations to students and parents. There is variation in the extent to which students understand their next learning steps, but generally, they are aware of the “goal for the day”. In some classes, teachers maintain very detailed charts so that students can track their progress and compare their performance with their peers.

Students below grade level have individual “promotion in doubt” action plans, which also involve parents, giving them clear steps to support their child. Well-attended parent teacher conferences and workshops to share strategies have proven to be successful in involving parents in their child’s education. It is increasingly common for parents to visit classrooms and observe what is happening.

Having communicated the expectations and established a ‘culture focus’, school leaders are beginning to widen collaboration to develop a strategic development plan for the future. They are aware that there was “a lot of top-down to start with”. The grade planning teams have proven to be a useful means of communication and support teachers in understanding how data can drive instruction. Leaders are exploring organizational ways in which they can facilitate more regular collaboration.

**Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school is implementing the SABIS educational system in English language arts, math, science, social studies and its choice of world language, Spanish. The interwoven assessments are effective in providing the school with meaningful ongoing data to monitor student progress and the means by which leaders hold teachers accountable. Teachers produce detailed lesson plans for what they intend to teach and leaders are providing continuing professional development and support in this area. The school is continuing to prioritize reading and is checking to ensure that, as it implements the SABIS curriculum, it meets the needs of all of its students. This monitoring led to the introduction of guided reading with small group instruction, “buddy” reading and independent reading time.

Students study Spanish four times a week, art three times a week, and have alternate six-week blocks of physical education and music. As the curriculum demands a high level of whole class instruction, in some lessons the pace of learning is slow and does not provide enough challenge or excitement for students. Students said that their favorite lessons include experiments in science, projects in art, and gym. They expressed a view that other lessons “could be more fun and exciting”. In the best

lessons, teachers use a range of instructional strategies to help students learn and actively involve them in their learning. Not all teachers are able to do this. The school has focused strongly on promoting good behavior and students show high levels of respect. There is much celebration, positive reinforcement, and reward. However, in lessons, this is sometimes to the detriment of engaging and practical activities, particularly for the youngest students. Teachers make good use of rubrics, word walls, and motivational charts in their classrooms but the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning is limited.

The school is very successfully using its intensives program to 'pull out' struggling students and provide them with extra support. It is meeting the needs of higher achieving students through guided reading. Teachers also involve them in acting as 'prefects' to help other students in lessons. In other classes, not all teachers are able to differentiate their instruction sufficiently well to challenge and meet the needs of the higher achievers.

There are effective systems in place to promote good attendance and punctuality and this is reflected in the current attendance rate of 96%.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

Prior to the opening of the school in September 2008, staff attended a three-week summer institute to develop the 'big goals' and to work together to build and understand the culture of their new school. Teachers described this preparation as "very comprehensive" and commented that by the first day everyone knew the general procedures and structures. In fact, they had practiced the arrival of students several times! The principal greets each student as they arrive in the morning, shaking hands and addressing them by name. Her personal knowledge of each student, and the majority of their parents, makes a significant contribution to their personal and academic development. The special education coordinator has worked within the community, and uses her expertise and knowledge to bring parents in to help them access the appropriate support services.

Professional development activity has continued to focus on the culture of the school and on ensuring consistent implementation of the school's high expectations for student behavior. Leaders make full use of a range of strategies, including early dismissal and inviting parents into classes, in order to promote and maintain good behavior. Students are very respectful and behave well. The school is a quiet, orderly, learning environment.

During the course of the school's first year, there has been a move towards providing more individualized professional development and support for teachers. Teachers value these improvements. Instructional leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning and provide focused feedback. They match the level and frequency of monitoring to individual need and provide appropriate support. There are no formalized individual professional development plans linked to school goals.

Teachers are encouraged to visit each other's classes and have started to use videos to see best practice in action. They receive weekly after school professional development and the twice-weekly grade team meetings provide more opportunities to share effective practices and ideas. 'Teachers from America' provide effective professional development for new teachers. The school has not yet developed comprehensive induction and support procedures for those staff who are new to the school.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

**This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.**

The school's recent self-evaluation shows that the principal and deans reflect well on the progress of the school and have accurately identified areas for improvement. Their roles are developing as the school makes the transition from a reliance on the current management support, provided by Ascend Learning, to more empowered leadership. The respective roles, responsibilities, and subsequent lines of accountability within the school's leadership are not sufficiently transparent at present. This is confusing some staff and is restricting the development of genuinely open collaboration and self-reflection. While leaders have been successful in establishing a shared commitment to the culture of the school with effective procedures in place, the whole school community does not yet understand and share a common vision for the future. This is partly because the school needed initial strong direction to ensure that it opened successfully and because leaders gave student achievement, particularly in reading, the highest priority.

The principal is well aware that the school is now poised to carry out collaborative strategic planning. The school has not yet prioritized its areas for improvement or created action plans. Consequently, it does not have the interim benchmarks and timeframes to measure success and make the necessary adjustments. However, there is much good practice on which to build, including the reading goals, which do have interim benchmarks and timeframes. The dean of instruction carries out a thorough analysis of data to pinpoint underachievement and recently presented the leadership team with a set of detailed recommendations to improve student outcomes and accelerate learning. This also includes plans to improve teacher outcomes, although there are currently no formal systems in place to turn this into individual and measurable goals. What is clear is that leaders and teachers are making effective use of frequent assessments to determine gaps in student learning.

**Quality Statement 6 - Monitor Effectiveness: The Charter School Board is proactive and diligent in monitoring its effectiveness and in undertaking its administrative responsibilities.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The BACS board is providing adequate oversight to the school and plans to evaluate the school leader at the end of the school year. The board receives regular updates via Ascend Learning's Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Executive Officer and by requesting financial (YTD Expenses, Cash Flow, Budget, Variance Analysis) and other data driven (scores, summaries, internal measures) information as it relates to the

educational programs offered by the school. The school's principal does not report at board meetings but rather reports directly to Ascend Learning's Chief Operating Officer. The school's board represents legal, finance, organizational/management, real estate and public affairs related expertise. Currently, the board lacks the presence of a seasoned educator (although one board member has some experience in curriculum development) but it is looking into adding a community representative and an educator soon. Although there is a School Director evaluation document, the school board is yet to discuss the mechanics of evaluating the school leader in collaboration with Ascend Learning. The board identified data analysis, core values plan, and reading as its top three priorities for the upcoming school year. The budget preparation process is holistic and involves board members, teacher inputs, school leader, and Ascend Learning's Chief Operating Officer as well as the Chief Executive Officer.

**Quality Statement 7 - Maintain Financial Viability: The Charter School and its Board maintain financial viability and control over the course of the academic year.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The BACS board has contracted an audit firm to produce school's financial statements. The school maintains necessary financial documents to facilitate decision making at all levels. The unaudited balance sheet as of February '09 casts a good financial position with liquid assets totaling \$858,198. The school has current liabilities of \$652,794, of which \$649,111 is in form of deferred revenue. The school is in good position to meet its short-term financial obligations. The statement of activities as of February '09 does not pose any particular concerns. The school provided the annual site visit team with a cash flow analysis projecting a positive balance of \$79,467 for June '09 period.

During the visit, the school and Ascend Learning's officials were interviewed on the procurement process, check signing, randomly selected paid invoices were inspected, and fingerprinting documents were inspected. Generally, the school is following its adopted financial policies and has adopted good internal controls. An appropriate balance of segregation of duties is in place among fiscal and operational staff. Paid invoices demonstrate that staff is following the process of purchase order approvals, order and receiving of goods, presence of packing slips and invoices along with proof of payment. However, some purchase orders lacked proper signatures and some payments lacked proper authorization. The school has tagged its assets for inventory purposes.

## Charter Schools Office Quality Criteria 2008-2009

### Brooklyn Ascend Charter School

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.**

<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty have...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?		<b>X</b>		
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?		<b>X</b>		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?			<b>X</b>	
1.6 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.**

<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		<b>X</b>		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school's Strategic Development Plan?		<b>X</b>		
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			<b>X</b>	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/carers?			<b>X</b>	
2.6 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

#### DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- 2 the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- 3 the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- 4 the school's Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school's curriculum (including Periodic, DYO, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data and hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge?			X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum to enhance learning both within and outside the school day and hold teachers for making instruction interesting and compelling?		X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for creating a positive, safe and inclusive learning environment?			X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, classroom and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?		X		
3.5 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?			X	
3.6 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness and report actual attendance data?			X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X	
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?			X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?		X		
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?			X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?		X		
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising, other student support services and partnerships with outside entities around stated academic and personal development goals?			X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly, encourage effective learning and effectively address discipline-related incidents?			X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X	
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>				
<i>To what extent do...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X	
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?		X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X	
5.4 teachers and school leaders use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures to revise plans immediately and make strategic decisions to modify practices in order to reach stated goals?			X	

5.5 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?		X		
5.6 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?		X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X		

<b>Quality Statement 6 – Monitor Effectiveness: The Charter School Board is proactive and diligent in monitoring its effectiveness and in undertaking its administrative responsibilities.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the Board.....</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
6.1 ensure effective, broad outreach to create a student body that is representative of the school's Community School District?			X	
6.2 manage any conflict of interest within the governing body and throughout the school?			X	
6.3 hold EMOs, CMOs and school leadership accountable in their positions?			X	
6.4 ensure that teachers are provided with high quality professional development opportunities to further build on their professional expertise?			X	
6.5 respond to parent, staff and student concerns/complaints?			X	
6.6 provide ongoing training for board members so that they are able to fulfill the duties of their positions?			X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 6</b>			X	

<b>Quality Statement 7 – Maintain Financial Viability: The Charter School and its Board maintain financial viability and control over the course of the academic year.</b>				
<i>To what extent do the school and its Board.....</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
7.1 ensure that an independent auditor is appointed to undertake an annual financial audit, which is submitted to the OCS along with any other relevant documentation?			X	
7.2 comply with the adoption of an annual budget for the upcoming school year, which is submitted to the OCS for review?			X	
7.3 maintain an accurate balance sheet, statement of activities, year-to-date expense report and statement of cash flow?			X	
7.4 implement procedures that provide adequate internal control measures to detect and prevent financial fraud, such as bank reconciliation, revenue recognition and travel reimbursement?			X	
7.5 align financial decision making to analysis and evaluation of student achievement data?			X	
7.6 focus budget decisions on the priorities for school development and improvement?			X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 7</b>			X	

<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed

<b>Charter School Compliance Checklist</b>			
<b>Does the Board and the school . . .</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>In process</b>
1. have a documented policy for suspensions and expulsions?	X		
2. maintain up to date and compliant with IDEA Regulations for IEPs?	X		
3. send newsletters and other parent communications home in the predominant languages of the school community?	X		
4. implement a comprehensive special education program that complies with applicable	X		

governing laws?			
5. implement a comprehensive program for English Language Learners that complies with federal law?	<b>X</b>		
6. publish a schedule of regular board meetings that is easily accessible to the general public?	<b>X</b>		
7. ensure that accurate minutes from Board meetings are maintained and published?	<b>X</b>		
8. ensure that proposed contracts with EMOs and CMOs are submitted punctually to the OCS for review?	<b>X</b>		
9. maintain a functioning parent organization?	<b>X</b>		
10. ensure that parents are informed of the time and location of Board meetings that are open to the public?	<b>X</b>		