



**THE EQUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL  
RENEWAL REPORT**

**2013 – 2014 SCHOOL YEAR  
DECEMBER 2013**

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## Part 1: Summary of Renewal Recommendation

### I. Charter School Overview:

Name of Charter School	The Equality Charter School
Current Board Chair(s)	Ed Hubbard
School Leader	Caitlin Franco
Management Company (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 11
Physical Address	4140 Hutchinson River Parkway East, Bronx 10475
Facility	Public
School Opened For Instruction	2009
Current Charter Term Expiry Date	1/12/2014
Maximum Grade Levels / Enrollment at Expiry Date	6-8 / 228 <sup>1</sup>
Proposed Charter Term	Five Years
Proposed Maximum Grade Levels / Enrollment at New Expiry Date	6-12 / 546

### II. Overview of School-Specific Data:

#### Performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade	-	C	A	B
Student Progress	-	C	A	B
Student Performance	-	C	A	C
School Environment	-	A	A	A
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	-	1.5	4.8	4.9

#### Students scoring at or above Level 3, compared to CSD, NYC, and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>The Equality Charter School</b>	<b>31.6%</b>	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>29.9%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>
CSD 11	30.1%	29.9%	34.7%	16.1%
Difference from CSD 11	1.5	-6.4	-4.8	-7.0
NYC	39.2%	38.3%	42.5%	24.8%
Difference from -NYC	-7.6	-14.8	-12.6	-15.7
New York State	52.5%	54.8%	55.2%	31.2%
Difference from New York State	-20.9	-31.3	-25.3	-22.1

<sup>1</sup> The school was originally authorized for a first charter term enrollment of 414 students serving grades 6-11 but amended its charter in December 2010.

<b>% Proficient in Math</b>				
	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>
<b>The Equality Charter School</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	<b>50.9%</b>	<b>69.6%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>
CSD 11	40.4%	42.1%	47.9%	16.8%
Difference from CSD 11	8.8	8.8	21.7	-0.6
NYC	52.8%	54.7%	57.3%	26.5%
Difference from NYC	-3.6	-3.8	12.3	-10.3
New York State	64.6%	64.6%	65.7%	28.9%
Difference from New York State	-15.4	-13.7	3.9	-12.7

All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

<b>Academic Goal Analysis (based on School's submission)</b>					
	<b>1st Year 2009-2010</b>	<b>2nd Year 2010-2011</b>	<b>3rd year 2011-2012</b>	<b>4th Year 2012-2013</b>	<b>Cumulative 4 Year Total</b>
<b>Total Achievable Academic Goals</b>	2	8	8	4	<b>22</b>
# Met	0	1	3	1	<b>5</b>
# Partially Met	0	0	1	1	<b>2</b>
# Not Met	2	7	4	2	<b>15</b>
<b>% Met</b>	0%	13%	38%	25%	<b>23%</b>
<b>% Partially Met</b>	0%	0%	13%	25%	<b>9%</b>
<b>% Not Met</b>	100%	88%	50%	50%	<b>68%</b>

### **III. Rationale for Recommendation**

#### **A. Academic Performance**

At the time of this school's renewal, The Equality Charter School (ECS) has demonstrated academic achievement and progress as demonstrated by its last two Progress Report grades. ECS received an A grade on the 2011-2012 New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Progress Report and a B grade on the 2012-2013 NYC DOE Progress Report. The school also earned an A and B in the Student Progress subsection over the past two years. The overall percentile ranking on the Progress Report compared to middle schools citywide has placed it in the top 30% in the past two years and made ECS the top ranked middle school in its Community School District (CSD) in both 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

The New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 establishes a system of charter schools throughout New York State, with objectives that include "(a) Improve student learning and achievement;" and "(b) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure."

ECS's mission is to ensure that all its students achieve "academic and personal success through a nurturing scholar-centered approach." The school helps students develop Life Action Plans to meet their individualized goals and provides them with a rigorous academic program designed to prepare them for college and post-secondary education. ECS enrolls new students at all grade levels to fill available seats. Over the course of its first charter term, 20% or more of the total number of students enrolled have been Students with Disabilities (SwD).

The school entered the fifth year of its first term of operation with the start of the 2013-2014 academic year. The NYC DOE has four years of New York State (NYS) assessment data to evaluate the academic performance of ECS. In addition, ECS has received three graded NYC DOE Middle School Progress Reports. Progress Reports grade each school with an A, B, C, D or F for Student Progress, Student Performance, and School Environment, with additional points for closing the achievement gap contributing to the overall grade. Grades are based on comparing school results in each category to a peer group of up to 40 schools with the most similar student population and to school results citywide.

In its three graded Middle School Progress Reports, ECS earned an overall grade of C in 2010-2011, an A in 2011-2012, and a B in 2012-2013. Over the past two years, its overall Progress Report performance placed ECS in the top 30% or better of NYC middle schools, ranking in the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2011-2012 and in the 74<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2012-2013. As noted above, based on its Progress Report performance, ECS was the top ranked middle school in its CSD in both 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

The Student Progress grade is the most heavily weighted of the Progress Report subsections, representing 60% of the total points available, and ECS's results during its first term have been positive. In its first Student Progress grade, ECS earned a C in 2010-2011, improving its grade to an A in 2011-2012 and then earning a B in 2012-2013, indicating success in moving its students forward academically based on the median adjusted growth percentiles<sup>2</sup> from the previous year, including a separate evaluation for improving students in the school's lowest third of performers.

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<sup>2</sup> This measure calculates the median (middle) adjusted growth percentile of a school's eligible students. 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. To evaluate a school on its students' growth percentile, the Progress Report uses an adjusted growth percentile. Growth percentile adjustments are based on students' demographic characteristics and reflect averages differences in growth compared to students with the same starting proficiency level. The Progress Report evaluates a school based on its median adjusted growth percentile, the adjusted growth percentile of the middle student when all students adjusted growth percentiles are listed from lowest to highest.

ECS's Student Performance section grade<sup>3</sup>, over its initial charter term has been mixed to positive, with the school receiving a C in its first student performance grade in 2010-2011, an A in 2011-2012, but another C in 2012-2013.

Over the course of its first term, ECS has met about a quarter of its achievable academic charter goals, increasing its percentage of met goals in the second half of the term: 0% (of 2) in year one, 13% (of 8) in year two, 38% (of 8) in year three, and 25% (of 4) in year four<sup>4</sup>.

ECS has surpassed its CSD in overall proficiency for common tested grades in math in 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, and performed about on par with the CSD in 2012-2013. ECS has been below CSD 11 in overall proficiency in ELA each year but its first year of operation. However, it should be noted that the school's adjusted growth percentile performance on their most recent Progress Report ranked them in the 61<sup>st</sup> percentile of the district in ELA and 94<sup>th</sup> percentile in math.

Over the course of its first charter term, ECS has developed a responsive education program and a supportive learning environment. The NYC DOE has conducted four site visits during the term: Annual Visits in the Spring of 2010, 2011, and 2012, and as part of the renewal process, a two-day visit in the Fall of 2013. The school had implementation challenges in the school's first year and a half of operation and there were changes in school leadership and staff with the current school leader becoming principal in the spring of 2011. As indicated by the site visit report from May of 2011, considerable effort was put into restarting the school's learning environment and school culture and recommitting staff to the school's mission with the school launching a Response to Intervention (RTI) program, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program, and providing staff development support that followed Doug Reeves' research in aligning taught and tested curriculum. In addition, the principal rebuilt the school leadership team during that spring and summer establishing a strong, scholar-centered culture of professional collaboration which resulted in improved Progress Report results and very high satisfaction results from parents, teachers and students—areas of the NYC School Survey that had been average or below, like Academic Expectations and Safety & Respect, increased to above or well above average.

## **B. Governance, Operations & Finances**

Equality Charter School is a fiscally sound and viable organization.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has established and maintained a developed governance structure and organizational design. The Board currently has nine members, which is more than the minimum number of five members and fewer than the maximum number of eleven members established by its bylaws. The Board has provided effective oversight of school management, making timely and successful decisions to improve leadership and to postpone expansion to high school grades until they were satisfied their middle school implementation was successful and stable. The Board maintains authority over school management, holding it accountable for performance and requiring a monthly Principal's Report from the school leader that details information related to the school's academics, operations, finances, and culture.

The school's Principal, Caitlin Franco, is a founding member of the staff who has been serving in her current position since February 2011 after the resignation of the school's founding principal.

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<sup>3</sup> This section is based on the percent of students at proficiency and the average student proficiency level (1.0 to 4.5) and how these measures compare to peer group and citywide results,

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% absolute proficiency or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals. Goals that compared the school to the Community School District performance were included in the analysis. The school's charter goals also include the school being deemed in good standing with state and federal accountability which the met in 2010-2011.

The School's Board is currently led by Board Chair Ed Hubbard and had been led by Ehri Mathurin from June 2010 through the start of 2013-2014 school year.

Over the course of its charter term, ECS has developed a stable school culture. The school's NYC School Survey results steadily improved over each of the past four school years, beginning in 2009-2010 with overall results of Average and Above Average and eventually reaching their 2012-2013 levels of Well Above Average to Above Average across all four satisfaction categories. During each of the past three school years, the school has received an A in the School Environment section of the NYC DOE Progress Report. The school has met its 95% average daily attendance goal for each of the past four school years.

Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on its current practices. There was no material weakness noted in the 2010-2011, 2011-2012 or 2012-2013 independent annual financial audits.

**C. Compliance with Charter, Applicable Law and Regulations**

Over the charter term, ECS has been compliant with all applicable laws and regulations. The ECS Board has also been compliant with all applicable laws and regulations.

**D. Plans for Next Charter Term**

ECS was originally authorized to serve grades six through eleven in its initial term, but in 2010 the school submitted a charter revision proposal to delay expansion to serve ninth grade students until its second charter term. During its next charter term, the school will continue with its original growth plans and serve grades six through twelve by school year 2017-2018. The school plans to begin by offering ninth grade in the 2014-2015 school year and has secured a private facility to house the high school grades.

**For the aforementioned reasons, the NYCDOE recommends a full-term renewal and approves its continued growth to serve high school grades in the new charter term.**

## Part 2: School Overview and History

The Equality Charter School (ECS) is a middle school serving approximately 234<sup>5</sup> students from sixth to eighth grades during the 2013-2014 school year. It opened in the 2009-2010 school year, with sixth and seventh grades and is under the terms of its first charter. The school's originally authorized full grade span was sixth grade through eleventh grade, but amended its charter to delay expansion to high school grades until its second charter term. The school is located in a NYC DOE facility in District 11, in the Bronx and is co-located with P.S. 160 Walt Disney and P.S. 168.

ECS mission is to ensure each scholar reaches individual academic and personal success through a nurturing scholar-centered approach. The school welcomes all scholars, regardless of their previous academic performance or behavioral record, with the intent of helping them make adequate progress to build a solid foundation for transition into high school.

The school typically enrolls new students in grades six through eight with grade six being the primary intake grade. The school received 459 applications for its Spring 2013 lottery.<sup>6</sup>

Over the charter term, the school has served the following percentages of special populations of students<sup>7</sup>:

### Special Populations

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)	73.7%	79.3%	77.2%	78.4%
Students with Disabilities (SwD)	22.6%	19.7%	22.0%	20.3%
English Language Learners (ELL)	2.9%	2.3%	2.6%	1.7%

The ECS Board of Trustees is led by Board Chair Ed Hubbard, who began in this role at the start of the 2013-2014 school year, replacing Ehri Mathurin, who had served as chair from 2010-2011 through the 2012-2013 school year. The school is led by Principal Caitlin Franco, who has been at the school since the school's inception. She has been the school leader since succeeding the school's first Principal, Joann Myers, in February 2011.

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<sup>5</sup> ATS 10/10/13

<sup>6</sup> Self-reported on Data Sheet submitted in October 2013

<sup>7</sup> Special population figures are pulled from ATS as of June 1st each year. These figures are compared against the total population which is pulled from ATS as of October 31st each year.

## Part 3: Renewal Process Overview

### Renewal Process

In the final year of its charter, a Chancellor-authorized charter school seeking renewal must demonstrate its success during the current 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 carry out an ambitious plan for the future.

As the school is approaching the end of its charter term, the NYC DOE performs a comprehensive review of the school's performance over the course of the charter. This renewal process is conducted through analyzing student performance data and collecting and evaluating school-submitted documents during the charter term. Evidence of a school's success is organized around the four essential questions that comprise the NYC DOE's Accountability Framework:

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

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.

### Renewal Report

This report contains the findings and recommendations of the NYC DOE 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 authorizer, the NYC DOE, all of which are conducted in order to identify areas of weakness and to help the school to address them. Additionally, the NYC DOE incorporates into this report its findings from the renewal application process, which includes a written application, a report on student achievement data and a school visit by staff from the Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team and other staff from the NYC DOE.

Upon review of all the relevant materials, a recommendation is made to the Chancellor. The Chancellor's determination, and the findings on which that decision is based, is then submitted to the New York State Board of Regents.

### Is the school an academic success?

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

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

Academic success is rated as **Demonstrated, Partially Demonstrated, or Not Yet Demonstrated.**

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

To assess whether a school is a fiscally sound, viable organization, the NYC DOE focuses on three areas: Governance Structure & Organizational Design, School Climate & Community Engagement, and Financial Health. This includes an analysis of the school's audited financial statements, based on the NACSA (National Association of Charter School Authorizers) Financial Framework<sup>8</sup>.

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

- Board of Trustee bylaws,
- Board of Trustee meeting minutes,
- Annual Reports submitted by schools to New York State Education Department (NYSED),
- NYC DOE School Surveys,
- Data collection sheets provided by schools,
- Student, staff, and Board turnover rates,
- Audits of authorized enrollment numbers, and
- Annual financial audits.

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

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

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

### **Staff Representatives**

The following NYC DOE staff representatives participated in the review of this school, including the visit to the school on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013:

- Richard Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE Charter Schools Accountability and Support
- Kamilah O'Brien, Director of Operations, NYC DOE Charter Schools Accountability and Support
- Gabrielle Mosquera, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE Charter Schools Accountability and Support

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance\\_Framework\\_Fall\\_2012\\_Draft.pdf](http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance_Framework_Fall_2012_Draft.pdf), page 38-59

## Part 4: Findings

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

At the time of this school's renewal Equality Charter School (ECS) has demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

#### Academic Attainment and Improvement

The school has received three NYC DOE Progress Reports and has four years of New York State (NYS) assessment data at the time of this report. (For detailed grade-level data on NYS assessments, please see Appendix A.)

#### Performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade	-	C	A	B
Student Progress	-	C	A	B
Student Performance	-	C	A	C
School Environment	-	A	A	A
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	-	1.5	4.8	4.9

#### Students scoring at or above Level 3, compared to CSD, NYC, and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>The Equality Charter School</b>	<b>31.6%</b>	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>29.9%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>
CSD 11	30.1%	29.9%	34.7%	16.1%
Difference from CSD 11	1.5	-6.4	-4.8	-7.0
NYC	39.2%	38.3%	42.5%	24.8%
Difference from NYC	-7.6	-14.8	-12.6	-15.7
New York State	52.5%	54.8%	55.2%	31.2%
Difference from New York State	-20.9	-31.3	-25.3	-22.1

% Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>The Equality Charter School</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	<b>50.9%</b>	<b>69.6%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>
CSD 11	40.4%	42.1%	47.9%	16.8%
Difference from CSD 11	8.8	8.8	21.7	-0.6
NYC	52.8%	54.7%	57.3%	26.5%
Difference from NYC	-3.6	-3.8	12.3	-10.3
New York State	64.6%	64.6%	65.7%	28.9%
Difference from New York State	-15.4	-13.7	3.9	-12.7

All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

## Mission and Academic Goals

Over its charter term, ECS achieved: 0 of 2 applicable academic charter goals in the first year of the charter; 1 of 8 in the second year; 3 of 8 in the third year (with an additional goal partially met); and 1 of 4 in the fourth year (with an additional goal partially met).<sup>9</sup>

Progress Toward Academic Charter Goals	Met in Year 1?	Met In Year 2?	Met in Year 3?	Met in Year 4?
<b>1) Absolute Performance 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> ELA:</b> Each year, 75% of 6 <sup>th</sup> through 8 <sup>th</sup> graders who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination.	N/A	No	No	N/A
<b>2) Value Added Performance 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> ELA:</b> For years 2-5 of ECS, each grade level cohort of the same scholars will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's ELA exam and 75% at or above Level 3 on the current year's ELA exam.	N/A	No	No	N/A
<b>3) Absolute Performance 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Math:</b> Each year, 75 percent of 6 <sup>th</sup> through 8 <sup>th</sup> graders who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State mathematics examinations.	N/A	No	Partial	N/A
<b>4) Value Added Performance 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Math:</b> For years 2 through 5 of the Equality Charter School, each grade level cohort of the same scholars 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% at or above Level 3 on the current year's Math exam. If the number of scholars scoring above proficiency in a grade level cohort exceeds 75% on the previous year's Math exam, then that cohort will demonstrate growth on the current year's exam.	N/A	No	Yes	N/A
<b>5) Absolute Performance 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies:</b> Each year, 75 percent of 8 <sup>th</sup> graders who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State social studies examination.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>6) Absolute Performance 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science:</b> Each year, 75% of 8 <sup>th</sup> graders who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State science examination.	N/A	No	No	No

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-13 the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% absolute proficiency or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and Math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals. Goals that compared the school to the community School district performance were included in the analysis.

<b>7) Absolute Performance High School Regents Exams:</b> By the end of year 4 in the charter, 75% of the first cohort will have scored at least 65 on the New York State Regents examination in ELA.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>8) Absolute Performance High School Regents Exams:</b> By the end of year 4 in the charter, 75% of the first cohort will have scored at least 65 on the New York State Regents examination in Math.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>9) Absolute Performance High School Regents Exams:</b> By the end of year 4 in the charter, 75% of the first cohort will have scored at least 65 on the New York State Regents examination in History.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>10) Absolute Performance High School Regents Exams:</b> By the end of year 4 in the charter, 75% of the first cohort will have scored at least 65 on the New York State Regents examination in Science (Living Environment, Chemistry, or Physics).	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>11) Credit Accumulation:</b> Each year, 75% of Equality scholars enrolled in grades 9-11 will accumulate 10 or more credits towards graduation. Equality will be accountable for all credits accumulated by scholars who were continuously enrolled in the school, including those who have dropped out or enrolled in an accredited GED program, however, the credits accumulated by scholars who have transferred to another school, were incarcerated, left the country, or died during the school year will be excluded. Each September, Equality will submit a report of scholar credit accumulation from the previous school year for the purposes of the NYCDOE Progress Report.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>12) Graduation Rates:</b> Each year, at least 75% of each scholar cohort will graduate within 5 years.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>13) Comparative Performance:</b> Each year, the percent of scholars performing at or above Level 3 on the State ELA exam in each tested grade will, in the majority of the grades, exceed the average performance of scholars tested in the same grades of CSD 11 as measured by an analysis of performance compared to CSD 11 conducted by the NYCDOE.	No	No	No	No
<b>14) Comparative Performance:</b> Each year, the percent of scholars performing at or above Level 3 on the State Math exam in each tested grade will, in the majority of the grades, exceed the average performance of scholars tested in the same grades of CSD 11 as measured by an analysis of performance compared to CSD 11 conducted by the NYCDOE.	No	Yes	Yes	Partial
<b>15) Comparative Performance:</b> From years 2-4, the school will receive a "B" or higher on the Scholar Progress section of the NYCDOE Progress Reports.	N/A	No	Yes	Yes

## Responsive Academic Program

In 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, the school reported that two Regents exams were administered to groups of eighth grade students with the following results:

- Twenty-nine ECS scholars took the 2012 Integrated Algebra Regents exam, approximately 37% of all eighth graders, with 100% of the test-takers receiving a passing grade and with 51.7% of them receiving a passing score of 80 or above. Thirty-four ECS scholars took the 2013 Integrated Algebra Regents with 97.1% receiving a passing grade and 38.2% receiving a score of 80 or above.
- A smaller group (six) of eighth graders ECS scholars took the Living Environment Regents exam in 2011-2012, with all of them receiving a passing grade. In 2012-2013, the number of eighth graders taking the Living Environment Regents increased to twenty-two and 77.3% of them received a passing grade.

As part of the renewal review process, representatives of the NYC DOE visited the school on October 2-3, 2013. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- Alignment with Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)
  - During the course of the term, school leadership reported that ECS revised their ELA curriculum and its supports for literacy across the curriculum to better prepare students for CCLS expectations. All ELA and Social Studies curriculum units now include:
    - Identified Common Core Learning Standards
    - Essential Questions linked to those standards
    - Objectives to support mastery of standards
    - Performance-based writing assessments and mid-unit assessments
    - Tiered vocabulary supports in ELA, Social Studies and Science.
  - Prior to the 2012-2013 school year ECS revamped its math curriculum to introduce greater rigor, more writing, and deeper conceptual understanding and questioning.
  - Based on the school's 2012-2013 proficiency results on NYS assessments for ELA and math, the school noted that it was "disappointed" but not shocked because interim assessment results indicated the school had further work to do in improving instruction to fully align with CCLS. Based on the results, ECS took the following additional actions:
    - Decided to work with Achievement Network (A-Net) for its interim assessment program and training support, as well as to provide an external comparative to their interim results.
    - Directors of Instruction are more frequently in classrooms, observing, modeling, and co-teaching, than previous years when much of their time was taking up with creating and analyzing school-created interim assessments.
    - The school also made adjustment to its schedule to increase attention to literacy in electives, to add a Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) period to the daily schedule, and bring in additional non-fiction resources through programs such as Achieve 3000.
- Addressing the Needs of All Learners
  - According to school leadership, all core subject classes except for the Read 180 and Period 5 intervention classes, which are small groups, are Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes, ensuring that students have significant opportunities for individual attention and differentiated instruction with two adults in core classes.
  - ECS has a Director of Special Education and Scholar Services, who manages all Special Education services, supervises Related Service providers and the school's social worker. In addition to the social worker, the school has a guidance counselor and grade level Student Support Teams (SST). The SSTs meet weekly on Tuesdays to review student progress.
  - Students with IEPs are supported by individually assigned "case managers," with ten certified staffers performing in this role, with case loads of between three and seven students per manager.
  - All teachers have appropriate access to student IEPs and are supported by school Differentiation Binders.

- All scholars have individual Life Action Plans to help students set meaningful goals, visualize success, craft strategies for attainment of goals, etc.—the approach is based on *The Success Principles for Teens* by Jack Canfield and Kent Healy.
- Instructional Model and Classroom Instruction
  - School leadership reported a mission-based focus on professional development that engages all members of the community in levels of decision-making, encourages and facilitates collaboration, and is committed to data-driven decision-making.
    - All staff participate in a two-week summer professional development session that includes mission and vision reviews, review of academic and behavioral priorities, working in teams, and preparing for the new school year, including data analysis, IEP review and co-teaching strategies.
    - Teachers collaborate on grade level teams, Student Support Teams, and data teams in weekly Tuesday afternoon professional development sessions.
    - Teachers set professional development goals with their supervisors and are formally observed twice a year. There are also regular informal “walk-throughs” by leadership team members, including teacher supervisors, who also regularly review and provide feedback on lesson plans.
  - On the days of the visit fourteen classrooms, including all core subjects, Life and Literacy, and intervention classes, were observed with the school’s instructional leaders, and the following was noted:
    - In all observed core classes ICT models were being implemented, typically with a Lead and Assist model with some examples of Team Teaching and Station Teaching also observed.
    - Class-sizes ranged from fifteen to twenty-seven students, with two or more teachers in all classrooms with more than twenty students.
    - Forms of questioning during the fourteen classroom observations included a mix of basic recall, explain or restate your understanding, and some analysis and application questioning.
    - In most rooms, checks for understanding included questioning, polling, exit tickets, classwork, rubrics, teacher observation, and homework, but little use of peer review was observed.
    - In all rooms, differentiation of materials, tasks, and products, through small group instruction or independent practice, was observed at varying levels of effectiveness.
    - In all observed classes, students were responsive to teacher directions and instruction.
    - In all observed classes, students were on task and academically and behaviorally compliant with instructional and behavioral expectations.
    - Based on debriefs with the school’s instructional leaders after classroom visits, all classrooms had instruction that aligned with the instructional model and current academic goals of the school but effectiveness of delivery varied. Leadership identified the following areas of improvement: more consistent rigor in instruction and assignments, more effective and efficient use of second adults in classroom, more targeted differentiation, and more opportunities for higher level questioning and student ownership of learning.
- Assessment System
  - ECS uses a variety of assessments to monitor progress, support instruction and accountability, including:
    - Terra Nova, a nationally norm-referenced assessment that is administered twice yearly, fall and spring.
    - Interim ELA and math assessments administered four times a year, three times prior to NYS assessments. ECS switched to Achievement Network in the 2013-2014 school year to improve the quality and immediacy of access to data reports for teachers.
    - Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA) II is used with Students with Disabilities in the fall and spring of each year.

- The school also uses formative classroom assessments and well as assessments from Read 180 and SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory).

### **Learning Environment**

- During the two days of the visit, the following was noted:
  - All observed classes were safe, orderly and conducive to learning. All hallway transitions were orderly and efficient.
  - Classrooms were print-rich with classroom procedures, instructional supports, and student work displayed. Classrooms had Smartboards and other technology, including laptops, available.
- During the renewal visit, NYC DOE representatives conducted one-on-one interviews with ten teachers. The following was noted:
  - All interviewed teachers reported that they received school-based professional development both in the summer and weekly during the school year, with the administration providing feedback and resources that they regard as “helpful,” “useful” and “things they can use.” They also reported that following the 2012-2013 state assessment results, the administration did “a great job breaking down the results” and presenting it as an opportunity. They also credited the “clinical teams” in which teachers meet to review instructional practices such as gradual release, questioning, and general instructional efficacy.
  - All interviewed teachers were clear on how and by whom they are evaluated and what the performance expectations were for them.
  - All interviewed teachers reported that they use data in the classrooms through both formal (i.e. interim assessments, Terra Nova, state assessments, unit and lesson assessments, performance tasks state assessments, unit and lesson assessments, performance tasks) and informal assessments (i.e. observational notes, exit slips assessments) for groupings and lesson planning.
  - Interviewed teachers were strongly positive about the school, its leadership, staff and students, noting that the culture was “warm,” “supportive,” and had a strong and reflective leadership that provided staff opportunities to grow and helped sustain a hard-working, student centered, united staff.

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

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

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has established and maintained a developed governance structure and organizational design.

On October 27, 2013, as part of the renewal review process, representatives of the NYC DOE interviewed the school's Board of Trustees. Based on document review and observation, the following was noted:

- The Board currently has nine active members, two of whom have served on the Board since the school's founding. Although the Board lost four members during school year 2010-2011, it has since replaced these members and added others. The Board has consistently kept membership within the minimum of five members and maximum of fifteen members established in the Board's bylaws.
- All of the Board's officer positions are currently filled.
- The Board has consistently achieved quorum, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Principal and Associate Principal update the Board on academic progress and operations at the school, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership as evidenced by the school's organization chart and school leadership's monthly updates on academic, financial and operational performance to the Board and its committees, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.
- The Board has active and functioning committees, as required by its bylaws, including an Executive Committee, Governance Committee, Finance Committee, Development Committee, and Academic Accountability Committee, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The ECS Board of Trustees is led by Board Chair Ed Hubbard, who began in this role at the start of the 2013-2014 school year, replacing Ehri Mathurin, who had served as chair from 2010-2011 through the 2012-2013 school year. The school is led by Principal Caitlin Franco, who has been at the school since the school's inception. She has been the school leader since replacing the school's first Principal, Joann Myers, in February 2011.
- Twice a year, as required by its charter goals, the Board of Trustees and Equality's leadership undergoes an evaluation of the school's mission, programs, and goals sharing the findings with staff.

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

Over the course of the charter term, the school has developed a stable school culture.

- The NYC DOE conducted a public renewal hearing for the school in an effort to elicit public comments on the ECS's renewal. Approximately 95 community members attended the hearing with twenty-five offering public comment. All speakers spoke in favor of the school's renewal; no speakers spoke against.
- The NYC DOE made randomized phone calls to parents from a roster provided by Equality Charter School for students of all grades. Calls to school parents/guardians were made until twenty phone calls were completed. Of these calls, 90% provided positive feedback and 10% provided neutral feedback regarding the school.
- Over the course of its initial charter term, the school has consistently met its charter goal of having an annual average student attendance rate of at least 95%.

<b>Average Daily Attendance<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>
	95%	95%	96%	95%

<sup>10</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form in October 2013

- ECS has experienced relatively low staff turnover rates throughout the course of its charter term. Its highest degree of instructional turnover (39%) occurred during its first year of operation. This number decreased over each subsequent year of the term and reached 16% in 2012-2013. Turnover among non-instructional staff has followed the same pattern, with its highest point being 36% in 2009-2010 and eventually reaching 8% in 2012-2013.<sup>11</sup>
- Over the course of the charter term, the NYC School Survey results and response rates were:

#### The Equality Charter School NYC DOE School Survey Results

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>Academic Expectations</b>	Average	Average	Well Above Average	Well Above Average
<b>Communication</b>	Above Average	Above Average	Well Above Average	Well Above Average
<b>Engagement</b>	Above Average	Average	Well Above Average	Well Above Average
<b>Safety &amp; Respect</b>	Average	Average	Above Average	Above Average

#### The Equality Charter School NYC DOE School Survey Response Rates Compared to Citywide Average

	Parents	Citywide	Teachers	Citywide	Students	Citywide
<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>67%</b>	49%	<b>89%</b>	76%	<b>100%</b>	82%
<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>80%</b>	52%	<b>100%</b>	82%	<b>98%</b>	83%
<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>81%</b>	53%	<b>89%</b>	82%	<b>100%</b>	82%
<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>80%</b>	54%	<b>100%</b>	83%	<b>97%</b>	83%

- Over the course of the charter term, participation in the school's NYC School Survey has always been above citywide participation rates and the threshold established in the school's charter goals (50%). Satisfaction levels were near or above school set targets in their charter goals for parents, teachers and students in the first two years and far exceeded them in the last two years of the term.

As part of the renewal process, representatives of the NYC DOE collected evidence relevant to the school's climate and community engagement over the school's charter term. Based on discussion, document collection and review, and observation, the following was noted:

- The school bases its student management plan on the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) system, which leadership and staff report has helped create a safe, respectful environment and a positive school culture.
  - The school's PBIS implementation is reviewed externally by PBIS evaluators and has been deemed exemplary each year since the program began, representing a met charter goal.
- Nine middle school students were interviewed in two groups, one of four and one of five, on October 2, 2013, the second day of the renewal visit.
  - Students provided mixed reports on the rigor and difficulty of the academic work, though most reported liking the school's academic focus, and some would like a free period.
  - Several students said the school feels "like home, like family" and that there was "lots of support" for them and that they feel they "can talk to anyone" if they need help.

<sup>11</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form in October 2013

- Interviewed students were mixed on school discipline, some stating that positive approach to discipline had improved things, while others still felt it was too strict.
  - Half of the interviewed students said they would definitely attend high school at ECS; half were not sure or intend going to another high school.
- The school set an internal goal in 2012-2013 around parental involvement. Its aim was for each child to have one parent/guardian attend at least two school events per year, exclusive of individual parent meetings. The school met this goal. Additionally, the school found that 85% of its parents attended anywhere from one to ten school events throughout the 2012-2013 school year.
- In an effort to further its students' community engagement, the school has formed program partnerships with the following community organizations over the past twenty months: Jewish Association Serving the Aging; the NYPD Community Affairs Bureau; and the Bronx District Attorney's Community Affairs Office.
- The school has an active Parent Teacher Association and provides all parents with access to its TeacherEase system so they may view their child's attendance record and academic data in real time. The school also provides parents training on the system during its Open House and subsequent PTA meetings.

## Financial Health

Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations.

- Based on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 financial audit, the school's current ratio indicated a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school had sufficient unrestricted cash to cover its operating expenses for more than two months without an infusion of cash.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2013-2014 budget to the actual enrollment as of October 31, 2013 showed that the school had met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY12 financial audit, the school had met its debt obligations.

Overall, the school is financially sustainable based on its current practices.

- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY13, the school generated an aggregate surplus over the three audited fiscal years, and in FY13 the school operated at a surplus.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's debt-to-asset ratio indicated that the school had more total assets than it had total liabilities.
- Based on the financial audits from FY11 through FY13, the school generated overall positive cash flow from FY11 to FY13, and the school had positive cash flow in each measurable year.

There was no material weakness noted in the 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013 independent financial audits.

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

- The school entered into a long-term operating lease for fifteen years, expiring in 2028, for a new facility to accommodate their proposed expansion to high school.

### **Essential Question 3: Is the School Compliant with its Charter and All Applicable Law and Regulations?**

Over the charter term, ECS has been compliant with all applicable laws and regulations.

The Board is in compliance with:

- Membership size. The Board has consistently had a membership size that falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws.
- Required number of Board meetings. The Board has held at least ten board meetings each year, the number of board meetings outlined in its charter and its bylaws.
- Submission of required documents. All current Board members have submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms and do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.<sup>12</sup>
- Availability of minutes and agendas. The Board has made all board minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to or at Board meetings by posting them on the school's website.
- Timely submission of accountability documents. The Board has provided timely submissions of accountability documents to the DOE.

The school is in compliance with:

- Submission of required documents. The school is in compliance with AED/CPR certification requirements.
- Fingerprint clearance. Over the charter term, all staff had members the required fingerprint clearance.
- Certification of instructional staff. Staff is either certified or highly qualified, and those that are not, fall under the requirements outlined in the NY State Charter Schools Act. A school can have no more than 5 teachers or 30% of the teaching staff uncertified, whichever number is lower.
- Insurance requirements. The school has submitted all appropriate insurance documents.

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<sup>12</sup> Source: New York State Education Department Annual Report

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

As reported by school leadership and the school's Board, the following was noted:

- ECS was originally chartered to serve grades six through eleven by the time of its initial charter expiration, but in 2010 submitted a charter revision proposal to delay expansion to grade nine by three years. During its next charter term, the school plans to pursue its original expansion plans and serve grades six through twelve by school year 2017-2018. The school plans to begin by offering grade nine in the 2014-2015 school year.
- The school has established two high school goals for itself: one, to retain 85% of its current middle school students to form the basis of its high school population, and two, to ensure that all of its students graduate high school with a Regents-level diploma, at minimum.
- The school plans to both modify and expand its existing organizational structure to accommodate its high school grades.
  - Modifications to current staff include: moving the Principal to Head of School; moving the Associate Principal to Middle School Principal; moving the Operations Manager to Director of Operations & Facilities; and separating the Operations and Finance team into two separate departments.
  - Additional staff to be hired include: Director of Curriculum; High School Principal; and Assistant to the Director of Operations & Facilities.
- The school's high school grades will be located in a privately leased facility within Community School District 8, located at 715 Castle Hill Avenue, Bronx, NY 10473.
- In response to the 2010 amendments to NYS Charter Schools Act requiring schools to attract and retain percentages of students who are designated as free and reduced lunch learners, students with disabilities, and English-language learners, the school is making demonstrated efforts to attract and retain these students.
  - The school has established outreach measures, such as creating translations of school materials into multiple languages, making available translators at school events, and advertising the school through various media outlets, in order to ensure compliance with the 2010 amendments.

## Part 5: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

### 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>13</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>14</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>15</sup> As one such charter entity, the New York City Department of Education 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;
- 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 NYC DOE 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>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See § 2850 of the Charter Schools Act of 1998.

<sup>14</sup> See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

<sup>15</sup> See §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4) of the Act.

<sup>16</sup> See § 2852(5) of the Act.

## Part 6: Authorizer Responsibility Under the NY State Charter Schools Act and the DOE Accountability 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 NYC DOE 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 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.

***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.

## The CSAS Accountability Framework

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

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

<b>1. Is the School an Academic Success?</b>
<b>1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement</b>
Schools that are academic successes have many of the characteristics below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meet absolute performance goals</li><li>• Meet student progress goals</li><li>• Are closing the achievement gap for at risk students, including special needs and ELL students</li><li>• Are surpassing performance of DOE identified peer-schools</li><li>• Are surpassing performance district and city proficiency or better averages</li><li>• Are meeting other rigorous academic and non-academic goals as stated in school's charter</li></ul>
Evidence for success might include, but not be limited to, the following depending on school configurations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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)</li><li>• 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)</li><li>• 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)</li><li>• Grades 8-12 NYS Regent Exam Results</li><li>• When applicable, NYSAA or other approved alternate assessments results</li><li>• HS 4- and 6-Year Graduation Rates (absolute and progress, overall, for at-risk student populations)</li><li>• Grades 8-12 College Readiness Credit Accumulation</li><li>• Percentage of Students Applying to and Being Admitted to College</li><li>• Percentage of Students Taking AP Courses and/or Percentage of Students Passing AP Courses</li><li>• Results on state accountability measures</li><li>• Charter School Academic and Non-Academic Goals</li><li>• NYC Progress Reports</li></ul>
<b>1b. Mission and Academic Goals</b>
Schools with successful missions and goals have many of the characteristics below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have an animating mission statement that staff, students and community embrace</li><li>• Set ambitious academic and non-academic goals that entire school community knows and embraces</li><li>• Have processes for regular monitoring and reporting on progress toward school goals</li><li>• Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring data</li></ul>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Have a formal or informal character education, social development, or citizenship program that provides opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens

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

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

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

### 2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

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

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

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

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

## 2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

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

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

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

## 2c. Financial and Operational Health

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

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

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

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

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

#### 3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

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

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

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

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

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have:

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

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

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

#### 3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Appendix A: School Performance Data

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>The Equality Charter School</b>	<b>31.6%</b>	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>29.9%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>
CSD 11	30.1%	29.9%	34.7%	16.1%
Difference from CSD 11	1.5	-6.4	-4.8	-7.0
NYC	39.2%	38.3%	42.5%	24.7%
Difference from NYC	-7.6	-14.8	-12.6	-15.7

% Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>The Equality Charter School</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	<b>50.9%</b>	<b>69.6%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>
CSD 11	40.4%	42.1%	47.9%	16.8%
Difference from CSD 11	8.8	8.8	21.7	-0.6
NYC	52.8%	54.7%	57.3%	26.5%
Difference from NYC	-3.6	-3.8	12.3	-10.3

All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

% of Sixth Graders Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>The Equality Charter School</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>28.6%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>
CSD 11	32.6%	37.2%	37.9%	14.6%
Difference from CSD 11	12.4	-12.9	-9.3	-6.8
NYC	40.1%	43.6%	45.3%	23.3%
Difference from NYC	4.9	-19.3	-16.7	-15.5

% of Sixth Graders Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>The Equality Charter School</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>45.3%</b>	<b>59.7%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>
CSD 11	42.3%	45.3%	50.9%	20.2%
Difference from CSD 11	15.7	0.0	8.8	-2.3
NYC	53.0%	56.0%	59.3%	28.8%
Difference from NYC	5.0	-10.7	0.4	-10.9

% of Seventh Graders Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>The Equality Charter School</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>29.9%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
CSD 11	27.5%	28.1%	35.5%	16.4%
Difference from CSD 11	-8.5	-3.1	-5.6	-4.7
NYC	38.2%	36.5%	43.3%	25.5%
Difference from NYC	-19.2	-11.5	-13.4	-13.8

% of Seventh Graders Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>The Equality Charter School</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>55.6%</b>	<b>67.1%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>

CSD 11	38.5%	45.3%	48.0%	15.6%
Difference from CSD 11	-4.5	10.3	19.1	-4.1
NYC	52.6%	55.5%	57.3%	25.0%
Difference from NYC	-18.6	0.1	9.8	-13.5

<b>% of Eighth Graders Proficient in English Language Arts</b>				
	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>
The Equality Charter School	-	21.1%	31.2%	7.8%
CSD 11	27.9%	24.6%	30.7%	17.5%
Difference from CSD 11	-	-3.5	0.5	-9.7
NYC	37.5%	35.0%	39.0%	25.4%
Difference from NYC	-	-13.9	-7.8	-17.6

<b>% of Eighth Graders Proficient in Math</b>				
	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>
The Equality Charter School	-	52.1%	81.8%	19.2%
CSD 11	27.7%	35.9%	44.8%	14.5%
Difference from CSD 11	-	16.2	37.0	4.7
NYC	46.3%	52.5%	55.2%	25.7%
Difference from NYC	-	-0.4	26.6	-6.5

All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

## Appendix B: Additional Accountability Data

### NYC DOE Progress Reports

[2012-2013 Academic Year](#)

[2011-2012 Academic Year](#)

[2010-2011 Academic Year](#)

### NYC DOE Accountability Reports

[Annual Site Visit Report 2009-2010](#)

[Annual Site Visit Report 2011-2012](#)

[Annual Site Visit Report 2010-2011](#)

[Annual Comprehensive Review 2012-2013](#)