ROSS GLOBAL ACADEMY
CHARTER SCHOOL
RENEWAL REPORT
ADDENDA

DECEMBER 2010

Addendum A: New York State Education Department Monitoring Visit Report

The New York State Education Department conducted a monitoring visit at Ross Global Academy in March of 2009. Their report is included below.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK/ NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
COMPREHENSIVE MONITORING FEEDBACK MATRIX 2008-2009

Ross Global Academy Charter School
52 Chambers Street (elementary grades) and 55 E. 25th Street (middle grades), New York, NY
CSD # 2 Manhattan
Head of School: Julie Johnson
Visit Date: Wednesday, March 18, 2009
Report Date: Friday, May 15, 2009

Mission: "Ross Global Academy Charter School's mission is to transform the way education prepares students for the future. Through systematic interdisciplinary instruction, built upon deep knowledge of the disciplines and commitment to fundamental skills, immersion in worldwide cultural history and current world events, intercultural dialogue, and fluency in new technologies, we endeavor to prepare students for the global challenges of the 21st century. The Ross Global Academy serves students from diverse cultural backgrounds with varied learning styles and cultivates engagement in life-long learning and well-being."
Team that attended the Monitoring Visit: Kalimah Geter, Jamal Young, Dr. Moshe Gans, Crystal Cumberbatch-Greene and Dr. Kathryn Ahern
Areas of Strengths: • The School has a commitment to include parents in the governance of the School. Two parents serve on the Board of Trustees. • The Trustees have contracted a consulting firm, CSBM, to strengthen the fiscal and operations support for the School. • Professional development has been sought by administrators, through networking, to meet the on-going needs expressed by the instructional staff. • School leadership offers continuous professional feedback to instructional staff. Teachers agree that the feedback received is beneficial in moving instructional practice forward.
Areas of Non-Compliance: • Evidence of fingerprint clearance must be provided for the 24 staff members. • The School employs three teachers without certification or qualifying exemption. The School must submit a plan to come into compliance with § 2854(3) of the Education Law. • The School is currently serving grades kindergarten through three and grades six to eight. The approved charter indicates that at this point the School should be serving grades kindergarten through eleven. • The School is under-enrolled, serving 318 students versus 440 as per the approved charter. • The School has eliminated its after school and Saturday programs. • Teachers have not received the $1,000 to attend conferences, as stated in the approved charter. • Chinese language instruction has not taken place consistently across all grade levels, as approved in the charter.

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status

Areas of Concern and/or Needs Improvement:

- The School does not have a nurse at the 25th Street location. If students need medical attention, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has to be called to the School. This is a concern for the safety and efficient care of the students.
- Classroom management was a notable concern in many classrooms.
- Teachers at the middle school location have not received adequate support, in terms of professional development and faculty meetings. A feeling of isolation was expressed.
- Middle grade students report feeling as if they are being taught by teachers who seem ill-prepared to teach certain subjects effectively.
- The School concluded the 2008 fiscal year with less than $20,000. This was largely attributed to an administrative error by the Ross Institute, acting on behalf of the School. Close attention must be paid by the Trustees, particularly the finance committee, to ensure the ongoing fiscal strength of the School.
- During the Board interview, Courtney Ross stated that the School had set a fundraising goal of $300,000 and was two-thirds of the way in reaching the goal. Independent conversations revealed the fiscal and operations team were unaware of these fundraising efforts.

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
CHARTER ESSENTIALS			
Implementation of provisions as written in approved charter			
School is implementing its philosophy as written in its approved charter.	☒	☐	
School is using its instructional methodologies as written in its approved charter	☒	☐	
Student Achievement Goals (or the goals within the Charter School Accountability Plan if applicable)			
School is monitoring performance goals and is collecting student assessment data.	☒	☐	
School is making AYP and is in Good Standing.	☒	☐	
Revisions to charter (if applicable) Documentation (e.g. memoranda from School and Authorizer) to demonstrate the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the chartering entity have approved all changes made to charter (if applicable).			
Copies of BOT minutes showing approval of the recommended changes are provided, as well as copies of letters from the authorizer and Board of Regents (BOR) showing approval for all changes.	☒	☐	
Observations/Comments: • All Board minutes were found to be in order, showing approval of changes and including copies of letters to the authorizer as evidence of revisions approved. • The School has monitored performance goals and collected student assessment data.			
CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT			
Description of Instructional Program			
Objectives posted	☒	☐	
Up to date student work displayed	☒	☐	
Teachable moments recognized	☐	☒	Student misbehavior was not consistently addressed by teachers. Students were noted

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
			as acting out in several classrooms.
Teacher strength in content knowledge displayed	☒	☐	
Transitions smooth and efficient	☒	☐	
Positive teacher feedback observed	☒	☐	
Rules and Behavior plan observed and/or displayed	☐	☒	Classroom rules were not visible in several classrooms at both locations.
Student Work and Classroom Observations			
Instructional strength was satisfactory at all grade levels and subject areas.	☒	☐	
Students were actively engaged in learning.	☐	☒	Students were off-task at both locations. Middle school students attributed misbehavior to the lack of teachers' instructional knowledge and confidence.
Time on task was well spent.	☒	☐	
Differentiated instruction was observed.	☒	☐	
Effective classroom management skills practiced.	☐	☒	Effective classroom management was not evident in many classrooms.
Assessments Administered to Students			
School administers all assessments indicated in its charter.	☒	☐	
School retains detailed, comprehensive records on student achievement for all local, State, and national assessments.	☒	☐	
School applies qualitative and quantitative assessment results to inform decisions and planning.	☒	☐	
Academic performance of the students demonstrates the School is educationally sound.	☒	☐	
In the case that portfolios are employed, the evaluation rubric is clear and is applied consistently by all staff.	☒	☐	

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
Observations/Comments: • In the classrooms that were observed, many students engaged in off-task behavior without evidence of teacher redirection. • In one classroom a teacher was observed screaming at the students with a lack of self-control and visible frustration. • Most classrooms lacked smooth transitions.			
BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETINGS			
The School's Board of Trustees asserts professional experience in the areas of education, law, finance, real estate and non-profit governance.	☒	☐	
Board members are assigned to a committee.	☒	☐	
Public Notifications			
The School maintains records to demonstrate public notification of BOT meetings.	☒	☐	
Minutes to Date			
Board minutes indicate that the BOT meets regularly and attendance is consistent.	☒	☐	
Minutes indicate the BOT functions as governing structure that holds final authority for policy and operational decisions of the School per §2853(1) (f).	☒	☐	
Minutes indicate all votes are taken with a quorum.	☒	☐	
BOT meetings are held in a location convenient for parents/staff to attend.	☒	☐	
The BOT does not vote via telephonic means or via e-mail. All members are either present or otherwise seen (e.g. via video conferencing) when voting.	☒	☐	
Data Provided at BOT meetings			
BOT members are kept aware of school occurrences.	☒	☐	
School leaders regularly inform the Board of Trustees of School activities.	☒	☐	

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
Revision to by-laws (if applicable)			
By-laws are consistent with charter and consistent with NYS provisions, Education Law §226(2) and 2853; Not for Profit Corporation Law, §712.	☒	☐	
Observations/Comments: • The Trustees have expertise in education, law, finance and real estate. • Board minutes are comprehensive and provide the trustees with academic, operations and fiscal information. • Board Attendance at meetings during the 2008-2009 school year has been strong and consistent. • New trustees have recently joined the board. Formal membership is pending NYCDOE approval. • The School and trustee minutes reflect the issuance of public notifications of BOT meetings; meetings are conducted at the School. • Minutes indicate all votes are taken with a quorum and that members do not vote by telephone. • The principal has developed a "dashboard" template for presentation to the Board of Trustees.			
COMPLAINT PROCESS			
Complaints received by BOT to Date			
The School maintains records pertaining to all formal complaints made to the BOT.	☒	☐	
All complaints have been addressed in a timely fashion.	☒	☐	
Evidence of Resolution of Complaints			
The School maintains evidence of resolution of complaints.	☒	☐	
Observations/Comments: • The School reports that the Board of Trustees has received no formal complaints from parents during the current school year. • Concerns raised by parents tend to be addressed by the School's leadership team. • The 2008-2009 Student Family Handbook includes parent complaint procedures consistent with § 2855(4) of the Education Law.			

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
FISCAL			
Budget in approved charter			
The School budget ensures staffing and service delivery is aligned to the charter.	☒	☐	
Tax Exempt Status			
The School has attained tax-exempt status within one year of being chartered.	☒	☐	
Dissolution Policies			
School has a dissolution policy in the case it faces closure.	☒	☐	
The School maintains an escrow account for dissolution per Section 8.5 of its charter agreement.	☒	☐	
Financial Reports			
The School maintains a system for financial reporting.	☒	☐	
Fiscal Controls			
The School demonstrates it has systems in place for fiscal controls.	☒	☐	
Contract(s) for Provision of Services			
Contracts between the School and its Institutional Partner/Charter Management Organization are current, signed and in accordance with approved charter.	☒	☐	

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status

Observations/Comments:

- According to the audited financial statements of RGACS for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, the School had a change in net assets of ($1,074,566). The School had a surplus from operations of $1,108,768. RGACS has net assets of $82,535. Cash at the end of the fiscal year was reported at $17,364.
- Debts in excess of $1M were forgiven by the Ross Institute.
- The budget is aligned to meet the instructional and operational needs of RGACS.
- The board of trustees receives monthly and quarterly financial reports from RGACS.
- Additional financial reports are prepared on a monthly basis.
- The School has attained tax-exempt status.
- The School has retained Charter School Business Management (CSBM) to provide fiscal and operations support.
- CSBM provides a liaison to the School throughout the week.
- The independent audit made three findings concerning the fiscal controls and policies of the School.
- CSBM provided evidence to demonstrate the findings have been addressed by the School.
- CSBM will initiate a pre-emptive meeting with auditors in March or April of 2009 in preparation for the 2009 audit.
- CSBM provides the trustees with cash flow projections, budget vs. actual expenditure reports and additional support related to records management of staff and students.
- CSBM projects a year end surplus of approximately $127,000.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE, INCLUDING PARENTAL & STAFF INVOLVEMENT			
School Organizational Chart			
School organizational structure aligns to the structure indicated in the approved charter.	☒	☐	
Complaint Procedures			
Complaint procedures have been distributed to parents.	☒	☐	
The procedure clearly outlines the proper steps and provides detailed contact information in accordance with §2855(4) of the Education Law.	☒	☐	

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
Observations/Comments: • Two parents were recently selected to serve on the RGACS Board of Trustees. • The Student-Family Handbook was distributed to families in August 2008 and is available online. • Parents report the principal is responsive to the concerns and requests raised concerning discipline and safety. • The School recently created a Parent Teacher Association in collaboration with the New York State Parent Teacher Association. • The School organizational chart is aligned to the management, staffing and reporting structure at RGACS. • Complaint procedures are clearly outlined and in accordance with §2855(4) of Education Law.			
ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES			
Class Registers			
Enrollment data correlate with size and configuration as approved in the charter.	☐	☒	The current grade configuration is not in compliance with the charter. The School is currently serving grades K-3 and 6-8, instead of grades K-11 as approved.
Student enrollment is within prescribed parameters described in charter.	☐	☒	The enrollment is not within the prescribed parameters of the charter. The current enrollment is 318 instead of the approved 440.
Record of Student Admissions			
Student records are kept confidential.	☒	☐	
Admissions data demonstrate strong retention of students from year to year.	☒	☐	
School records are only transferred with parent consent.	☒	☐	
List of Discharges to Date with Reason(s) for discharge			
The School maintains organized discharge data to indicate reason for students' departures.	☒	☐	
Involuntary transfer is not offered as an option.	☒	☐	

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
Procedures used to verify student residency			
Students in CSD are given preference (beginning with students entering 2008).	☒	☐	
Student Demographics			
School maintains disaggregated data by reportable subgroups.	☒	☐	
Materials pertaining to recruitment of students and conduct of admission lottery.			
Parents/Guardians can easily access applications for the School.	☒	☐	
The application requires only basic information.	☒	☐	
The School provides assistance to families in need of help with the application. (Including translation services when deemed necessary.)	☒	☐	
Admissions policy is implemented in accordance with §2854(2) (a) and (b) of Education Law.	☒	☐	
School is open to all students; with the exception of students residing within its located community school district, the School does not require students meet admissions criteria.	☒	☐	
No student is denied admission due to his/her disability, intellectual ability, and measures of aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender national origin, religion or ancestry.	☒	☐	
School holds open houses and makes recruitment efforts in accordance with charter. (Offering second language and/or translation services as needed.)	☒	☐	
The School holds an annual lottery and maintains preference in accordance with §2854(2) of the Education Law.	☒	☐	
The School maintains documentation to demonstrate evidence of good faith effort to attract LEP, ELLs and SWDs.	☒	☐	

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
Waiting List by Grade			
The School maintains a wait list of students seeking admission to the School. The list is maintained in accordance to lottery or by date of submission (if application was received following lottery) and divided by grade level.	☒	☐	
Observations/Comments: • The School has submitted a request for revision to the Board of Regents to rectify the enrollment discrepancies. • Admissions and lottery procedures were found to be in compliance with the charter.			
SCHOOL DAY SCHEDULES			
School Calendar			
The School offers the number of days that are approved in the charter (a minimum of 180 days of instruction or its equivalent).	☒	☐	
Daily Schedule			
The School offers a minimum of 5.5 hours of instruction to 7th-12th graders and/or a minimum of 5 hours of instruction to students in grade K-6 or its equivalent throughout the school year.	☒	☐	
The daily calendar (and implementation of) demonstrates students receive instruction in all tested areas, even if they are integrated into other subject areas.	☒	☐	
The daily calendar (and implementation of) demonstrates students receive instruction in all the learning standards, even if they are integrated into other subject areas.	☒	☐	
After School, Saturday, or Sunday programs			
After school, Saturday and/or summer program is offered in accordance with charter.	☐	☒	The after school and Saturday programs have been eliminated.

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
The School uses non-public funds to provide optional after school, summer school and/or Saturday programs.	☒	☐	
The School offers additional support services to students. Services include tutoring, academic enrichment, dance, music, physical education, test prep, etc.	☒	☐	
Observations/Comments: • The School is out of compliance with the charter in regard to the offering of an after school and Saturday program. • The School has submitted a request for revision to the Board of Regents to rectify the elimination of the after-school and Saturday programs.			
PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES			
Parent Survey			
Results gathered from the School's parent satisfaction survey indicate the parents are satisfied.	☒	☐	
A majority of parents participated in the parent satisfaction survey.	☐	☒	There was a response rate of 22% on the 2007-08 Learning Environment Survey. The School must create a more innovative approach to get a majority of parents to complete the satisfaction surveys.
Involvement of Parents in School Governance			
A Parent Advisory Committee has been established in accordance with the approved charter. (As applicable.)	☒	☐	
Other Evidence of Engagement with Parents and Community			
Written communication to parents is clear. Material to parents is provided in the parents' dominant mode of communication as needed.	☒	☐	

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
Courses, programs and/or services offered to parents, family/community members.			
GED preparation courses, technical certification course or other similar programs/services are not offered with general school funds, to students, parents or family members.	☒	☐	

Observations/Comments:

- The School reports a 22 percent response rate to the Learning Environment Survey for the 2007-2008 school year.
- During interviews, parents provided the following information on RGACS:
  - Students are enthusiastic about the School and have demonstrated significant academic progress.
  - The curriculum is rigorous, but may lack sufficient differentiation to meet the needs of all students.
  - School discipline has been a challenge because RGACS lacks coherent resources for meeting needs of students with disabilities.
  - The handbook was recently revised by the School, but has not been distributed to parents.
  - Trustees engaged parents in the process of hiring the School principal.
  - Parents visited the Long Island Ross School and found curriculum to be aligned between schools.
  - RGACS conducted grade level meetings with parents to provide information about the curriculum.
  - The School no longer offers a Saturday or after school program. The Saturday program was eliminated due to a significant decline in participation, according to the previous principal.
  - Parents expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of Chinese language instruction at the School.
  - RGACS does not offer structured athletics.
  - RGACS did not develop a program for Black History Month.
- The School conducted an independent survey of parents in December 2008.
  - The School has an enrollment of 318 students. Parents of 93 students responded to the survey. The estimated response rate to the School's survey is 28%.
  - 33 percent of parents disagreed that the School provides challenging academic goals.
  - 40 percent of parents disagreed that the curriculum is rigorous.
  - 82 percent of parents agreed that their child/children receive the extra support they need.

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
IDENTIFICATION OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS			
Evidence of Home Language Survey (HLS)			
The School maintains HLS for every student enrolled.	☐	☒	One student was found without a home language survey on record (Alice Ciobance). The School must submit a completed home language survey for the aforementioned student.
SCHOOL FACILITIES			
Map of the School			
Facility permits School to accommodate the programs and services detailed in its charter.	☒	☐	
Charter school does not house any grade at more than one site.	☒	☐	
Condition of Physical Plant			
Condition of Physical Plant was high: clean, well lit, safe, conducive to subject (PE / lunch included).	☒	☐	
Facility meets architectural access requirements for persons with disabilities, as indicated in the ADA and local building codes.	☒	☐	
Emergency Plan and Procedures			
An approved SAVE plan is in place.	☒	☐	
Emergency Plan is in place.	☒	☐	
School conducts (and logs) twelve fire drills each year with eight of them occurring before the month of December.	☒	☐	
Certificate of Occupancy is current.	☒	☐	
INSURANCE COVERAGE			
Copy of Policy			
Insurance documents reviewed demonstrate the School holds current coverage, including: liability, property loss, and personal injury of students.	☒	☐	

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status

Observations/Comments:

- The School holds current coverage including liability, property loss and personal injury of students.
- The current premium is $17,779. The proposed renewal premium is $22,249. The per student rate is expected to decrease in the renewal term by approximately .50 cents per student.

QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS AND OTHER STAFF			
Building Staff Roster			
The School maintains an accurate, updated list of all school personnel.	☒	☐	
Teacher Certifications			
Teachers are certified in accordance with the requirements applicable to other public schools; provided it may employ up to 30% of its teaching staff, or 5 teachers (whichever is less) who meet the criteria listed in §2854(3)(a-1) of Education Law.	☐	☒	The School employs three teachers without certification or qualifying exemption. The School must submit a plan to come into compliance with the 30/5 law.
Evidence that required background checks			
The School maintains documents to demonstrate each staff member has been cleared for employment by NYS. (Emergency conditional clearance has been attained for each staff member as necessary.)	☐	☒	Evidence of fingerprint clearance must be provided for the following staff as per §2854(a-2)(i) of the Education Law: Allen, Auguste, Brown, Buxton, Devane, George, Johnson, Martin, Marzan, Mulhern, Neuage, Noguera, Quattara, Reid, Rhinehart, Richards, Rosenberg, Ruiz, Sanchez, Szeli, Trazino, Ukai, White and Wilson.
School Policies and Procedures for Staff Recruitment and Selection Process. Evidence BOT makes final decisions			
Policies and procedures for staff recruitment and selection process are clear.	☒	☐	
BOT makes final employment and termination decisions.	☒	☐	

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status

Observations/Comments:

- As per §2854(3)(a-2)(i)of the Education Law, fingerprinting of all prospective employees is required. Fingerprint clearances for the aforementioned staff members must be obtained as soon as possible. In the interim emergency clearances must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Copy of Professional Development Plan or Board minutes indicating adoption of Professional Development Plan (Consolidated Application and Technology Plan)

Professional development offered matches that described in charter.	☐	☒	The charter requires a $1,000 allocation for instructional staff, to attend professional conferences as per the approved charter. RGACS must provide this option to teachers.
School provided evidence of teachers' participation.	☒	☐	
Staff members interviewed express satisfaction with professional development that is offered.	☒	☐	
The principal conducts regular, on-going meetings/dialogue with teachers to discuss student performance and instructional practice.	☒	☐	

Observations/Comments:

- The School has two consultants to lead the professional development effort. Each consultant is available three days per week.
- Teachers interviewed are satisfied with the professional development that is being offered. Teachers recommended that the professional development sessions be more nuts-and-bolts as opposed to general theory.
- The School leadership team has continuous professional dialogue with teachers at both locations. Teachers report that this is beneficial to their professional growth.
- The principal reports that the professional development budget is $160,000.

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
STUDENT DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES			
Student Code of Conduct			
The School implements the student Code of Conduct in its approved charter.	☒	☐	
Parents receive a copy of the Code of Conduct.	☒	☐	
Students are not withheld from academics due to a uniform violation.	☒	☐	
Family/Student behavioral contract is voluntary.	☒	☐	
List of Student Suspensions with Parent Notifications			
Suspensions are properly documented. Repeated suspensions are supported by action plans to improve behavior.	☒	☐	
School demonstrates that parents are notified of suspensions in a timely fashion.	☒	☐	
Suspended and/or expelled students are afforded due process	☐	☒	The School must provide clear communication to students and parents, regarding their right to appeal a suspension.
Evidence that Suspended Students Received Alternate Instruction, Not Just Assignments			
School properly offers alternative instruction.	☐	☒	The School must provide clear communication to students and parents that they have a right to receive alternative instruction within, 24 hours of a suspension.
Evidence of Due Process			
The School retains evidence that due process procedures are followed for all disciplinary action.	☐	☒	The School must retain records of the due process procedures that were followed for all disciplinary actions.
Observations/Comments: • The School provided several suspension letters that were inconsistent. None of the letters offered alternative instruction. Only two letters noted an option for a conference, but it was not clear that the conference related to the student's right to appeal. • The School did not have any documents related to the due process procedures that were taken for any disciplinary actions.			

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
• The principal reported that students are not withheld from classes for uniform violations. However, the Parent Handbook states that "students may be detained until a parent brings a uniform." The handbook also states that repeat offenders may be deemed "not ready to be part of RGA." Referrals to suspensions, expulsions and withholding from classes must be eliminated from the handbook. The School may not suspend students or encourage families to leave because of uniforms. What system does the School have in place for students unable to afford uniforms?			
COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH AND PUPIL SERVICES, FOOD SERVICES, AND TRANSPORTATION			
School Health Services			
Nursing services are provided in accordance with the charter.	☒	☐	
Medication is kept in a secure, locked storage cabinet.	☒	☐	
All student medication is provided in its original container with specific dosage instructions.	☒	☐	
Daily provision of medication is noted in a log.	☒	☐	
An external defibrillator is on site, and staff has been trained in its use.	☐	☒	The School must provide a list of currently employed staff that has been trained in the use of the defibrillator at the middle school location.
Student Immunization			
Immunization/ Health records are received for each student and are properly maintained and updated.	☒	☐	
VADIR Data			
School submitted Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting (VADIR) data in a timely fashion.	☒	☐	
Transportation			
Transportation services provided for all days of mandatory attendance.	☒	☐	
Food Services			
Food services provided as described in the approved charter.	☒	☐	

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status

Observations/Comments:

- The School employs a nurse; however, the nurse does not service students at the 25th Street location. If students need medical attention, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has to be called to the School. This is a concern for the safety and efficient care of the students. The School should look at alternative options for safeguarding the health of all Ross Global Academy students, in all locations.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES			
Description of CSE referral procedures			
The School immediately initiates CSE referrals on students enrolled in the program who are determined to require updated IEP goals and objectives, further evaluation, changes in program and/or related service recommendations, and/or have incomplete or incorrect IEPs.	☒	☐	
Communication of IEP Responsibilities			
The School assures that each appropriate teacher, related service provider, and other individuals with IEP implementation responsibility are informed of their specific responsibility related to implementing the IEP and specific accommodations, program modification, and supports that need to be provided to the student.	☒	☐	
Implementation of Programs and Services			
Programs and services for students with disabilities provided by the School are implemented within required timelines and in accordance with their IEPs. (FAPE/LRE).	☒	☐	
Service/Program Providers			
Special education programs and services are provided by appropriately certified/licensed individuals. (FAPE/LRE)	☒	☐	

Observations/Comments:

- All student individualized education plans (IEPs) were up to date.
- Services were found to be appropriately provided and service provider schedules gave evidence to the service provisions indicated.
- The School has submitted the required focused review report to the NYSED Office of Vocational and Educational Services

Monitoring Items	Y Yes	N No	REQUIRED ACTION for Items with "N" Status
for Individuals with Disabilities. The report is currently under review.			

Addendum B: New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Office Annual Site Visit Reports

The NYC DOE CSO visited Ross Global Academy in May 2007, June 2007, November 2007, and May 2008. These reports are included below.

NYCDOE | Quality Review: Final Report

Department of Education

Office of Charter Schools

Quality Review Report

Ross Global Academy Charter School

84M355

52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Board Chair: Courtney Sale Ross

Dates of review: May 20 & 21, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Jeannemarie Hendershot, Aamir Raza, Chris Hawkins, Elizabeth Cooley
&
Jo Cheadle (Cambridge Education)

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

Progress made since the last review
Overall evaluation
RGA's performance on Office of Charter School's (OCS) evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

During the 2007-08 school year, Ross Global Academy ("RGA") was an elementary-middle school with 210 students from kindergarten through grade 2 and grades 6 through 7. The school population comprises 25% Hispanic, 48% African American, 16% Asian, 3% White and 7% students from other origins. The student body includes 10% special education students. Boys and girls are equally represented. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007-2008 was 91% per data reported in June by the school. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school is in its second year of existence. There has been high turnover of the school's staff, including five school leaders, since opening. The principal who was in place at the time of the visit became leader of the school prior to the previous Quality Review conducted in May '07 that was followed by an abbreviated follow-up visit at the school. The school will have its first grade 3 and grade 8 in September 2008.

The Quality Review also constituted the New York City Department of Education's ("NYCDOE") review of compliance with the charter regulations.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Committed teachers put forth enormous effort in their individual classrooms.
- Board members and school leaders communicate a school vision centered on positive learning experiences and academic success.
- Parents appreciate the care that individual teachers show for their children.
- The core curriculum is interesting and broad, and establishes links between subjects, which enhances student learning.
- A range of specialist classes such as music, theatre, dance, and art provide outlets for student creativity.
- Extended activities include a program for the arts.
- Dedicated teachers collect anecdotal evidence to make their teaching more effective.

What the school needs to improve

- The school did not share evidence of a detailed document outlining how it plans to achieve its vision, showing priority goals with clear action plans, delegated responsibilities, measurable success criteria and suitable timeframes.
- There was no evidence of a systematic plan for generating, collecting, analyzing, and using data for student and teacher outcomes to establish a clear picture of the school's progress.
- Observations and interviews revealed that teachers do not make effective use of a well-organized range of student information to plan for new learning.
- High expectations regarding student behavior and achievement, and clear procedures for behavioral support were absent from the larger school community during the visit.
- Roles and responsibilities for staff are not clearly defined, resulting in the use of inappropriate channels of communication and a lack of trust and respect among staff, creating a negative climate for teaching and learning.
- The review team did not find evidence of school procedures and levels of professional conduct being adhered to consistently.
- There are no systems in place to address chronic staff attrition.
- The school currently lacks effective communication between the school leadership and the board of trustees.
- Evidence of consistency in board oversight is lacking.

Part 3: Main findings

Progress made since the last review.

The school leadership and board had addressed several items such as the creation of initial systems for tracking student data and a stabilized school culture noted in last year's review by implementing initial systems by October 2007 when NYCDOE conducted an abbreviated follow-up visit at the school. However, much of the progress observed in October 2007 was not realized during the May 2008 school quality review due to changing dynamics among staff, leadership, and the RGA board of trustees.

Overall Evaluation

The Ross Global Academy Charter School ("RGA") prides itself on an interdisciplinary curriculum framework which uses cultural history as the foundation for teaching. This curriculum model is being executed in different ways across the school. A rich array of specialist classes are provided to help support this curriculum model, and students participate in music, dance, art and theater classes daily. These courses appear to engage the students enrolled in them, and seem to excite students about being in school. Teachers are faced with the challenge of incorporating the cultural history components into their teaching of New York State standards to students who often need remediation before they meet grade level standards. As a result, the curriculum is not coherent as a whole-school model since teachers are faced with the dual challenge of teaching and assessing basic skills while trying to integrate and develop a rich, interdisciplinary curriculum that is sometimes difficult to access for students who are reading below grade level. Teachers have not received the proper professional development and time to create a scope and sequence that ensures appropriate integration of the cultural history component with the skills, standards, and flexibility required for students with special needs.

An effective special education team is in place to ensure that students' needs are met through a student study team which meets frequently, regularly reviews Individual Education Plans ("IEPs"), and works in liaison with the Committee on Special Education to ensure proper placement of all students according to their IEPs. However, this work is somewhat hindered by the lack of frequently collected objective data to measure progress. This is the case across the school. Teachers administer assessments and track progress on grade level teams or for their individual classes, but this is not consistent, and there is no clear format for school leadership to view progress across the school or by groups of students. The lack of consistent data collection and meaningful use of data is one of the biggest obstacles facing the school, since without clear and objective data, goal-setting and strategic planning cannot be accomplished.

A culture of distrust among the faculty has also burdened the school significantly. This culture of distrust was evidenced during the visit through comments from teachers such as, "It feels like there are spies everywhere; no one is comfortable being critical," and "We have received board directives without explanation to spend entire days out of our classroom, leaving our students with substitutes, to gather every piece of communication we ever had with parents this year." Staff attrition is another major issue that has created challenges for this school. The attrition rate for teachers/instructional staff in 2006-07 was 82% and 75% (based on figures provided by RGA) in the 2007-08 school year. More specifically, all five of the lower school teachers and the lower school literacy specialist left at the end of the year, and the school's fourth principal was also to depart at the end of the year. According to the RGA board, high teacher attrition rates are evident in many New York City schools that serve high-poverty, high-needs students and that 29% of teachers

were not invited back and another 29% of the non-returning teachers left to enroll in full-time graduate programs.

Currently, the school is in a tenuous position as it enters its third year of operation. With the addition of two new grades and movement of the upper school to a second campus, the school has been presented with the task of replacing many positions as it also fills a number of newly created positions. The school will be serving both a third grade and an eighth grade for the first time, in two separate campuses. Effective board oversight and communication between the board and principal will be crucial for the school to move forward and focus completely on student learning and progress.

While presiding over staff attrition, inconsistent instructional practices, lack of student performance data at the board level, the RGA board did not provide the most consistent oversight to the school. For example, while the board did not have a dashboard in place for monitoring student progress and performance at the time of the visit, the board was also getting involved in more micro school-level matters, such as the monitoring of each teacher's contact with families. With minor reservations on the school's financial condition (but good internal controls), the school displays a fair financial outlook.

Parent engagement efforts have helped create a fair rate of satisfaction among families that are committed to the future success of the school.

In making renewal decisions, the Office of Charter Schools (OCS) will focus on three (3) key questions:

- Is the school an academic success?
- Is the school a viable organization? and
- Is the school in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations?

OCS applies these Standards at each year of the charter to measure progress towards renewal. When applying these Standards to the unusual staff attrition rates over the past two years, frequent turnover in school leadership, non-compliance with teacher certification, and lackluster educational environment as evidenced by inconsistent instructional practices and the NYCDOE Learning Environment Survey RGA is not sufficiently meeting interim benchmarks towards renewal.

ROSS GLOBAL ACADEMY'S PERFORMANCE ON OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOL'S ("OCS") EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

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

As a small school, most members of staff know students well. Parents appreciate that their children are perceived as individuals, known personally by many teachers and, as a result, are happy to come to school. Teachers make good efforts to plan learning that meets students' academic needs and personal interests. They care about students and want to teach them effectively. However, with a growing population, the school has given too little attention to understanding the performance of individual students through regular data collection. During the school visit, no one was able to provide examples of data that demonstrate a clear picture of student performance and progress across the school. Some teachers had data charts and item analyses of their individual classes which were shared with the review team when individual teachers sat down with the review team; however, this was not available in an accessible manner for the whole school, and the practice of maintaining and analyzing this data varied by teacher. The main intake grade is Kindergarten, but many students also enroll in grades 1, 6, and 7. The principal, school leadership team, and board have neglected the importance of knowing and understanding students through the regular collection and collation of data about their prior experiences, social contexts, past achievements and personal interests. During the visit, the board reported that it had not requested quantitative data on student performance throughout the year nor did it have a regular system or dashboard for reviewing this data on a regular basis. Teachers do not have access to a general overview of each student that gives them a clear picture of their starting points for learning. The school is lacking the urgent support mechanisms for students' learning and behavioral needs. Teachers are unable to provide this support effectively because there is insufficient information about students' current levels of achievement, specific needs and gaps in learning. Leaders carry out some analysis of State test results. While the analysis has demonstrated that the school is on track to meet a number of its charter goals, realistic year-to-year strategic goals have not yet been set forth. However, limited action is taken to devise whole school goals with the aim of remedying the issues identified by the analysis.

Since the last Quality Review, leaders have taken some steps to compile assessment information. Teachers administer baseline assessments and the school uses ECLAS diagnostics three times per year. Some teachers in the upper school use a tracker for item analysis of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), which was used as practice for the New York State English Language Arts exam, but this work was self-initiated by those teachers and not part of a whole school initiative. However, leaders do not analyze this data thoroughly enough, nor do they collate information suitably, making it easily accessible to teachers when they plan for future learning. The substance of most data collated about students is anecdotal. While this "soft data" has an important place in the school, it is not substantial enough to inform regular updates on where the school currently stands in its effectiveness. Where data exists, teachers use it sporadically and without conviction, because there has been virtually no training and guidance on how to make sense of it in a practical way. Board members have been satisfied with "big picture" reporting from the administration, but have not requested specific data nor have they created a dashboard for looking at performance and progress.

In the context of the school's unstable history of high staff and leadership attrition, this is an inadequate measure of progress because it means that with every staff change, adults must start from scratch to determine students' strengths and weaknesses by class and as a school. While there are pockets of proficient practice and a wealth of positive intentions to make a difference to student outcomes, the school's lack of consistent data generation, analysis and use has serious consequences for student gains.

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

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

Academic support teachers use IEPs to devise goals for students at most risk of underachieving. For this reason, in most cases, special education students receive an appropriate level of support. When whole school goals are established, leaders do not always share them effectively with all staff, resulting in confusion among teachers as to what curricular priorities should be emphasized. In an interview with teachers, one said, "There are two visions here: RGA as a Ross school and RGA as a standards-based school." Even so, teachers try hard to set pertinent goals for students to improve overall school performance. According to the teachers, it is a hard task since they have little information on which to base their targets for future learning and have limited access to whole school data. Goals, where they exist, are therefore rather 'hit or miss.' Levels of challenge are not always appropriate and expectations are inconsistent across classrooms. Teachers have little opportunity to work collaboratively to devise realistic goals. The consequence of this is that students who need supportive intervention for academic and behavioral needs do not always receive it. A student study team is in place to discuss students whose academic performance or behavior present concerns. While there is a commitment to working collaboratively to meet student needs, the time is not organized in such a way to allow for clear, individualized student goal-setting.

Parents have mixed views about the school and its relationship with them. They feel that the past year has seen the school grow from "zero culture to a culture." Many say that there is now an open door policy. However, others feel that there is still some resistance to their full involvement. Some mentioned that their children are, "not where they would like them to be academically." Others feel that teachers give them clear information about what their children need to do to improve. In general, they feel that teachers communicate well with them, but what information and how they communicate it is inconsistent. The school lacks a full program of appropriate procedures for sharing information with parents and encouraging their contributions and participation. The principal established a parent coffee hour this year for parents to engage in the school community on Saturdays, but there are not many other clear systems in place for these home to school exchanges. Teachers make efforts to relay important information in the way they feel best, such as frequent notes and phone calls home, and parents really appreciate this. In relation to other issues that all parents should know about, the school does not always send information in the best way to make sure that it reaches every home in good time. For example, several parents interviewed during the visit had not received notice that the principal would not be returning the following year because the message had only officially been communicated to families through email, a source of information that not all parents may have access to. Parents look forward to stability in the future, expressing their concerns that it could be daunting to get to know "yet another leader."

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

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

The cultural history curriculum ideas imported from the Ross School are the foundation for what should be an interesting curriculum. Planning for motivating and engaging learning is central to the school's vision. The school attempts to create a curriculum that has relevant links between subjects, develop skills and knowledge through many practical activities, promote social and personal growth and provide well for artistic and creative learning. The school successfully provides regular art and dance sessions. Older students talk positively about the good understanding they gain when subjects have meaningful links. Classroom bulletin boards show evidence of the good work students do. However, little data gathering is conducted to determine whether all students are ready to learn in such a way, or whether they have the skills to access such a curriculum. Teacher anecdotals and baseline evidence of student performance indicate that some students need support to learn the basics of reading and writing, even in upper grades. During classroom observations on the visit, it became evident that some students also lack well-established learning habits, good levels of concentration or a clear understanding of behavioral norms for classrooms. None of these very real issues receive the serious consideration necessary to make the ideas behind the cultural history curriculum meet the needs of all students.

School leaders have required that teachers devise curriculum content independently. Many of them have had no prior teaching experience and this task has been onerous on top of day-to-day classroom responsibilities. At the time of the review, teachers stated that there was no certainty that planning is accurate and aligned to State Standards and no monitoring to check that the curriculum is progressively developmental through grades. Moreover, the principal and the board do not have an overview of student progress to confirm that the curriculum meets students' needs effectively and helps them to make progress. Most importantly, teachers have very limited information about students to begin to plan lessons that are right for them. Nevertheless, teachers persevere to provide a stable classroom environment and do their best to engage students in learning.

It is obvious that adults in the school care about the students. Teachers have supportive groups within the staff and want to work together. However, there is a tangible feeling of anxiety at the school that leads teachers to feel fear and uncertainty. The school has factions and cliques that have grown from a continual struggle over who to trust. As one teacher said during an interview, "There is an in group and an out group here." If teachers support ideas that the principal may have, they are certain they will displease board members, or that their comments will be passed back to the board via inappropriate channels. When there are direct communications between board members and teachers, this breeds suspicions that make it difficult for teachers to communicate openly with each other and school leaders. Some teachers expressed that the underlying problems at the school were a result of the conflicting agendas of adults in charge, rather than fundamental differences about the school's vision and mission. According to teachers, there is confusion about roles, lack of professional respect at various levels and forgetfulness about adults being good role models for students through their conduct with each other. Students are perceptive and sense these tensions. As one teacher said, "The children here don't feel a sense of security."

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

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

The principal has a solid understanding of where teachers have strengths. She is equally aware of what aspects of their work require further improvement. She formulates her evaluations on strong pedagogical understanding and a growing awareness of students' academic needs. The developments she sees as main priorities for each teacher's growth are very appropriate. However, teachers are not fully aware of where they need to improve because the procedures for lesson observation, feedback and follow-up discussions are not well established. While lesson observations are conducted both formally and informally, teachers expressed mixed feelings on the usefulness of feedback they received from them. There are virtually no opportunities for teachers to observe each other's lessons or to work collaboratively to improve their practice. New teachers feel that leaders care about them personally, but do not help them to make as much professional progress as they would have hoped. The principal regrets that, for various reasons, this is a true picture. There have been few opportunities for professional development relating to the whole school or individual needs. Promised links with the Ross Institute as a provider for training and support have not been realized until very recently when a new staff member was hired to support the transition in leadership. This was due, in part, to some resistance from the principal to being supported by the Institute because of what she saw as competing professional development priorities. Leaders and the Board have failed to fully consider all of the professional development options that may have been useful to the school in its given context and with its current student population.

The school is sited on the first floor of the historic landmark building, Tweed Courthouse. There are classrooms along various hallways adjacent to offices and there are no common spaces, no gym and limited outside space for recess. Movement between classrooms is very challenging, since expectations for behavior in public areas are not clearly communicated and supervision for students during these periods is inconsistent and often lacking. Many classrooms are shared learning areas. While they are attractive, sound travels easily and during lessons observed, sounds from adjoining areas frequently distracted students. The school has not yet established a clear system, with clearly communicated consequences, to ensure that students fully understand the expectations about their behavior. In addition, there are few support structures for students who have difficulties in maintaining good levels of conduct and control. This creates extra pressure for teachers who struggle to manage behavior issues.

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

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped.

The vision for the school's future is commendable. Board members and the principal share a common aim to provide a unique education for students that enables them to reach their full academic potential and make a valuable contribution to society. However, the route that the school takes to realize this vision is extremely confused. There is no evidence of clear action planning to move the school forward from its current situation. Following a very unsettled first year, the school remains without documented priority goals, measurable success criteria or schedule for internal evaluation and review. At the time of the visit, it was unclear whether or not a formal strategic plan had been developed and was used as a working document between the leadership and board. Without this clearly

constructed plan, there are no agreed measures for accountability and no benchmarks for success or failure. Board members have met with the principal, but have done little to undo the broad-brush presentation of the school. They have a limited understanding of how students are progressing, of what test results really indicate or of the quality of teaching and learning. It is only as relationships have deteriorated that the board turned a sharper eye to the school's performance and begun to hold the principal to account. The board has done this by hiring an individual at the Ross Institute to closely monitor the hiring and transition of a new principal. However, unprofessional attitudes between Board members and the principal, along with the tardy monitoring of the school's progress by the Board, have developed into a medium for blame and defense. These unprofessional attitudes have been exhibited in interviews with the board and the principal where both parties blamed one another for the lack of significant progress and the recent deterioration of trust among staff. With the ensuing breakdown of relationships, there is insufficient focus on what is actually happening to students. The school's vision, therefore, is very far from realization, despite having met a number of charter goals.

Quality Statement 6 - Monitor Effectiveness: The charter school board is proactive and diligent in undertaking its administrative responsibilities.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The Board is responsible for the overall direction and fiscal well-being of the school. As such, the Board has the authority and duty to adopt policies and by-laws that are necessary to meet its statutory responsibilities and produce optimal academic results. Those administrative and daily operational responsibilities shall be delegated to principals, senior management/administrators, and board appointed officers to manage the school within the established policies. The principal /senior administrators, and board appointed officers should then be held accountable for performance.

Although the RGA board has provided oversight to the school and the school leader, the level of oversight has not been very consistent overtime. During the visit, the board was unable to share any academic dashboard that they use to monitor academic progress at the school level, but rather relied on principal's report at board meetings. The school's board of trustees consists of financial, education, management and legal expertise. Although RGA board members may have served on other governing boards, few board members, if any, attend training sessions aimed at improving charter school board effectiveness. Accountability may be better shared collectively across the board members if they receive training in areas including board self-assessment, board roles and responsibilities, strategic planning, committee structure and roles, legal and fiduciary oversight, effective board meeting, and school leader recruitment and evaluation. According to the RGA board minutes, the board chair and board treasurer were in attendance 4 times (50%) and 5 times (62.5%) respectively for the past 8 conducted board meetings.

At the time of this report writing, RGA has witnessed five (5) different school leaders (Mr. Jon Drescher, Mr. Frank Marchese, the late Mr. Robert Durkin, Dr. Stephanie Clagnaz and newly appointed principal Ms. Julie Johnson), in the past two years. However, Dr. Clagnaz was the school leader for a period of approximately 17 months. This high turnover at RGA has, yet again, heightened OCS' level of concern regarding leadership.

Based on data provided by RGA, for the past two consecutive school years teacher attrition rate (82% in 06-07; 75% in 07-08), has been substantially higher than most charter schools authorized by NYCDOE. According to some teachers, the majority of school staff and teachers operate under the 'fear' that minor dissent may lead to termination by the school's board of trustees. In addition, this claim was also manifested

by the principal towards staff with whom relationships had soured. The board has little, if any, legitimacy with some of the current school staff. Several conversations with staff revealed that some view the board as a body controlled solely by the board chair without any challenges by other board members. The board has set high expectations for school leaders and all members of the RGA school community, which is considered a good governance practice. However, there are concerns among staff members regarding the board's ability to correlate goal setting with pragmatic expectations that can be achieved in a reasonable timeframe.

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

A charter school shall be able to operate with an annual budget that reflects the expected revenue and expenses for the fiscal year. Since the revenue stream for charter schools tends to be based upon the number of students served (per pupil revenue) and the State and Federal grants (Title funding, etc.), a continued and growing negative net balance poses a threat to a school's stability and its ability to fulfill its short and long-term financial obligations. In the end, it is worth noting that a school may implement and practice the best internal controls (procurement, check signing, balanced budget, etc.), and still end up in a difficult financial condition.

The RGA board has been proactive in contracting an audit firm and producing the school's financial statements in reasonable period. The school maintains necessary financial documents to facilitate decision-making at all levels but the unaudited balance sheet as of May '08 casts a fair financial position of the school with liquid assets totaling over $339,000. The balance sheet also shows the school having current liabilities of over $227,000 in short-term financial obligations. The Ross Institute donated $636,528 this school year and had made similar donation of $681,040 prior year as well. The partnership agreement executed between Ross Global Academy and Ross Institute in 2006 allowed for a line of credit up to $632,500 during the first two years of school's operation. However, the subsequent renegotiated partnership agreement approved by the RGA board (and provided to NYCDOE staff at the site visit) on 10/10/07 lacked provisions related to the line of credit. Although the board has been generous in providing financial support to the school, the unusual timing of contribution may have hindered effective strategic planning from taking place. Most schools project and allocate the expected financial resources at the beginning of the school year rather than spend and then offset deficits (in cases, where applicable) at the end of the year. The school provided the annual site visit team with a cash flow analysis projecting out until June '09. According to the cash flow projection, the school is expected to finish the '08-'09 fiscal year with a surplus of over $284,000.

During the visit, the school officials and a business consultant who supports finance and operations were interviewed on the procurement process, check signing, inspection of three randomly selected paid invoices, random human resource files (three teachers, two non-teaching staff) and fingerprinting (all staff hired since previous year school visit). The school is following its adopted financial policies. Paid invoices had the right purchase order approvals, order and receiving of goods, presence of packing slips and invoices along with proof of payment with proper signatories.

The teacher and staff files were kept in proper condition with fingerprint clearance, W-4, I-9, formal classroom observations, and proper identification.

Quality Statement 8 – Integration of Parents and the Community: The Charter School has adequate structures to integrate parents and community partners with the school.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Parent engagement is one of the cornerstones in measuring parent satisfaction, initial and ongoing expectations, student academic improvement, and true parental inputs in choices made by the school. Parent engagement in charter schools tends to come in all forms: Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Parent Advisory Committee/Councils (PAC), Parent Association, parental involvement at board level, etc. While none of these vehicles represents the perfect solution for increasing parental involvement, all schools are expected to make good faith efforts to stimulate parental participation in creating a community that shares the school's vision and ongoing strategic direction.

The level of parent engagement at RGA has varied this year due to turnover in the Parent Association (PA), which exists for parents to voice their concerns. There is also a seat on the board of trustees reserved for a parent; however, that seat is now vacant. Every six weeks, parents are invited to a Parent Coffee Hour with the principal to discuss what is happening at the school and ask questions. This occurs on a Saturday when children are in Saturday classes. Parents receive other information from the school through emails, the school's website, phone calls from teachers, or backpack notices. However, none of these forms of communication is consistent or used as a school-wide approach to communicating with families, and information-sharing methods vary by teacher. The school uses its website as a primary means of informing parents about board meetings, and most are aware of the time and location of these meetings. Most major school communications are sent home in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

CHARTER SCHOOL NAME: ROSS GLOBAL ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL (M355)	Δ	➢	✓	+	◇

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student's progress over time.					
To what extent do school leaders and faculty gather, generate, and utilize data to provide . . .	**Δ**	**➢**	**✓**	**+**	**◇**
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?		X			
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?		X			
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners? **NA**					
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?	X				
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?	X				
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress that demonstrates that the charter school is at least meeting the State's student performance standards for all other schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?		X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X			

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.					
To what extent do school leaders and faculty. . .	**Δ**	**➢**	**✓**	**+**	**◇**
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and time frames for reaching those goals?	X				
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?		X			
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?	X				
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?		X			
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?		X			
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?		X			
2.8 implement a comprehensive special education program that complies with applicable governing laws?			X		
2.9 implement a comprehensive program for English Language Learners that complies with federal law? **N/A**					
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X			

Δ	**Underdeveloped**
➢	**Underdeveloped with Proficient Features**
✓	**Proficient**
+	**Well Developed**
◇	**Outstanding**

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students, around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.					
To what extent do the school leaders. . .	**Δ**	**➢**	**✓**	**+**	**◇**
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?		X			
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive, safe and inclusive learning environment?		X			
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, classroom and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?	X				
3.5 make staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all?		X			
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?	X				
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness and report actual attendance data?			X		
3.8 ensure that their charter high school meets the defined graduation standards as determined by NYCDOE (where applicable)? **NA**					
3.9 ensure that the time given over for instruction is at least equivalent to that required in other public schools?			X		
3.10 ensure that discipline policies, including those for suspension and expulsion, are documented and filed with the CSO?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X			

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent do the school leaders. . .	**Δ**	**➢**	**✓**	**+**	**◇**
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?		X			
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?	X				
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?	X				
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?	X				
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?		X			
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly, encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?		X			
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?		X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X			

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do. . .	**Δ**	**➤**	**✓**	**+**	**◇**
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?	X				
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?	X				
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?		X			
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?	X				
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?	X				
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?	X				
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?	X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5	X				

Quality Statement 6 – Monitor Effectiveness: The Charter School Board is proactive and diligent in monitoring its effectiveness and in undertaking its administrative responsibilities.					
To what extent does the Board . . .	Δ	➢	✓	+	◇
6.1 ensure effective, broad outreach to create a student body that is representative of the school's Community School District?			X		
6.2 manage any conflict of interest within the governing body and throughout the school?			X		
6.3 publish a schedule of regular board meetings that is easily accessible to the general public?			X		
6.4 ensure that accurate minutes from Board meetings are maintained and published?			X		
6.5 ensure that proposed contracts with EMOs and CMOs are submitted punctually to the CSO for review?		X			
6.6 hold EMOs, CMOs and school leadership accountable in their positions?				X	
6.7 ensure that teachers are provided with high quality professional development opportunities to further build on their professional expertise?		X			
6.8 respond to parent, staff and student concerns/complaints?			X		
6.9 provide ongoing training for board members so that they are able to fulfill the duties of their positions?		X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 6			X		

Quality Statement 7– Maintain Financial Viability: The Charter School and its Board maintain financial viability and control over the course of the academic year.					
To what extent does the school and its Board . . .	Δ	➢	✓	+	◇
7.1 ensure that an independent auditor is appointed to undertake an annual financial audit, which is submitted to the CSO along with any other relevant documentation?			X		
7.2 comply with the adoption of an annual budget for the upcoming school year, which is submitted to the CSO for review?			X		
7.3 maintain an accurate balance sheet, statement of activities, year-to-date expense report and statement of cash flow?			X		
7.4 implement procedures that provide adequate internal control measures to detect and prevent financial fraud, such as bank reconciliation, revenue recognition and travel reimbursement?			X		
7.5 satisfy the requirement to maintain adequate liability insurance filed with the CSO?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 7			X		

Quality Statement 8 – Integration of Parents and the Community: The Charter School has adequate structures to integrate parents and community partners with the school.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➢	✓	+	◇
8.1 maintain a functioning parent organization?			X		
8.2 provide special events for parents to meet, to discuss school-related issues and to socialize?			X		
8.3 ensure that parents are informed of the time and location of Board meetings that are open to the public?			X		
8.4 ensure that newsletters are sent home in all predominant languages to encourage parent participation and eliminate language barriers?			X		
8.5 ensure parents are aware of appeals procedures should a conflict arise with any aspect of the school?			X		
8.6 understand each student's progress during their time in the school?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 8			X		

Ross Global Academy

Summary

The Ross Global Academy Charter School (RGA) is currently in its second year of operation. The school serves approximately 200 students in grades K, 1, 2, 6 and 7. RGA is committed to serving students from diverse backgrounds by providing them with "a holistic education to enable students to develop a global worldview and the skills necessary for success in the 21st century." The school was formed through a partnership between the Ross Institute and New York University.

Last year, the school struggled through facilities challenges, extremely high leadership and teacher turnover, and a lack of standards-based instruction. Two Annual Site Visits to the school, last May and June (2007), revealed many areas of concern, including the aforementioned matters. A follow-up visit was conducted on November 16, 2007 by the Office of Charter Schools. This report describes the findings from that visit.

What the School Does Well

- The school has come a long way in establishing a standards-based curriculum and improving overall classroom instruction.
- There is a strong culture and sense of community at the school, evidenced by the students' and teachers' commitment to the 'core values' of RGA.
- The use of data to inform instruction has improved dramatically, with teachers using shared Google spreadsheets to track student progress, diagnostic results, and interventions.
- The Student Study Team meets frequently and works hard to provide individualized instruction to students who are struggling.
- The school environment is a responsive one, and many parents feel it is an appropriate environment for child development.
- The new group of teachers appears to be very enthusiastic, committed and energetic.
- There is an overall willingness to revise curriculum and procedures when necessary from teachers and school leadership.
- Structures and routines for behavior are clearly in place, as evidenced by smooth transitions and teachers' ability to share classroom space with other classes.
- The principal has implemented a Saturday coffee hour to give parents an opportunity to voice concerns.

What the School Needs to Improve

- No clear long-term plans exist for the current curriculum; frequent changes to the curriculum have left many parents concerned.
- In some of the classrooms, teachers did not appear to have a clear grasp over balanced literacy techniques such as guided reading.
- There is a disconnect between the use of two very different mathematics curricula in the lower school and upper school, and there are concerns as to how these programs will connect and help ensure continuity and student progress.
- While professional development is happening frequently, there is no clear long-term plan in place.
- There is a core group of parents that feel shut out from full engagement in the school, and often feel as if they are being denied access because of the high security in the facility in which the school is located.

- Parents expressed that they did not understand the curriculum being used at the school, and did not know what was expected of their children in order for them to be successful. There were also many concerns shared about the small amount of homework assigned to students.

Standard 1: High Academic Attainment and Improvement

Renewal Expectation: Students' academic performance meets or exceeds local, state, and federal standards.

	Indicator	Measurement	High Performance	Middle Performance	Low Performance
1.F	**Alternative/Internal Assessment(s)**	Percent of Students Who Meet Standard at Levels to be Determined in Contract	To be determined for each Indicator	To be determined for each Indicator	To be determined for each Indicator
1. G	**School-Specific Educational Goal(s)**	Attainment of School-Specific Educational Goal(s)	To be determined for each Indicator	To be determined for each Indicator	To be determined for each Indicator

Interim Expectation: School has systems in place to assess and track student learning, and makes organizational decisions based on student need.

Interim Indicators:

What systems does the school have in place for administering interim assessments?

	Check one (1)
School has comprehensive system in place for administering interim assessments	
School administers interim assessments in some grades/subjects	✔
School does not administer interim assessments	

Comments:
The school administered ECLAS2, QRI, and TAKS this year as benchmark assessments, in addition to a math diagnostic assessment. Teachers claim to spend a wealth of time during professional development sessions talking about the results of these assessments and working together to strategize student interventions based on the data. Teachers record these results and other data in shared Google spreadsheets that all teachers and school leaders can access to view progress of students. Because the school received their ECLAS2 assessments late this year, they are still awaiting results, and at the time of the visit, had not yet communicated the results of diagnostic assessments to parents. The school did say, however, that they would be sharing these results along with report cards at upcoming parent-teacher conferences. At this point in the year, it is unclear whether the school has analyzed this data by student subgroups and whether they are making school-wide comparisons of student performance.

Ross Global Academy

How is student progress tracked?

	Check one (1)
School has comprehensive system in place for tracking data	
School tracks some assessment data	✓
School does not track assessments data	

Comments:
The school uses shared Google spreadsheets to track student data on the diagnostic assessments that have been administered thus far. This data is accessible to all teachers and is generally used during professional development and student study teams. The school does not have a sophisticated student data tracking system to track more interim or informal assessments, but the principal can access all of the teachers' spreadsheets and see how each class is performing "at a glance."

Does interim assessment data inform instruction?

	Check one (1)
Individual student data informs lesson plans and/or individual student learning consistently	
Individual student data informs lesson plans sometimes	✓
Individual student data does not inform lesson plans	

Comments:
The school is continuing to work on strategies and professional development that will enhance the use of data to inform instruction. Because the ECLAS results had not yet been received at the time of our visit, the lower school was not using a great amount of data to plan daily lessons. However, teachers from the upper school noted their use of QRI results, reading journal entries, and results on the TAKS, as well as teacher created assessments to drive instruction.

Do student performance data inform organizational use of resources?

	Check one (1)
Student performance data informs how school allocates resources	
Student performance data informs how school allocates some resources	✓
Student performance data does not inform how school allocates resources	

Comments:
The school has used student data from the NYS Testing Program, the DOE Progress Report, and their own assessments to determine how time will be used in the after-school and Saturday school programs. The school has also used this data to reevaluate the curricula in Mathematics, which led the school to abandon Saxon Math and purchase TERC Investigations and Holt Mathematics.

It was not determined from this visit whether data was driving the decisions to hire additional staff or assign coaches to specific teachers or students.

Ross Global Academy

Standard 2: Responsive Educational Program and Environment

Renewal Expectation: A quality educational program enables all students to achieve academically and socially.

	Indicator	Measurement	High Performance	Middle Performance	Low Performance
2.A	**Quality Instruction**	Curriculum Aligned with State Standards	The school implements a quality curriculum that prepares students to meet State performance standards	The school has a curriculum that generally aligns with State standards	The school lacks a comprehensive, cohesive curriculum ✓

Comments:
The school has worked hard since the last visit to implement a curriculum that is both rigorous and standards-based. This curriculum includes a school-wide balanced literacy program, TERC Investigations and Holt Mathematics, as well as Chinese, Well-being, Science, the Ross Cultural History Spiral, and Art.

While the curriculum has moved very far in the right direction, there is really no long-term framework or scope and sequence for the curriculum. Teachers are planning their units and lessons typically one to two months in advance, without a full understanding of how these fit into the long-term curricular goals for students as they rise through the grades at RGA. The school has not demonstrated how it will connect the mathematics curriculum that was used last year with the two new curricula being used this year, and how the two distinct programs will be connected for students between the lower school and upper school.

Parents expressed confusion regarding the curriculum and felt, overall, the school has not clearly communicated to them the expectations for students at different grade levels. Parents also felt that they did not understand the decisions to implement balanced literacy, TERC, or the limited daily homework which generally consists of a reading log. The school has said that it will look into strategies for better communicating these research-based pedagogical decisions to families.

	Indicator	Measurement	High Performance	Middle Performance	Low Performance
2.B	**Orderly Environment**	Discipline Practices	The school has documented discipline policies and procedures that are consistently applied and lead to an environment conducive to learning	The school has documented discipline policies and procedures that are generally applied ✓	The school lacks discipline policies and procedures and/or discipline policies and procedures are inconsistently applied that create an environment not conducive to learning

Comments:
RGA "Core Values" are the guiding force behind the school's discipline policies and expectations for students. Students interviewed at the visit clearly articulated how teachers address violations of the core values and how, as classmates, they engage in conflict resolution using these values to guide their discussions with peers. Teachers seamlessly weave these values through their lessons when students are off task or act without demonstrating their core values. In Student Study Team meetings, teachers share data and observations not only on academic performance, but on each student's ability to live out the core

values.

Classroom procedures and expectations for engagement varied from teacher to teacher, but on the whole, engagement was high across classrooms. Hallway transitions were less orderly and expectations for noise and movement between classes were unclear. In some of the classes with shared space, teachers' expectations for appropriate noise often varied, making instruction a challenge in the less noisy class in each room.

2.E	**School-Specific Non-Academic Goals**	Attainment of School-Specific Non- Academic Goal(s)	To be determined for each Indicator	To be determined for each Indicator	To be determined for each Indicator
Comments: These measures will be evaluated upon receipt of the School's Annual Report for 2007-08 SY.					

Standard 3: Responsible School Leadership and Management

Renewal Expectation: Leadership furthers the school's mission, program and goals and is strategic to ensure adequacy, alignment and coherence of actions.

	Indicator	Measurement	High Performance	Middle Performance	Low Performance
3.A	**Leadership Quality**	Leadership Expertise	Leadership demonstrates exceptional education and business expertise	Leadership demonstrates sufficient education and business expertise and turnover has been stable	Leadership demonstrates insufficient education and business expertise and/or turnover has been damaging to the school
		Leadership Retention	Leadership turnover has been manageable and appropriate	Leadership turnover has been stable	Leadership turnover has been damaging to the school
		Leadership Execution	Leadership has created and makes continuous progress in strengthening a professional environment for quality teaching and learning.	Leadership is making significant progress in creating and promoting a professional environment for quality teaching and learning.	Leadership has not created a professional environment for quality teaching and learning.
3.C	**Strategic Vision**	Continuous Improvement Process	The school employs processes for continuous improvement leading to positive enhancements	The school employs processes for continuous improvement leading to some mid-course	There is a lack of engagement in the improvement process and/or responding to problems that negatively

			in the school's education program over time.	corrections when needed.	impact the quality of the education program.

Interim Expectation: Leadership has systems and structures in place to create a professional, effective, learning organization

Interim Indicators:

Does Leadership create opportunities for staff to reflect on practice and collaborate?

	Check one (1)
Staff have opportunities to reflect on practice and collaborate frequently	✓
Staff have some opportunities to reflect on practice and collaborate	
Staff do not have opportunities to reflect on practice and collaborate	

Comments:

Staff members meet regularly to plan, review curricula, observe each others classrooms and analyze student data. Prior to the start of the school year, staff members engaged in a two week professional development session during which they collaborated with teachers from the Ross School in East Hampton and developed their own RGA curriculum.
In interviews with teachers, several said that the principal empowers them to make changes to the curriculum as necessary. In addition, many expressed that RGA was a school where "pedagogy is put into practice." Further, teachers noted the extensive collaboration between teachers of different subject areas – a result of the principal's emphasis that, "every teacher is a literacy teacher and every teacher is a math teacher." Through the use of a wiki, teachers can share lesson plans and other materials via the Internet.

Are there staff evaluations in place?

	Check one (1)
All staff are evaluated yearly	
Most staff are evaluated yearly	✓
Staff are not evaluated yearly	

Comments:
Formal staff evaluations had not yet been completed at the time of the visit, but most teachers said that the principal visited their classrooms frequently for informal observations, and even offered to conduct demonstration lessons when they were struggling with a particular strategy or concept.

What structures does the school have in place for developing staff professionally?

Check one (1)	
School has a comprehensive professional development structure in place	
School has some professional development for staff	✓
School has no professional development for staff	

Comments:
The staff is offered many opportunities for professional development such as monthly full day development sessions and twice weekly meetings in the Lower School. However, it seems that there is no long term plan in place or individualized plans to help teachers reach their individual professional development goals. The lengthy summer professional development helped the staff to bond and become comfortable working together and within the outline of the school's charter.

Ross Global Academy

Standard 4: Financial Sustainability, Controls & Effective Board Governance/Oversight

Renewal Expectation: The school is a sustainable organization and capable of achieving long-term success.

	Indicator	Measurement	High Performance	Middle Performance	Low Performance
3.B	**Board Stability**	Board Size/Structure and Functions as Stipulated by Contract	Board membership is complete and contributes a broad skill set	Board membership has some unanticipated turnover and/or is reasonably balanced in expertise	Board membership is incomplete and/or not well balanced in expertise

Has the Board provided effective oversight in all aspects of school? i.e., Operations, Fiscal Discipline, Academic Performance, Hiring (as appropriate), etc.

	Check one (1)
Board has provided effective oversight in all aspects of school	√
Board has provided oversight in some but not all aspects of the school	
Board oversight has been negligent towards the school	

Comments: RGA board-of-trustees has improved its oversight considerably in most or all areas since OCS' last monitoring visit to the school. The board has taken action towards adopting an effective financial policy, strengthening fiscal condition, and providing clarity around Ross Institute's role in the ongoing development of RGA. The board has provided leadership in the hiring of new staff and developing institutional relationships (NYU, etc..) to benefit the school in the long run.

	Indicator	Measurement	High Performance	Middle Performance	Low Performance
4.B	**Financial Compliance**	Financial Audit Findings	Unqualified opinion and no findings	Unqualified opinion and only minor finding(s)	Significant findings, on-going Concern and/or qualified opinion

Interim Expectation: School has systems in place to adequately and accurately manage its financial operations and adequately meet projected fundraising needs.

Interim Indicators:

Does the school have a comprehensive financial control system (procurement, check signing, budget amendment, etc..) in place?

	Check one (1)
Board has a comprehensive financial control system in place	√
Board has some financial controls in place	
Board has underdeveloped financial controls in place	

Comments: RGA has a comprehensive policy procedure manual and a dedicated fiscal staff. The effectiveness of these policies and their applications will be evaluated at our next school monitoring visit. At the time of the visit, the policies were still new and the system evolving, and therefore, it will be optimal to look into these matters closely during future visits.

From the discussions with staff members and consultants from Charter School Business Management (CSBM), it seemed clear that the school has made a good faith effort to improve its internal controls and segregate duties of school staff. Again, the degree of effectiveness remains to be seen, but in the meantime, the school has made significant improvements in its internal operations.

Is the school in good fiscal condition to sustain itself?

	Check one (1)
School is in excellent financial condition with superior ability to sustain itself	
School is in good financial condition with minor concerns	√
School has major financial concerns that threaten its ability to sustain itself	

Comments: Based on RGA's financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2007, RGA is in good financial condition with minor reservations. The school has a short-term liability of $298,130. The other two liabilities of $175,000 (long-term) and $856,040 (due to related party) have been minimized by a one-time payment of $681,040 from the school and the rest of the liability (i.e., $175,000) has been financed through a loan. The school spent only 56% (excludes start-up costs) of its funds on educational programs, 41% on administrative expenses, and 2.68% on fundraising. Recognizing the hardship that the school faced during the first year of operation, the continuous leadership turnover and the hard work the board has done to pull itself together, OCS would like to point out that the school needs to improve its expense on educational activity to at least over 70% and decrease the administrative cost further. OCS will continue to closely monitor the school's ability to meet its short term financial obligations with minimal debt/liability on its books. Currently, there are no outstanding concerns.

Standard 5: Strong Culture and Supportive Relationships

Renewal Expectation: There is high social trust within the school community and a culture of excellence.

	Indicator	Measurement	High Performance	Middle Performance	Low Performance
5.B	**Community Investment in School**	Community Partnership Outcomes	The school maintains meaningful relationships with community partners that enhance the	The school has made progress in engaging community partners in the academic and social growth	The school has failed to engage community partners in the academic and social growth of

			academic and social growth of the school's students.	of the school's students.	the school's students.

Interim Expectation: School has mechanism (s) for incorporating parents and other community partners in the school

Interim Indicators:

What structure does the school have in place for incorporating parents and other community partners in the school?

	Check one (1)
School has multiple structures in place for incorporating parents and other community partners in the school	
School has a structure in place for incorporating parents and other community partners in the school	√
School has no structures in place for incorporating parents and other community partners in the school	

Comments: The school has made some improvements in incorporating parents and community partners in the school. However, there remains some dissatisfaction with the school administration in addressing some parental concerns. For some parents, it has been difficult to assess what their kids are learning at the school as the school year progresses. Concerns also revolve around the amount of homework and how often it is given to students. While there may be philosophical differences on how much homework is given to students, school administration is advised to revisit this issue and open a dialogue with parents. However, the ultimate decision to change or maintain the homework policy rests with the RGA board of trustees and the principal.

Among some parents, there is a sense apprehension given the high staff and leadership turnover from last year and the initial friction that some parents experienced when the current principal came on board. The school has improved its communication with the parents in many ways through the website and Saturday Coffee Hours, but more needs to be done in this area to engage all parents and take the school in a positive direction.

OCS will continue to monitor the ongoing relationship between the parents, school leadership and RGA board of trustees to look for further evidence of cooperation and establishment of common ground to bring the two sides closer.

The New York City Department of Education

Quality Review Report

2006-2007

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

Ross Global Academy Charter School

52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Principal: Stephanie Clagnaz

Review Date: May 29 & June 22, 2007

Reviewer(s): Jean Mackie, Aamir Raza

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 Portfolio Development's (OPD) evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The school, which opened in September 2006, is located in the basement of the Department of Education's building in Tweed. There are 160 students currently enrolled, covering grades kindergarten, 1, 5 and 6. It is intended that the school will eventually cater for the full range of students from kindergarten through grade 12. The school population currently comprises 38% Black, 27% Hispanic, 24% Asian and 8% White students. A further 3% are from other ethnic origins. Approximately 22% are special education students and there are a very small number of English language learners. The school opened with 168 students. The population has remained relatively stable, although there have been a number of enrollments and withdrawals during the year. There is currently a substantial waiting list for entry at all grades. The attendance rate has been well over 90% throughout the year.

The school has been established through a partnership between the Ross Institute and New York University. The overarching goal is to implement the Ross model of education and to align it with New York State standards. The planned curriculum is intended to be interdisciplinary to promote intercultural understanding, taught through an integrated approach, connecting multiple subjects through a cultural history core. There is a focus on developing strong technology and, subsequently, both the collaborative and independent learning skills of students.

The school has experienced an unsettled start with four principals in less than a year. The current principal joined the school as an assistant principal in January and took on the leadership of the school in March. Some of the original teachers are no longer at the school.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

The frequent changes in administration have limited the school's ability to firmly establish the principles and objectives clearly outlined in the charter proposals. Nevertheless, the current principal has a clear view about what is needed to establish good educational practice and is taking appropriate steps to ensure that systems and structures are in place to enable this to happen. Expectations for both staff and students are now much higher than previously. The curriculum has been realigned and there are some good examples of instructional practice, most notably, but not exclusively, in the lower school. There are secure plans for next year, with a strong summer program, for both staff and students. The principal's main aim is to develop a more collaborative climate in which student learning and personal development is the key driver for the whole school community. Steps taken to date have led to a more stable community and are positive indicators for the future development of the school.

Despite recent efforts by the school administration to address academic and principal turnover concerns, the school's governing Board has failed to provide effective oversight and to establish credibility among parents and staff members. The school now needs to adopt clear job descriptions and to decentralize its organizational structure so that school based staff can be empowered and accountability can be breathed into the institutional apparatus. The school leadership and the Board must, as a matter of urgency, develop a strategic plan in collaboration with staff members that outlines the plans for upcoming school year.

The school has been on an overspending spree since its inception and has not used its financial resources responsibly in the absence of effective Board level leadership. The fiscal condition remains grim due to overspending and its dependency on the generous financial support of the Ross Institute.

A follow-up visit will be conducted in the fall of 2007 to determine the extent of the progress made towards establishing more effective leadership structures.

How well the school meets Office of Portfolio Development's 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 undeveloped.

Until the new principal's arrival, very little data about students' performance and progress was being collected in a systematic way. No report card had been produced in the fall semester, for example. Diagnostic literacy assessments have been undertaken, which have informed teachers about the students' level of proficiency in a range of skill areas. This data has been used to identify those students in need of additional support. The students' reading levels are tracked regularly by teachers. When the current principal arrived in January she established a baseline test in English language arts and mathematics for the middle school students. This was so that the school had some indication of how the students were performing with respect to the New York standards.

This also helped teachers to become more familiar with the standards expected. Report cards have now been devised and distributed to parents.

Teachers are completing informal assessments in literacy and numeracy and recording the results but the level of consistency regarding both expectations and the recording of data remains very variable. Teachers meet with students daily to discuss their work with them.

Some detailed analysis at lower school level has led to a clearer understanding of the needs of special education students. This is then used to inform intervention programs for these students. The principal has looked carefully at the recent test results and is aware of the relative performance of different ethnic groups and of boys and girls. With no historical data, the school cannot compare its performance over time. Nevertheless, comparisons of the school's 2006-07 ELA and Math performance data have already been made with other Charter schools and the City as a whole. These comparisons show RGA outperforming the city averages for ELA and Math, but not outperforming the local district in which the school is located.

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 undeveloped.

The original Charter proposal established clear goals for the school covering a range of aspects such as student performance in the core curriculum, study skills, the curriculum, teacher skills and collaborative planning. There is, however, a need to establish clear systems and procedures in the school have limited the principal's capacity to fully pursue all of the other wide-ranging goals.

The general lack of awareness of New York standards has meant that teachers have found it difficult to pitch their aspirations for the students at the appropriate level. Some of the work in mathematics in the middle school has been set at too low a level. The principal has taken appropriate steps to ensure that the current work is now sufficiently challenging. Where staff members are more confident with the standards expected, goals for the students in their classes are more realistic. The analysis of the diagnostic literacy testing has been used effectively in the lower school to identify those students in need of particular support and to plan well-focused support for them. Intervention for needy students in the middle school is less well targeted. The principal is well aware of the need to ensure that all teachers are setting goals that are more in line with State standards and are sufficiently challenging for the students.

Links with parents are improving since the initial months when no report cards were produced. The school keeps parents informed about expectations through newsletters and parent teacher conferences. Some parents, however, have been concerned about the lack of communication regarding aspects of their children's education. The principal has recognized this and has held a school wide parents' meeting to inform them of the restructuring of the daily schedule. Given the changes taking place in the school, procedures for systematically sharing goals with both parents and students are not yet fully embedded. The principal is eager to establish a stronger school climate so that there is a common drive to ensure that all students are doing as well as they can. Nevertheless, communication is not yet sufficiently secure to ensure that the actions of all parts of the school community are driven by the plans and goals developed for improved student performance.

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 undeveloped.

The curriculum has not yet developed in line with the Ross model as anticipated in the original Charter proposal. The core curriculum of English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies is in place however. The principal recognized on her arrival that there were mismatches between what was being taught and the State standards so she has taken active steps to remedy this and to ensure that there is proper alignment. She has rescheduled the day so that students' experiences are enhanced through a balance of Chinese, art, theater, wellbeing, music and dance. Students value this development. There is also an enrichment program and an advisory session where issues and concerns of the students can be discussed. Preliminary findings are that these have helped to reinforce positive relationships.

The lack of secure data; and uncertainty about the standards expected have resulted in variable instructional practice, with insufficient challenge for students. In general, there is little evidence of differentiation. As a result, the level of student engagement is not consistently as high as it should be. Teachers do not always share the aims of lessons with students so they are then unsure about what it is they are expected to achieve by the end of the session. There are examples, however, of lively instruction which captures the imagination of the students, who then respond enthusiastically. This is most notable in the lower school. A number of teachers show real commitment to the students, who recognize and value the support and guidance provided. Other teachers do not feel the same level of accountability and students sense a certain detachment from them. Not all students feel that they have an adult within the school to turn to in time of need.

In the short time available to her, the principal has made some sensible budgetary and staffing decisions, largely based on an analysis of immediate needs, but overall the management of this area is undeveloped. Additional literacy support has been provided in the middle school, for example, and more books have been purchased for all grades. Rescheduling has enabled small group instruction and provided common planning time for staff. Attendance levels have remained high throughout the year. There are secure systems in place to pursue any absence or tardiness.

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 undeveloped.

The principal has been proactive in seeking to hire staff who have a strong commitment to and high expectations of the students in the school. She has taken active steps to recruit teachers from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, to reflect the founding principles of the school. This has been achieved by advertising in community newspapers and searching diversity networks. Those teachers continuing at the school have also been actively engaged in the process.

Extensive professional development has been provided by external groups and previous administrators to support the staff during the early stages of the school, at considerable cost. The impact of these to date has been limited given the day to day demands of the school. The principal has a good grasp of the current needs of the school and has

established a clear program for development which has just started and will continue during the summer. Developing a culture of learning, high expectations and common goals is, rightly, a major priority.

Classroom observations have been undertaken but not as regularly as the principal would have liked, and to limited effect. She is aware of strengths and weaknesses in instructional practice however, and is taking appropriate steps to improve the overall quality so that it is more in line with the best. The common planning and preparation time, provided as part of the rescheduling process, is used productively by some staff to share ideas and evaluate practice. This collaborative approach is not yet consistent across the school.

The principal has made steady progress in establishing systems and procedures to secure a school that runs smoothly. She has gained respect for her actions to establish clear expectations for students' work, a more varied and challenging curriculum and planning for next year. Although this new principal has made great improvements in the daily procedures and operation of the school, it remains to be seen if she has the capacity to take the school to its next stage of development. The links with the Ross Institute and other partnerships based on the original charter proposal are beginning to be developed in line with the current needs of the school.

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 undeveloped.

Given the administration changes within the school, there has been little systematic strategic evaluation toward the goals of the original Charter proposal. The recently released 2007 test data has been used to compare actual performance with expected outcomes. Although the results are favorable, the principal judges that the school is able to achieve much, much more and is currently developing a road map for further improvement next year.

Steps have been taken to ensure that report cards are in place, to realign the curriculum and scheduling as a result of review but systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are yet to be fully established. In a drive to establish clearer expectations of behavior, the principal has put in place a review of the code of conduct so that it more closely reflects the needs and philosophy of the school. This process is being led by the assistant principal, due to join the school full time in July. The review includes staff, parents and students so that all stakeholders are involved and have ownership of the outcome.

At the individual student level, there is some effective use of teacher assessment to inform and modify the curriculum where appropriate. Reading levels are regularly checked, for example, to ensure that students are being suitably challenged. In the lower school, intervention strategies for students in need are systematically reviewed and realigned as required. As more data, both quantitative and qualitative, is collected, the school is beginning to become more flexible in its response to the needs of students and staff.

Quality Statement 6 – School's Board has provided "effective" oversight and leadership as needed and is functioning in accordance with the agreed upon charter.

The Board is responsible for the overall direction and fiscal well being of the school. As such, the Board has the authority and duty to adopt policies and by-laws that are necessary to meet its statutory responsibilities and produce optimal academic results. Those administrative and daily operational responsibilities need to be delegated to principals, senior management/administrators, and Board appointed officers to manage the school within the established policies. The principal, senior administrators, and Board appointed officers should then be held accountable for performance.

The school visit suggests that the Board has not addressed its governance, policies and procedures, staffing, and strategic planning needs. The Board needs to make improvements relative to its governance responsibility, its credibility among parents and staff, and provide "effective" oversight.

Ross Global Academy's ("RGA") Board of trustees is represented by finance, parent association representative, real estate, faculty, educator, and pro bono legal expertise (not on the Board) to meet upcoming challenges. Board consists of committees overlooking academic and quality assurance, auditing, executive, and development.

Evidence suggests that the Board has not had effective oversight of decisions made at the school. A review of the Board meeting minutes indicated the following:

- No clarity on who approved the compensation packages of all hired principals (4) and the Ex-President, Mr. Mark English.
- The criteria for determining bonuses paid to principals/administrators and teachers was not discussed or crystallized on paper.
- No discussion of how the conflicting role (RGA President & Chair of Executive Committee) of Mr. Mark English was managed.
- No discussion of how the school communicated departure of principals (4) with the concerned parents.
- No discussion of how the school leader will be evaluated for performance.
- No clarity whether the Board approved the opening and closing of all bank accounts related to RGA.
- High staff turn-over and its effect on students were not discussed during the Board meetings.
- Numerous parent concerns were raised to the Board on February 22, 2007.
- No mention of whether a response was sent to the Parent Association letter dated May 8, 2007. The letter was regarding the future vision and direction of the school in 2007-08 school year.
- Mr. Neil Pirozzi was replaced by Mr. Nick Combemale (for check signing purposes) on July 28, 2006 per Board meeting minutes. However, during our school visits, we found Mr. Pirozzi's signatures on RGA related expenses dated August 23, 2006.
- Although the Board agreed to amend the bidding process from $500 to $10,000, that update is not reflected in the fiscal policy. No one at the Board meeting was assigned the responsibility of implementing this policy.

- Faculty and staff handbook is outdated and was last revised on 8/11/06 (as printed on the document collected at visit). It lists Mr. Mark English as President and Mr. Jon Dreshcer as the Director of RGA.

Board awarded (still to be confirmed if it was approved by the full board) lucrative packages/bonuses to former RGA executives that does not appears to be tied to any time commitment (length of stay to be eligible for bonus) or other matrix at the school. In fact, some executives left the school before it reached its operational stage and other(s) barely stayed with the school for any length of time. Despite all this, the RGA Board paid these bonuses to the departing executives without there being any clear evidence of any positive impact on the academic achievement in the school.

Although weak oversight has existed since the inception of the school, in past 3-4 months RGA Board has improved its oversight role. The Board-of-trustees has been presented with sufficient financial, educational information, parental concerns 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, where applicable. Nonetheless, the overall assessment points to weak board oversight.

While Ross Institute is heavily involved in providing fiscal and human resources related services, our review of the service agreement (obtained during the school visit) between RGA and Ross Institute found no mention of Ross Institute providing fiscal and human resources related services to the school.

It is highly recommended that the school communicate its whistleblower policy with all school staff and post it where visible. In addition, it is in RGA's interest to revisit its confidentiality clause in hiring agreements. The clause may make teacher retention a problem, and it might also stifle the recruitment of high quality teachers.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

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 the school employees.

RGA has not adopted a comprehensive fiscal policy. The site visit revealed that the in-house fiscal staff position is being eliminated and/or outsourced. However, as pointed out during the school visit, the school must assign a dedicated in-house fiscal staff to oversee the implementation of adopted fiscal policies.

We suggest the fiscal policy to include but not limited to:

- Petty cash policy
- Travel reimbursement policy
- Investment policy
- Inventory policy & inventory tracking sheet
- Procurement policy

- Whistleblower policy
- Signing bonus (including contingencies) and relocation bonus policy
- Bank and petty cash reconciliation guidelines

It is advised that the school based fiscal staff receive copies of bank statements, annual budget (approved & modified, if any), and access to RGA related bank accounts (view only if no check signing authority) to comprehend the overall fiscal implications for the school. The inventory policy should account for all fixed assets acquired by Federal, State, Local or private funds and an inventory being conducted at least once a year.

A sampling of invoices, purchase orders, packing slips, and proof of payment was conducted during the site visit. All documentation was found in order except for the absence of any signatures or initials on packing slips that would indicate that all ordered goods (not partial) were actually received by someone at the school. This becomes increasingly critical since the school admitted having 15 laptop computers and 5 I-pods stolen from school's premises. The school did not take any action (legal, civil or otherwise) to recover the stolen computers.

Inspection of staff/teacher reimbursement revealed large amounts e.g. $251 and $367 being reimbursed for small purchases. School should consider putting a ceiling on staff reimbursements and encourage supplies to be ordered though central supply. More specifically, the $251 payment had no itemized bill attached to it from a restaurant (Restaurant & Wine Bar). It could not be established if alcohol had been bought but the school is informed and warned not to spend public funding on alcohol. In addition, the expense took place before the school was in full operation.

Numerous payments made by the school to staff (terminated or resigned) are questionable. The school has paid hefty bonuses to employees who were employed for periods of only two to four months.. While reviewing personnel payment records, OPD noticed the following:

- Former principal, Mr. Frank Marchese was employed by RGA between 1/2/07 and 2/23/07 and received a total compensation of $53,704 as he departed from the school. Of this total of $53,704, $37,089 was paid in bonuses to this former principal despite the fact that he stayed less than 60 days at the school.

Other examples of debatable bonus payments included:

Former RGA Principal – Jon Drescher (left before school started)
$24,923 ; Period of employment – 47 days

Former RGA President – Mark English
$22,500 ; Period of employment - 4 Months

While it is not OPD's practice to critique how school's spend their per pupil allocation, questionable choices were made despite RGA being continuously reminded of its tight fiscal position from OPD in previous meetings with the Board members and even at the inception of the school. The signing bonuses and other forms of payments were not disclosed to OPD at pre-opening discussions that took place with the school leadership at that time.

The school is still waiting to receive confirmation from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regarding its tax-exempt status. The school is advised to claim back its paid sales taxes from the IRS at the end of the year when the tax-exempt status approval is received.

Besides Approved Operating Expense (AOE) per pupil funding, the school also receives Other Than Personnel Services (OTPS) grants from Department of Youth & Community Development ("DYCD"). School has not yet allocated the expenses that will be charged towards the DYCD contract. School is advised to provide all purchase orders, packing slips, invoices, and proof of payment related to DYCD purchases to OPD.

Please note that since quality statements 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4 are contingent upon strong 7.1 (having several policies in place), this area is deemed undeveloped.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

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

A charter school should be able to operate with an annual budget that reflects the expected revenue and expenses for the fiscal year. Since the revenue stream for charter schools tends to be based upon the number of students served (per pupil revenue) and the State and Federal grant (Title funding, etc..) funding, a continued and growing negative net asset balance poses threat to school's stability and the ability to fulfill its short and long-term financial obligations.

Based on RGA's unaudited financials available as of April 30, 2007, RGA is under fiscal stress. The school's total net assets reflect a negative balance of $830,651 (including loans totaling $175,000) that has increased over the past several months. This deficit is on top of the in-kind services (valued at $226,607) received through Ross Institute. The school has become increasingly dependent upon funds and/or in-kind services infused by Ross Institute and owe $822,602 as of April 30. The school did not receive the Charter School Planning Grant of $175,000 in the 2006-2007 school year. Nonetheless, RGA's fiscal condition remains worrisome for the remainder of this fiscal year and the upcoming year.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

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

The school has been plagued by numerous parents and staff complaints throughout 2006-2007 school year. School leadership turnover was a critical concern and most parents were surprised that the changing of principal(s) was downplayed by RGA and not communicated properly to the parents. While several parents were glad to see their kids attend RGA, there were parents that regretted the decision. Most parents complained of false promises and RGA's inability to deliver its programs such as Rosie's Broadway Kids, Stomp Dance, etc..

During the school visit, a number of parents expressed strong dissatisfaction with the current principal, Stephanie Clagnaz. Most of their concerns revolved around insensitivity towards minority parents, lack of welcoming spirit, lack of community feeling, and lack of responsiveness towards parental inputs and concerns. Parents were also concerned that no grades were assigned for English and Science classes. Parents have also expressed concern that the Board is run solely by or on the direction of Mrs. Courtney Ross and parents don't feel empowered or welcomed bringing complaints to the Board of trustees.

RGA must address the issues of parent engagement and develop a comprehensive policy to ensure parents have avenues (presence of RGA parent association representative since

2/07 on the board is an example) to raise their concerns and participate actively in the culture of the school. Some ways that RGA might accomplish this is to plan additional parent awareness events, participate in parent association meetings, and to communicate in languages other than English to accommodate bi-lingual parents and the changing demographic trends of the neighborhood. In conformity with New York State Open Meetings Law, the school needs to improve on informing RGA parents regarding the date, time and location of Board meetings. Further, the school should be clear in articulating the appeals process to parents so that they are aware of the protocols for filing complaints.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

ROSS GLOBAL ACADEMY

Ø ------ Undeveloped √ ------ Proficient + ------ Well Developed

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Ross Global Academy Charter School	Ø	✓	+

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.	Ø	✓	+
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: • each student, classroom, grade level,	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: • ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students	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: • all other categories of interest to the school	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		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1	X		
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.	**Ø**	**✓**	**+**
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		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2	X		

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.	Ø	✓	+
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3	X		
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.	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		
Overall score for Quality Statement 4	X		
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.	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		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5	X		

Quality Statement 6 – School's Board has provided "effective" oversight and leadership as needed and is functioning in accordance with the agreed upon charter.	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.		X	
6.7 Board has been responsive to both parent and school staff concerns/complaints (if any)	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 6	X		
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.	**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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 7	X		
Quality Statement 8* – Based on the most recent financial statements, school is in sound fiscal condition.	**Ø**	**✓**	**+**
8.1 School's total educational expense / total expense ratio is above 70% for this fiscal year.			
8.2 School's administrative ratio is under 30% for this fiscal year.			
8.3 School's current ratio is greater than or equal to 2.0.			
8.4 School's debt to asset ratio is less than or equal to 1.0.			
Overall score for Quality Statement 8	X		
Quality Statement 9 – School has structure to integrate parents and community partners in the school.	**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		
Overall score for Quality Statement 9	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.