

# The New York City Department of Education



## Quality Review Report

**2006-2007**

Joel Klein, Chancellor  
Garth Harries, CEO, Office of Portfolio Development

**Explore Charter School**

**15 Snyder Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 10007**

**Principal: Morton Ballen**

**Review Date: March 21, 2007**

**Reviewer(s):  
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## **Content of the report**

### **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

### **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

### **Part 3: Main Findings**

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets Office of Charter School's (OCS) evaluation criteria

### **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Explore Charter School (“ECS”) opened in 2002 with students in grades K through 3. Since that time, the school has expanded by one grade each year and now educates students up to grade 7. In September 2007, ECS will have its first 8<sup>th</sup> grade cohort and will have completed its development as a K through 8 Charter School. Presently there are 336 students enrolled, of whom 90% are Black and 10% are from other ethnic backgrounds. Two students are identified as English Language Learners, and a small percentage of students (10.8%) have special education needs. These students are supported by specialists within general education classes. The number of student suspensions has been decreasing each year, reflecting the behavior management policy and procedures implemented by the principal who was the founder of the school.

ECS has an extended school year of 209 days and runs an extended school day, from 7:50 am to 4:00 pm. At present, there is a waiting list of over a thousand families for school places.

The school’s performance on the 2005-2006 State English language arts exams was 53% level 3 & 4 and 71% level 3 & 4 on the State math test for grades 3-7. Grade 5 social studies showed 76% at level 3 & 4 and on grade 4 science was 74%.

Last year, the school was awarded a five-year renewal to serve grades K-8. The last report issued to the School was the Charter School Renewal Report, February 2006. Any findings of concerns in that report were raised and addressed during this visit. The report reflects any additional findings. No salient findings of delinquency were raised in that report.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision for the development of the school that is shared by staff, students, parents and the wider community.
- Good relationships between adults and students are evident throughout the school, resulting in a warm, positive climate for learning.
- The principal has empowered the school community by ensuring that everyone has a voice in the decision making process and by creating good opportunities for leadership and personal growth.
- There are high expectations for student performance, shared by staff, parents and the students.
- Staff are offered good opportunities for a wide range of professional development based on both personal choice and areas identified within the data analysis process.
- Good systems are in place to gather, analyze and use data to consistently improve student performance, particularly in English language arts and mathematics.
- The 'Explain your thinking' component of all math teaching is having a positive impact on results.
- Teaching teams are collaborative and mutually supportive and are very effectively managed by the academic directors.
- School is fiscally sound and proper documentation is kept in order.
- ECS Board is diversified and represents relevant skills set.
- School leader has empowered school staff and embedded clear accountability in the administrative apparatus.

### What the school needs to improve

- Further develop creative solutions for staff to resolve the tension between high expectations, leadership opportunities and the reality of effective time management.
- Continue to extend ownership of school policy and procedures to ensure consistency of practice across the whole school.
- Extend the data collection and analysis systems to include social studies and science in order to ensure rigor in curriculum planning and delivery.

- Ensure that the annual priority plan contains precise, measurable and focused goals with clear checkpoints for monitoring and evaluation.
- Expand the tracking of attendance data to motivate and reward students, particularly those in the upper grade levels.
- Train all Board members in understanding basic financial information.
- Implement proper inventory control systems.
- Refine overall fiscal policy manual to include check signatories and other essential areas significant to internal controls.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

ECS is a popular and successful school that sets very high expectations for itself. There are good systems and structures in place to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed and staff, students and their parents are prepared to work hard to make this happen. There is a warm, welcoming culture with good relationships evident between adults and students. The principal is well respected throughout the school community and has a clear vision for continuous improvement which is shared by his skilled and dedicated academic directors and enthusiastic and hard working staff. Teamworking is a major strength of the school. The wide variety of teams and committees effectively use the range of data available to make informed choices about the curriculum, instruction and support strategies to ensure that the individual learning needs of their students are addressed. Everyone has a voice in the decision making process, including the students and their parents. Resources are good and adults take the time to create a stimulating and attractive learning environment. The school is in a good position to continue to expand and improve.

The ECS Board has provided effective oversight to the school and has established its credibility among parents and school staff. The Board is holding discussions on branding and building reputation of the school well beyond New York State to enable students attend better high schools and colleges. The school has a decentralized organizational structure that allows the school leader to spend time on strategic planning needs. In addition, Staff has been empowered to carry out its job duties effectively at most levels.

ECS has utilized its financial resources wisely and enjoys a strong financial outlook for present and the upcoming school year.

### How well the school meets Office of Charter School's (OCS) evaluation criteria

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

There are good systems in place for the collection, analysis and use of data across the school. All formal assessments are clearly organized into an annual calendar indicating when each will be administered to each grade and when analysis will be completed. The school uses a wide variety of assessment materials for English language arts and mathematics including DIBELS, ECLAS, DRA, and past papers for State tests. In addition, the school has designed its own interim assessments, for example related to 'Explain your thinking' for mathematics mastery which are administered at agreed intervals. Results from these tests are carefully recorded and analyzed by the academic directors and shared with grade teams. Teachers keep their own records of student progress and understanding, including conference notes, to supplement and constantly update information about each individual. The academic directors carefully monitor the data collected about each class and grade within the realm of their responsibility and keep a specific check on the progress of English language learners and those students with special education needs. The school has undertaken some analysis of variation in performance between students from different ethnic backgrounds but this is an area still to be fully developed. Administrators and task force teams take responsibility for studying the relative performance and progress of different groups of students of particular interest to the school. These groups have included the more able students and gender comparisons. The information gathered is used to create flexible teaching groups, inform curriculum planning and to design specific programs, as appropriate.

Progress is closely monitored to evaluate performance in comparison with other schools, with past performance in each subject and to record individual and grade progress over time. The school has developed 'at a glance' progress records to provide constantly updated, easy to understand information. Some curriculum areas, for example, reading, have a whole school overview on display in an office to chart the individual progress of each student in the school, along with any intervention or support. This is a valuable tool, providing easy access to monitoring information for all staff and could be usefully extended to create databanks for charting progress in other areas of the school's work.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

In addition to the five year Charter plan, the school has developed an annual priority plan in which the main goals and targets are identified. The goals are selected collaboratively by the administrators and other school teams and reflect needs identified through data analysis. Each goal has a clear plan of action, named individuals with overview responsibility and identified outcomes for success. At present, however, although there are regular interim discussions, timeframes for achievement are not specifically agreed. Consequently, all goals imply longer term achievement, even those that could be identified as quick win successes. The good systems in place for data management ensure that goals and plans have different layers of focus for whole school, subject, grade, class and individual improvement. This enables the school to work proactively in introducing new ideas for programs, curriculum choices and flexible grouping and also to respond to identified needs, providing appropriate intervention and support. Particular attention is carefully focused on improving the performance of those students with the greatest need. In addition to the individual programs developed for the students who are English language learners or who have special education needs, other groups are provided with

specific programs and instruction. For example, students identified as being at risk of not achieving their targets are each issued with a school designed individual education plan and the students who are high achievers have access to programs to increase their motivation by providing highly challenging work and activities.

The school has high expectations of itself and of all members of the wider school community. Students are expected to do their very best and their parents are very supportive of the school's aims for excellence. In order to focus this expectation, all staff have been involved in identifying exactly what it means for all students to 'achieve' and have devised rubrics to display and use in their classrooms. Parents are invited to take English language arts and math tests so that their understanding is enhanced and they can better support their children at home. At the annual leadership retreat, creative strategies for increasing parental involvement are discussed and scheduled for the year. Although there is a whole school drive for continuously improving the performance of everyone involved in the school, the principal is aware of the need to resolve the tension between high achievement and effective time management to avoid 'burn-out' of staff.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient with some well developed features.**

The school has made careful choices in the English language arts and math curriculum to ensure that appropriate, useful data can be collected while retaining the interest and engagement of the students. For example, the 'Everyday math' curriculum has been selected but this is supplemented with other school programs such as 'Explain your thinking'. Social studies and science are covered in each grade but assessment and data collection in these subjects is less well developed meaning that teachers do not have access to a wide range of information to inform their planning and instruction. During the extended school day, students have opportunities to learn in other enrichment areas such as art, drama and physical education. In response to student surveys, the school intends to introduce team sports and technology for grades 4 to 8.

Consistently high expectations for student performance ensures clear teacher accountability and teachers are committed to doing their best for each student in their care. Creative scheduling enables teachers to work in grade planning teams on a regular basis along with membership of task teams involved in researching different aspects of the school's work. Team working at all levels is a strong aspect across the school and a wide range of support personnel are engaged to provide specific expertise to enhance both teaching and learning. Teachers are confident and well supported in differentiating tasks and activities in math and English language arts using, for example, spiral math and guided reading groups but are less confident in planning differentiated work for other subjects. The principal is aware of the need to provide the assessment tools to enable teachers to better match their planned activities in science and social studies to the different needs of their students. Students report that they enjoy their lessons, particularly where activities are lively, active and offer real challenge. There are good relationships between adults and students across the school. This results in a warm, caring and mutually respectful climate where students are confident to ask for help where required and teachers know their students, and their individual needs, very well. Students are eager to come to school therefore attendance levels are high and any unexplained absence is rapidly followed up. Student retention from year to year has also increased.

**Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The principal hires new staff for their ability to own and have responsibility for their own learning. He has clear selection criteria and shares his high expectations for performance at the outset so that staff chose to become part of his teaching team. In order to retain high quality staff, the principal has introduced creative solutions to reward achievement and to provide leadership opportunities. For example, he has established a scholarship fund; open to all staff, to encourage further study in exchange for an additional year of work on their return. He also acquired funding to pay two staff to become 'Resident teachers', to lead others in their area of expertise. Continuous professional development thus is a high priority in the school. The annual program aims to balance the needs identified through classroom observation and scrutiny of data with the personal preferences identified by staff in their professional growth plans. A good mix of in-house and external workshops and courses are provided alongside opportunities for educational research within the task force groups and external consultants are brought in, as appropriate, aligned to supporting identified school priorities. Administrators frequently undertake classroom observations on both a formal and informal basis and structures are in place to provide useful, prompt feedback. Teachers report that they appreciate this professional evaluation of their instructional skills but would like to extend opportunities for inter-visitation with colleagues. Some opportunities do exist for this but staff would welcome a more structured, scheduled approach to enable them to share good practice, particularly across grades. Staff turnover has been a concern; however the principal has introduced measures to increase retention figures, for example mid-year surveys, check-ins and incentives. Teachers enjoy positive working relationships within their grade teams and have regular time scheduled for planning. As a result, all grades have long-term, medium term and weekly plans in place for all subjects taught. Planning files are also used to identify daily goals and targets. This means that lessons are planned daily to respond to individual and group needs and this has a positive impact on student achievement at all levels. The principal has a clear vision for the school, is very well respected and has good capacity to continue to effect positive change. Systems and structures are in place to ensure that the school runs smoothly although, as the number of teachers and students has expanded, there is some inconsistency in the rigor with which each procedure is enforced. The principal is aware of the need to extend ownership of school systems, for example in dealing with minor behavior disruptions, the use of rubrics, sharing clear learning objectives at the start of each lesson and 'out of class' passes, to all staff so that there are uniform procedures throughout the school. There is an intention that these will be revisited in the near future to re-establish whole school practices and identify phase specific systems.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient with some well developed features.**

School plans and targets at student level are well established. Individual and group progress is carefully monitored with timely intervention provided as appropriate. In addition, the school is pro-active in using the wide range of data available to predict need on a regular basis to inform curriculum design, programs and teaching groups. Long and

medium term plans are flexible in order to respond to what the data is revealing to the staff. This is having a positive effect on student achievement, as reflected in the improving results in both English language arts and mathematics. Regular meetings are held between administrators and teaching staff to monitor data, discuss progress and revise classroom planning. Administrators are skilled in data analysis and have ensured that structures are in place to provide teachers with the tools that they need to monitor and evaluate progress themselves.

The school priority plan is a useful, collaboratively agreed plan for improvement, identifying the main goals for the year, the responsibility for achievement and the anticipated outcomes. Some of the goals are, however, not precise enough to allow easy measurement of outcome and others are not clearly enough focused on needs identified through the good quality data systems. For example, rather than setting precise percentage gain targets for each grade based on prior progress information in math, the goal describes an increase to 60% for all students. In addition, timescales for achievement do not always reflect the level of challenge required. All of the goals are reviewed at the end of the year rather than having clear interim checkpoints and final dates for achievement. As a result, although progress is made, not all goals and targets are fully successful, leading to disappointment. The administrators have the skill and capacity to re-define school priorities to reflect more accurately the precise needs of the school.

**Quality Statement 6 – School’s Board has provided “effective” oversight ad leadership as needed and is functioning in accordance with the agreed upon charter.**

**This area of the school’s work is well-developed.**

The ECS Board of trustees is functioning as stipulated by charter contract. The Board is a visionary presence and well-equipped with finance, community leadership, parent, educator, and legal expertise to continue providing strong guidance in policy implementation. The Board of trustees is exploring ideas on how to “brand” the school to a larger state and nationwide audience so that it translates into better opportunities (high schools, colleges, etc..) for pupils attending ECS.

The Board of trustees has been presented with sufficient financial, educational data and other relevant information during Board meetings to formulate informed decisions and work collaboratively towards school’s stated mission. The Board approved budget is consistently monitored and compared to year-to-date expenses, variances analyzed and justifications provided by school staff, as appropriate. The budget preparation process is collaborative and involves Board members, teachers, the school leader, chief financial officer and respective departmental heads. The Board evaluates the performance of the chief financial officer as well as the school leader and has successfully provided effective oversight in all aspects of school operations.

It is recommended that *all* members of the Board receive basic level training to become familiar (not experts necessarily) with basic financial information presented to them.

***All issues raised in previous oversight report in this category were addressed by the school.***

**Quality Statement 7 – School has developed internal controls in place to detect and prevent financial fraud. School has written policies to guide ongoing operations and those policies are followed by school employees.**

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

ECS has a comprehensive policy procedure manual (draft) in circulation and is continuously making improvements/adjustments that suit its need. The school has documented procedures on invoice payments, document retention, and several other areas essential to a strong internal control system. The school is recommended to have a viable inventory policy that accounts for all fixed assets acquired by Federal, State, Local or private funds and to conduct an inventory at least once a year. In addition, the school’s fiscal policy manual should list positions bearing check-signing authority. Check-signing authority should be shifted to individuals that don’t have access to school’s check books. Furthermore, any individual with access to online banking with ability to conduct online financial transactions (debit, credit, transfer funds, etc..) should also be a designated check signatory as outlined in fiscal policy manual. Other school staff may have *view only* access per their job functions.

The school is recommended to avoid paying any sales tax on petty cash reimbursements and use its tax-exempt form wherever possible while conducting business.

The school should also consider revising its credit card bills receiving and reconciliation procedure. No credit card user (i.e. principal, etc..) should open or review statements prior

to someone *other* than the user having reviewed the statement for the accuracy of transactions and for compliance with all Board adopted policies governing card usage. Once the reconciliation process is finished, the final reconciliation may be shared with the card user to reconfirm accuracy, if needed. As a reminder, card users are urged to use cards strictly for school business purposes only.

A sampling of invoices, purchase orders, and proof of payment was conducted during the site visit. ECS has one of the most impressive and neatly arranged recordkeeping systems in place. All invoices, purchase orders, and proof of payments reflected the adopted policies of the school. No material weakness was found during this procedure.

As a testament to ECS's vision and leadership, the school is considering new staffing models to reduce employee burn out and retain its best employees that will help the school continue its competitive advantage. The school leader's (principal) understanding of the business needs and academic functions is unparalleled. He has a clear vision of how both the financial and academic wings of the school amalgamate to produce the best possible results to benefit ECS's kids. The school also has one of the most comprehensive, transparent, and well-thought organizational charts outlining clear roles and reporting structures. The school leader has instilled accountability, innovation, and empowerment among school staff by encouraging individual responsibility. In summary: "Explore is a school of tomorrow."

Finally, it is advised that the school send a final copy of the fiscal policy manual to the Office of Charter Schools after the Board's final approval.

***All issues raised in previous oversight report in this category were addressed by the school.***

**Quality Statement 8 – Based on the most recent financial statements, school is in sound fiscal condition.**

**This area of the school's work is well-developed.**

Based on ECS's financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2006, ECS is in excellent financial condition. The school spent over 85% of its funds on educational programs and less than 15% on administrative expenses. The school continues to enjoy a healthy financial outlook with a strong ability to meet its short term financial obligations with minimal debt/liability on its books.

***All issues raised in previous oversight report in this category were addressed by the school.***

**Quality Statement 9 – School has the structure to integrate parents and community partners in the school.**

**This area of the school's work is well-developed.**

The school enjoys excellence in this category and has several avenues to formulate parental input into the program. ECS has various planned parent awareness events and meeting opportunities in place to encourage continued parent and community participation. The school also communicates in languages other than English --as determined by home language surveys-- to accommodate bilingual parents and changing demographic trends of the neighborhood.

Parents hold positive opinions of ECS. They praised the staff for their communication, dedication to educating kids, and for reaching out to parents as needed. Parents mentioned their kids had improved reading, math, and problem solving skills since attending ECS. Reading improvement was considered a strength among parents and it was especially attributed to having kids in smaller groups.

Parents were aware of the Board meetings and their rights as a parent at the school.

***All issues raised in previous oversight report in this category were addressed by the school.***

# EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOL

∅ ----- Undeveloped      √ ----- Proficient      + ----- Well Developed

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

**SCHOOL NAME: Explore Charter School**      ∅    √    +

<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.</b>	∅	√	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			X

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b>	∅	√	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	∅	√	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	

3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>			Ø ✓ +
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student’s and group of students’ outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other’s classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.		X	
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>			Ø ✓ +
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan’s interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 6 – School’s Board has provided “effective” oversight and leadership as needed and is functioning in accordance with the agreed upon charter.</b>			Ø ✓ +
6.1 The Board size, structure and composition are appropriate. The membership is diverse (G/S/E) and compliments a broad skill set.			X
6.2 Board functions as stipulated by contract, and is a well-functioning organization.			X
6.3 Board has adopted and communicated the whistleblower policy with staff members.			X
6.4 Board has provided effective oversight in operational, fiscal, academic, hiring & firing (as appropriate) issues of the school.			X
6.5 Board conflicts (if any) were resolved in timely fashion and had no effect on school operations.			X
6.6 Board evaluates partner organization at least once a year. OCS was notified of any changes in partnership agreement.		N/A	
6.7 Board has been responsive to both parent and school staff concerns/complaints (if any)			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 6</b>			X

<b>Quality Statement 7 – School has developed internal controls in place to detect and prevent financial fraud. School has written policies to guide ongoing operations and those policies are followed by school employees.</b>	Ø	✓	+
7.1 School has a comprehensive financial control system in place. Check signing, procurement, inventory controls, bank reconciliation, travel reimbursement, investment, petty cash, conflict of interest, vacation and sick leave, bonus relocation, etc. policy is in place.		X	
7.2 School has segregated staff duties to prevent and detect fraud.		X	
7.3 School is consistently following its adopted financial procedures for requisition approval, certification of funds and placing of orders for goods.			X
7.4 School's employees are familiar with school's established financial procedures.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 7</b>		X	
<b>Quality Statement 8* – Based on the most recent financial statements, school is in sound fiscal condition.</b>	Ø	✓	+
8.1 School's total educational expense / total expense ratio is above 70% for this fiscal year.			X
8.2 School's administrative ratio is under 30% for this fiscal year.			X
8.3 School's current ratio is greater than or equal to 2.0.			X
8.4 School's debt to asset ratio is less than or equal to 1.0.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 8</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 9 – School has structure to integrate parents and community partners in the school.</b>	Ø	✓	+
9.1 School has a parent organization or a parent teacher organization.			X
9.2 School has special events for parents to meet, discuss issues and socialize with each other.			X
9.3 Parents are informed of the time and location of the open Board meetings.			X
9.4 Newsletters are sent in all predominant languages of the neighborhood to encourage parent participation and eliminate cultural and language barriers.			X
9.5 Parent handbook stipulates the appeals process should a conflict arise.			X
9.6 Has a clear idea of how the pupil has improved since attending this school.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 9</b>			X

\*Note on Statement 8: School's current year in operation and other extenuating circumstances (facilities acquisition, capital renovation, etc..) will be taken into account while assigning a grade.