



**Department of
Education**

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

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

**BRONX COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
RENEWAL REPORT**

2012-13 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Bronx Community Charter School opened in 2008 and is in its first charter term, which expires on January 14, 2013. The school provides a progressive school model and is located in two nearby private facilities within Community School District 10 in the Bronx, at 2348 Webster Avenue and 2255 Webster Avenue. Bronx Community is an elementary school currently serving approximately 300 students in grades K-5¹. The school's primary intake grade is Kindergarten but it accepts applications and fills available seats at all grade levels. It received over 350 applications, K-5, for its spring 2012 lottery. Below are the school's 2012 Progress Report grade and overall assessment results and demographic data for the school and CSD.

During the 2011-12 school year the average attendance at Bronx Community Charter School was 95%.² The school scored above average on Academic Expectations, Communication and Safety & Respect and well above average on Engagement on its 2011-12 NYC DOE School Survey with 83% of Parents and 96% of Teachers responding to the survey³.

Bronx Community Charter School is an independent charter school not associated with a charter management organization (CMO) or other parent organization. The school has had the same two co-directors, Martha Andrews and Sasha Wilson, since its founding.

	2011-12 PR overall grade	2012 ELA, 3+%	2012 Math, 3+%	FRL %	SWD %	ELL %
School ⁴	D	39	47	78	13	7.7
CSD 10 ⁵		38.9	52.1	76.5	16.8	21

Renewal Recommendation:

In order for a charter school to be renewed it must demonstrate that it has earned renewal and is worthy of continuing the privilege of educating New York City students. While the academic performance of students is the foremost determining factor of a school's success, a school's ability to demonstrate an effective educational program, a financially and operationally viable organization, and a strong learning community with support from stakeholders are important factors that inform a renewal decision.

¹ Self reported in Renewal Application (8/31/12).

² Self-reported in Progress Towards Charter Goals submission with Renewal Application (8/31/2012)

³ NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

⁴ Proficiency rates from <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>. Demographics from ATS 11/20/12.

⁵ CSD ELA and Math data from NYC DOE website and measures average performance of common grades only. Demographics from ATS 11/26/12 data pull.

Based on the evaluation of the renewal application, renewal visit, historical annual reports and visits, performance on Progress Reports, comparisons to the CSD, and other factors, the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Accountability & Support team (NYC DOE CSAS) recommends a **Two-Year Renewal with Conditions** of the charter for Bronx Community Charter School. If the school does not meet all specified conditions future renewal is in jeopardy.

The conditions are as follows:

- 1) Score C or better in each of the years of the new charter on the Overall Progress Report grade, Student Progress and Student Performance grades on the Progress Report.
- 2) Equal or surpass CSD proficiency levels in Math and ELA in testing grades of grade to grade comparisons (i.e., 3rd grade to 3rd grade) during new charter term
- 3) If above goals are met during the term, the school can apply to move forward with middle school expansion.

Part 2: Renewal Decision and Findings

Renewal Framework:

The New York State Charter Schools Act (“the Act”) states the following regarding the renewal of a school’s charter:

§2851.4: Charters may be renewed, upon application, for a term of up to five years in accordance with the provisions of this article for the issuance of such charters pursuant to section twenty-eight hundred fifty-two of this article; provided, however, that a renewal application shall [also] include:

(a) A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in the charter.

(b) A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private. Such statement shall be in a form prescribed by the Board of Regents.

(c) Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school required by subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty-seven of this article, including the charter school report cards and the certified financial statements.

(d) Indications of parent and student satisfaction. Such renewal application shall be submitted to the charter entity no later than six months prior to the expiration of the charter; provided, however, that the charter entity may waive such deadline for good cause shown.

(e) The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the board of regents or the board of trustees of the state university of New York, as applicable, of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program which shall be considered by the charter entity prior to approving such charter school's application for renewal. When developing such targets, the board of regents and the board of trustees of the state university of New York shall ensure (1) that such enrollment targets are comparable to the enrollment figures of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community

school district, in which the charter school is located; and (2) that such retention targets are comparable to the rate of retention of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the proposed charter school would be located.

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

Full-Term Renewal

In cases where a school has demonstrated exceptional results with its students, a five-year renewal will be granted. A school must show that its program has yielded strong student performance and progress, has met the majority of its charter goals, has demonstrated financial stability, has attained sufficient board capacity, and has an educationally sound learning environment in order to gain this type of renewal.

Renewal with Conditions

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

Short-Term Renewal

In cases where a school is up for renewal of its initial charter and has fewer than two years of state-assessment results, a renewal of three-years or fewer may be considered. In very limited circumstances, a school not in its initial charter or in its initial charter with more than three years of state assessment data, may be considered for a short-term renewal if the school's most recent year results are good (for example, an A or B on the NYC DOE Progress Report) while the previous year's results may have been poor (D or F).

Non-Renewal

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

NYC DOE CSAS Recommendation:

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

Charter School. If the school does not meet all specified conditions future renewal is in jeopardy.

The conditions are as follows:

- 1) Score C or better in each of the years of the new charter on the Overall Progress Report grade, Student Progress and Student Performance grades on the Progress Report.
- 2) Equal or surpass CSD proficiency levels in Math and ELA in testing grades of grade to grade comparisons (i.e., 3rd grade to 3rd grade) during new charter term
- 3) If above goals are met during the term, the school can apply to move forward with middle school expansion.

This recommendation is made for reasons that include the following:

1. The first listed objective of charter schools, in accordance with the NY Charter Schools Act of 1998, is to improve student learning and achievement (Education Law Section 2850(2)(a)).

Bronx Community has partially demonstrated student progress and achievement for the following reasons:

- i. In 2012, its second year taking state assessments, the school's overall percent of students scoring proficient (Level 3 or above) on NYS Math and ELA assessments increased by 10.9 points in Math and 7.8 points in ELA.⁶
- ii. The school has received overall Progress Report grades of C in 2011 and D in 2012.
- iii. However, the school received an F grade in Student Progress in both 2010-11 and 2011-12, indicating minimal improvement in overall student performance as compared to peer schools.⁷
- iv. The percent of students at/above L3 on the NYS Math exam was below district averages for all applicable grades in both 2011 and 2012. In ELA the percent proficient was below the district in 2011 (grade 3), but equal (grades 3 and 4) to the district in 2012.⁸
- v. The school has not yet met the academic goals in its charter but had demonstrated some progress toward those goals.

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

Bronx Community has proven to be an effective and viable organization:

⁶ 2010-11 and 11-12 Progress Reports.

⁷ 2010-11 and 11-12 Progress Reports.

⁸ <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>.

- i. The school has ended each fiscal year with a significant surplus while maintaining a private space, staffing each classroom with two certified teachers, and offering competitive salaries.
 - ii. The school has strong parent support as evidenced by NYC DOE School Survey results. The positive response rates for all categories have met or exceeded citywide averages.⁹
 - iii. School has clear fiscal policies and procedures and separates duties as delineated in the school's Handbook.
 - iv. The school has consistently met the fiscal and operational goals in its charter.
3. In accordance with Education Law Section 2853(1)(f), the board of trustees of the charter school shall have final authority for policy and operational decisions of the school.

The board of Bronx Community has proven to be effective for the following reasons:

- i. The school has benefitted from the continuity of leadership and low staff attrition.
 - ii. It has provided effective governance and oversight of financial and operational performance and secured and managed its private facility needs.
 - iii. The school has made adjustments in response to state assessment data to its professional development, assessment system, and focus on instructional data. It has expanded its Targeted Academic Support period to every grade in 2012-13.
4. In accordance with Education Law Section 2850(2)(b), a primary objective of charter schools is to increase learning opportunities for students who are at-risk of academic failure.

Bronx Community has successfully served at-risk students:

- i. The school has structures in place to meet the needs of all learners. Services for special needs students are being provided in compliance with each student's Individual Education Plan.
 - ii. The school reported gains in the percent proficiency rates for students with IEPs from 2011 to 2012 (from 0% to 23% in ELA; from 38% to 46% in Math). The percent proficiency rates for economically disadvantaged students also improved (from 28% to 36% in ELA and 32% to 44% in Math).¹⁰

⁹ 2009-2012 School Surveys.

¹⁰ Self-reported in School's Revised Renewal Application, Oct 2012.

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

Bronx Community has been compliant with its charter and applicable laws and regulations.

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

Bronx Community has demonstrated viable plans for its next term for the following reasons:

- i. The school has a reasonable, achievable plan for improving academic results in its next charter term.
- ii. The school has proposed a responsible plan for managing its enrollment projections with different options depending on grade configurations in the next charter term.

Part 3: Charter School Goals

Below is the school's report on its progress toward meeting its charter goals.

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

Goal I: Students will be proficient readers, writers, and speakers of the English language.						
Measure	Expectation	Year 1 2008-09	Year 2 2009-10	Year 3 2010-11	Year 4 2011-12	Year 5 2012-13
Student performance on ECLAS-2 and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). (Absolute and value added) ¹¹	For the 2008-09 through 2012-13 school years, 75% of kindergarten students will perform at grade level in the rhyme recognition, rhyme generation, syllable clapping, initial consonants; perform at grade level on ABC recognition; and perform at or above grade level on spelling.	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met:
		Overall Result: 86% --- Rhyming- 86% Letter Recog.- 90% Initial Sounds- 82%	Overall Result: 75% -- Rhyming- 70% Letter Recog.- 80% Initial Sounds- 76%	Overall Result: 81% -- Rhyming- 74% Letter Recog.- 88% Initial Sounds- 80%	Overall Result: 82% -- Rhyming- 78% Letter Recog.- 86% Initial Sounds- 82%	Result:
		Explanation: Classroom instruction and supplemental intervention were effective.	Explanation: Classroom instruction and supplemental intervention were effective.	Explanation: Classroom instruction and supplemental intervention were effective.	Explanation: Classroom instruction and supplemental intervention were effective.	Explanation:
Student performance	For the 2008-09 through	Met: Yes Result: 76%	Met: No Result: 65%	Met: No Result: 68%	Met: No Result: 58%	Met: Result:

¹¹ The goal is included to show that even if the School does not make the absolute measure of 75%, that there is still growth, thus value-added. The numerator refers to all students who pass the NYS test in the current year and were in the school on BEDS day the prior year/ the denominator refers to all students who are tested this year and were in the school as of the BEDS data the prior year. Once the school has a 4th grade class, the following analysis will be computed and computed every year for every test grade following this first year. The school will reduce the difference between a grade's performance in year 1 and 75% by one half in year 2 and each subsequent year. For example, if in year 1, students in the two-year cohort performed at 60% the year 2 performance would be expected to be at 67.5% ($75 - 60 = 15$; $15/2 = 7.5$; $60 + 7.5 = 67.5$)

on ECLAS-2 and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). (Absolute and value added) ¹²	2012-13 school years, 75% of the first grade students will perform at or above grade level in spelling and decoding.	Explanation: Classroom instruction and supplemental intervention were effective.	Explanation: Students required a higher level of intervention and support.	Explanation: Students required a higher level of intervention and support.	Explanation: A significant number of the 25 newly enrolled first graders were non-readers when they began first grade. They needed a higher level of intervention as well as more time to meet grade level standards.	Explanation :
Student performance on ECLAS-2 and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). (Absolute and value added) ¹³	For the 2009-10 through 2012-13 school years, 75% of the second grade students will perform at or above grade level the spelling and decoding.	N/A	Met: Yes	Met: No	Met: No	Met:
			Result: 82%	Result: 68%	Result: 64%	Result:
			Explanation: Classroom instruction and supplemental intervention were effective.	Explanation: Students required a higher level of intervention and support.	Explanation: Students required a higher level of intervention and support.	Explanation :
Student performance on ECLAS-2 and Developmental Reading	Each year, 75% of Kindergarten-5 th graders will perform at or above	Met: No	Met: No	Met: No	Met: No	Met:
			Result: K: 70% 1: 62%	Result: K: 56% 1: 54% 2: 84%	Result: K: 32% 1: 29% 2: 32% 3: 38%	Result: K: 44% 1: 52% 2: 42% 3: 36%

¹² The goal is included to show that even if the School does not make the absolute measure of 75%, that there is still growth, thus value-added. The numerator refers to all students who pass the NYS test in the current year and were in the school on BEDS day the prior year/ the denominator refers to all students who are tested this year and were in the school as of the BEDS data the prior year. Once the school has a 4th grade class, the following analysis will be computed and computed every year for every test grade following this first year. The school will reduce the difference between a grade's performance in year 1 and 75% by one half in year 2 and each subsequent year. For example, if in year 1, students in the two-year cohort performed at 60% the year 2 performance would be expected to be at 67.5% ($75 - 60 = 15$; $15/2 = 7.5$; $60 + 7.5 = 67.5$)

¹³ The goal is included to show that even if the School does not make the absolute measure of 75%, that there is still growth, thus value-added. The numerator refers to all students who pass the NYS test in the current year and were in the school on BEDS day the prior year/ the denominator refers to all students who are tested this year and were in the school as of the BEDS data the prior year. Once the school has a 4th grade class, the following analysis will be computed and computed every year for every test grade following this first year. The school will reduce the difference between a grade's performance in year 1 and 75% by one half in year 2 and each subsequent year. For example, if in year 1, students in the two-year cohort performed at 60% the year 2 performance would be expected to be at 67.5% ($75 - 60 = 15$; $15/2 = 7.5$; $60 + 7.5 = 67.5$)

Assessment (DRA). (Absolute and value added) ¹⁴	Benchmark Grade Levels on the DRA-2 assessment.				4: 34%	
		Explanation: Significant numbers of students were approaching grade level and were provided with interventions designed to push them.	Explanation: Students, especially in K and 1, need a different type of targeted support.	Explanation: Based on research from Teachers College and the Common Core Standards, grade level benchmarks were raised.	Explanation: While 3 out of 4 cohorts show growth from the previous year, there must be an accelerated rate of growth for many more students. See renewal narrative for detail about raising achievement.	Explanation :
Student performance on NYS ELA examination. (Absolute)	For the 2010-11 through 2012-13 school years, 75% of 3 rd through 5 th graders who are enrolled on the test date of the current year and were enrolled on BEDS day of the prior year will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS ELA examination.	N/A	N/A	Met: No	Met: No	Met:
				Result: 3 rd grade: 29%	Result: 3 rd grade: 38% 4 th grade: 40%	Result:
				Explanation: Students needed a higher level of intervention, more experience with structured paper and pencil tasks and testing situations, and better stamina. See the renewal narrative for more detailed reflection and responsive action.	Explanation: More intensive intervention needs to be targeted towards an accelerated rate of growth for students who are below grade level. See renewal application for more detail.	Explanation :

¹⁴ The goal is included to show that even if the School does not make the absolute measure of 75%, that there is still growth, thus value-added. The numerator refers to all students who pass the NYS test in the current year and were in the school on BEDS day the prior year/ the denominator refers to all students who are tested this year and were in the school as of the BEDS data the prior year. Once the school has a 4th grade class, the following analysis will be computed and computed every year for every test grade following this first year. The school will reduce the difference between a grade's performance in year 1 and 75% by one half in year 2 and each subsequent year. For example, if in year 1, students in the two-year cohort performed at 60% the year 2 performance would be expected to be at 67.5% ($75 - 60 = 15$; $15/2 = 7.5$; $60 + 7.5 = 67.5$)

Student performance on NYS ELA examination. (Comparative)	Each year, the School's aggregate Performance Index on the NYS ELA exam will meet or exceed its Annual Yearly Progress goals.	N/A	Met: Yes	Met: No	Met: Yes	Met:
				Result: BxC did not meet AYP.	Result:	Result:
				Explanation: See above and renewal narrative.	Explanation:	Explanation :
Student performance on NYS ELA examination. (Comparative)	Each year, the percentage of students at BxC performing at or above Level 3 on the NYS ELA examination in each tested grade will be greater than that of Community School District 10.	N/A	N/A	Met: No	Met: No	Met:
				Result: 3 rd grade: BxC: 29.5% NYC CSD 10: 35%	Result: 3 rd grade: BxC: 38% NYC CSD 10: 38% 4 th grade: BxC: 40% NYC CSD 10: 40%	Result:
				Explanation: See above and renewal application narrative. BxC's mean scale score of 675 was higher than the district mean scale score of 655.	Explanation: BxC met the district, which is not good enough. See above and renewal application narrative for more reflection and action plans.	Explanation :
Student performance on NYS ELA examination. (Comparative)	Each year, the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 on the NYS ELA exam in each tested grade will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools as determined by the NYC Department of Education and based on the similar school categories generated by	N/A	N/A	Met: No	Met:	Met:
				Result: BxC was far below the mean for its peer schools.	Result: Data not yet available.	Result:
				Explanation: See above and renewal narrative.	Explanation:	Explanation :

	the NYS Education Department and the NYC Department of Education.					
Student Proficiency on a norm-referenced test such as the Terra Nova ¹⁵ and the NYS ELA examination. (Value added)	For the 2009-10 through 2012-13 school year, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half, the gap between their average score in the previous year's administration of the Terra Nova or other nationally-normed reading test, and their average score in the current year. If a grade-level cohort exceeds the national average in the previous year, the cohort will show at least an increase in the current year.	N/A	N/A	Met: Yes	Met:	Met:
				Result: In 2nd grade, the class of 2016 cohort had a mean normal curve equivalent of 36.7 and in 3rd grade (in 2011), the same cohort had a mean normal curve equivalent of 47.5, showing marked improvement and attainment of this goal.	Result: Data is not yet available.	Result:
				Explanation: The Terra Nova reveals student growth as readers as well as test takers.	Explanation:	Explanation:
	For the 2011-12 through 2012-13 school years, each grade-level cohort of students will reduce by	N/A	N/A	N/A	Met: No	Met:

¹⁵ BxC is currently in the process of considering a several standardized tests.

	one-half, the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's NYS ELA exam and 75% at or above Level 3 on the current year's NYS ELA exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75% at or above Level 3 in the previous year, the cohort will show at least an increase in the current year.				Result: The class of 2016 cohort improved by 11 percentage points while they needed to improve by 23 to meet this goal.	Result:
					Explanation: See above and renewal narrative.	Explanation :

Goal II: Students will demonstrate proficiency in the understanding and application of mathematical skills and concepts.

Measure	Expectation	Year 1 2008-09	Year 2 2009-10	Year 3 2010-11	Year 4 2011-12	Year 5 2012-13
Student performance on the NYS Mathematics examination. (Absolute)	For the 2010-11 through 2012-13 school years, 75% of 3 rd through 5 th graders who are enrolled on the test date of the current year and were enrolled on BEDS day of the prior year will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS Mathematics examination.	N/A	N/A	Met: No	Met: No	Met:
				Result: 3 rd grade: 35%	Result: 3 rd grade: 42% 4 th grade: 52%	Result:
				Explanation: Students needed more targeted intervention, more opportunities to demonstrate their learning in testing contexts, and more stamina. See attached action plan outlined in the renewal narrative.	Explanation: In addition to the 3 areas identified in year 3, it's clear we need to concentrate more resources on accelerating the growth of students who are below grade level. See attached action plan outlined in the renewal narrative.	Explanation :

Student performance on the NYS Mathematics examination. (Absolute)	Each year, the School's aggregate Performance Index on the NYS Mathematics exam will meet or exceed its Annual Yearly Progress goals.	N/A	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met:
				Result:	Result:	Result:
				Explanation:	Explanation:	Explanation :
Student performance on the NYS Mathematics examination. (Comparative)	Each year, the percentage of students at BxC performing at or above Level 3 on the NYS Mathematics exam in each tested grade, will be greater than that of Community School District 10.	N/A	N/A	Met: No	Met: No	Met:
				Result: 3 rd grade: BxC: 35% NYC CSD 10: 45%	Result: 3 rd grade: BxC: 42% NYC CSD 10: 47% 4 th grade: BxC: 52% NYC CSD 10: 57%	Result:
				Explanation: See above and renewal narrative.	Explanation: See above and renewal narrative.	Explanation :
Student performance on the NYS Mathematics examination. (Comparative)	Each year, the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 on the NYS Mathematics exam in each tested grade will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools as determined by the NYC Department of Education and based on the similar school categories generated by the State Education Department and the NYC	N/A	N/A	Met: No	Met:	Met:
				Result: BxC was far below the mean for its peer group comparison.	Result: Data not yet available.	Result:
				Explanation: See above and renewal narrative.	Explanation:	Explanation :

	Department of Education.					
Student Proficiency on a norm-referenced test such as the TERRA NOVA and the NYS Mathematics examination. (Value-added)	For the 2009-10 through 2012-13 school year, grade-level cohorts of students will reduce by one-half the gap between their average score in the previous year's administration of the Terra Nova, a nationally normed math test, and their average score in the current year. If a grade-level cohort exceeds the national average in the previous year, the cohort will show at least an increase in the current year.	N/A	N/A	Met: Yes	Met:	Met:
				Result: In 2nd grade, the class of 2016 cohort had a mean normal curve equivalent of 36.7 and in 3rd grade (in 2011), the same cohort had a mean normal curve equivalent of 47.5, showing marked improvement and attainment of this goal.	Result: This data is not yet available.	Result:
				Explanation: Students made growth in their ability demonstrate their skills and understandings on standardized tests.	Explanation:	Explanation:
Student Proficiency on a norm-referenced test such as the TERRA NOVA and the NYS Mathematics examination. (Value-added)	For the 2011-12 through 2012-13 school years, each grade-level cohort of students will reduce by one-half, the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's NYS Mathematics exam and 75% at or	N/A	N/A	N/A	Met: No	Met:
					Result: The class of 2016 cohort reduced the gap between the percent of students at or above a level 3 and 75% by 17 percentage points. Reducing the difference by one half would have meant a 20 percentage	Result:

	above Level 3 on the current year's NYS Mathematics exam. If a grade-level cohort exceeds 75% at or above Level 3 in the previous year, the cohort will show at least an increase in the current year.				point increase.	
					Explanation: While students reduced the gap, it was not enough to meet this goal. See above and renewal narrative for reflection and action.	Explanation :

Goal III: Students will demonstrate proficiency relevant to science achievement.

Measure	Expectation	Year 1 2008-09	Year 2 2009-10	Year 3 2010-11	Year 4 2011-12	Year 5 2012-13
Student performance on the NYS Science Examination. (Absolute)	For the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school year, 75% of 4 th graders who are enrolled on the test date of the current year and were enrolled on BEDS day of the prior year will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS Science examination.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Met:	Met:
					Result: Results are not yet available.	Result:
					Explanation:	Explanation :
Student performance on the NYS Science Examination. (Comparative)	Each year, the percent of students at BxC performing at or above Level 3 on the State Science exam in each tested grade will be	N/A	N/A	N/A	Met:	Met:
					Result: Results are not yet available.	Result:
					Explanation:	Explanation :

	greater than that of Community School District 10.					
Goal IV: Students will demonstrate proficiency relevant to social studies.						
Measure	Expectation	Year 1 2008-09	Year 2 2009-10	Year 3 2010-11	Year 4 2011-12	Year 5 2012-13
Student performance on NYS Social Studies Examination. (Absolute)	For the 2012-13 school year, 75% of fifth graders who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS Social Studies examination.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Met:
						Result:
						Explanation:
Student performance on NYS Social Studies Examination. (Comparative)	Each year, the percent of students at BxC performing at or above Level 3 on the NYS Social Studies exam in each tested grade, will be greater than that of Community School District 10.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Met:
						Result:
						Explanation:
Goal VI: BxC parents will express a high satisfaction rating with the school.						
Measure	Expectation	Year 1 2008-09	Year 2 2009-10	Year 3 2010-11	Year 4 2011-12	Year 5 2012-13
Parent Satisfaction Survey	Each year, parents will express satisfaction with BxC's program, based on the school's Family Survey, in	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: No	Met:
		Result: 91% of all families at BxC reported that they were very happy or happy with their child's education at	Result: 93% of all families at BxC reported that they were very happy or happy with their child's education at	Result: 92% of all families at BxC reported that they were very happy or happy with their child's education at	Result: Although 94% of survey respondents reported that they were very happy or happy with	Result:

	which at least 90% of <i>all</i> ¹⁶ parents provide a positive response to each of the survey items.	BxC.	BxC.	BxC.	their child's education at BxC, this accounted for only 77% of all BxC families due to the fact that only 81% of families responded.	
		Explanation: Our family support, communication, and involvement is effective.	Explanation: Our family support, communication, and involvement is effective.	Explanation: Our family support, communication, and involvement is effective.	Explanation: Of the 180 families who returned the survey, 94% of them reported that they were very happy or happy with their child's education at BxC. While we think this is indicative of overall happiness, our system for following up to collect surveys was not thoroughly implemented, so our data is incomplete.	Explanation :
Enrollment Data	Each year, 95% of all students enrolled during the course of the school year, will return the following September, excluding those students who have moved.	N/A	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met:	Met:
			Result: 96% of students whose families did not move to another state or geographic district returned to BxC	Result: 99.9% of students whose families did not move to another state or geographic district returned to BxC	Result:	Result:
			Explanation: Our family involvement plan was effective.	Explanation: Our family involvement plan was effective.	Explanation:	Explanation :
Goal VII: BxC will exceed attendance rates of the surrounding district.						

¹⁶ All parents include those who do not respond to the survey as well as those who do respond.

Measure	Expectation	Year 1 2008-09	Year 2 2009-10	Year 3 2010-11	Year 4 2011-12	Year 5 2012-13
Attendance Statistics	The school will have a daily attendance rate of at least 95%.	Met: No	Met: No	Met: No	Met: Yes	Met:
		Result: 90.3	Result: 94%	Result: 93%	Result: 95%	Result:
		Explanation: Attendance at BxC fluctuated both at the start of the year and at the end. We believe that enrollment stability at the start of the year and the city-wide influenza outbreak at the end of the year had an impact on the overall attendance average. We created and followed through on an action plan to improve attendance.	Explanation: Our attendance improved, indicating the effectiveness of our action plan. We believe the continuation of the H1N1 outbreak at the start of the year had an impact on the overall attendance average. We refined our action plan.	Explanation: More effective targeted outreach was needed with specific families who presented attendance concerns.	Explanation: Our targeted outreach and accountability system was effective.	Explanation :

Goal VIII: BxC will meet all legal requirements and responsibilities.

Measure	Expectation	Year 1 2008-09	Year 2 2009-10	Year 3 2010-11	Year 4 2011-12	Year 5 2012-13
Adherence to charter terms	Each year, BxC will comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations and contract terms including, but not limited to, the New York Charter Schools Act, the New York Freedom of Information Law, the New York Open Meetings Law, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met:
		Explanation: BxC was in compliance with all applicable rules and laws governing charter schools.	Explanation: BxC was in compliance with all applicable rules and laws governing charter schools.	Explanation: BxC was in compliance with all applicable rules and laws governing charter schools.	Explanation: BxC was in compliance with all applicable rules and laws governing charter schools.	Result:
						Explanation :

	Act, and federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.					
Goal IX: BxC will make responsible financial decisions and demonstrate sound fiscal practices and management.						
Measure	Expectation	Year 1 2008-09	Year 2 2009-10	Year 3 2010-11	Year 4 2011-12	Year 5 2012-13
Financial Compliance	Upon completion of BxC's first year and every year thereafter, the School will undergo an independent financial audit that will result in an unqualified opinion and no major findings. ¹⁷	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: TBD	Met:
		Result: Clean audit	Result: Clean audit	Result: Clean audit	Result: We anticipate a clean audit.	Result:
		Explanation: There were no major findings in the annual audit.	Explanation: There were no major findings in the annual audit.	Explanation: There were no major findings in the annual audit.	Explanation: Audit will be finalized and submitted in October 2012.	Explanation :
Financial Viability	Each year, BxC will operate on a balanced budget ¹⁸ and maintain a stable cash flow.	Met: Yes	Met:	Met:	Met:	Met:
		Result: BxC operated with a strong cash flow and ended the year with a substantial surplus.	Result: BxC operated with a strong cash flow and ended the year with a substantial surplus.	Result: BxC operated with a strong cash flow and ended the year with a substantial surplus.	Result: BxC operated with a strong cash flow and ended the year with a surplus of over \$1.7 million.	Result:
		Explanation: We budgeted conservatively and managed our budget aggressively.	Explanation: We budgeted conservatively and managed our budget aggressively.	Explanation: We budgeted conservatively and managed our budget aggressively.	Explanation: We budgeted conservatively and managed our budget aggressively.	Explanation :
Enrollment Stability	Each year, the student enrollment at BxC will be within 15% of full enrollment as defined in the School's charter on an	Met: Yes	Met: Yes	Met: No	Met: Yes	Met:
		Result: 100 students were consistently enrolled	Result: 150 students were consistently enrolled	Result: 175 students were consistently enrolled	Result: 250 students were consistently enrolled	Result:
		Explanation: Our substantial buy-in from	Explanation: Family commitment	Explanation: Due to space constraints, we	Explanation: Family commitment	Explanation :

¹⁷ The NYCDOE will determine a finding to be "major" if it indicates a deliberate act of wrongdoing, reckless conduct or causes a loss of confidence in the abilities or integrity of the school or seriously jeopardizes the continued operation of the school.

¹⁸ A budget will be considered "balanced" if revenues equal or exceed expenditures.

	ongoing basis.	founding families and long waiting list enabled us to maintain consistent enrollment.	was strong and our waiting lists were long.	were given permission by the Office of Charter Schools to enroll one fewer K class. We made up for it the following year by adding an additional 25 first graders.	was strong and our waiting lists were long.	

Part 4: Charter School Performance Data

Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - Whole School¹⁹

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Bronx Community Charter School			29.4	39.0
CSD 10*			37.7	38.9
NYC*			48.1	50.7
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Bronx Community Charter School			35.3	47.0
CSD 10*			45.6	52.1
NYC*			54.8	61.4

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

Grade 3

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Bronx Community Charter School			29.4	38.0
CSD 10			37.7	37.9
NYC			48.1	49.0
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Bronx Community Charter School			35.3	42.0
CSD 10			45.6	47.3
NYC			54.8	57.0

Grade 4

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Bronx Community Charter School				40.0
CSD 10				39.9
NYC				52.4
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Bronx Community Charter School				52.0
CSD 10				56.8
NYC				65.7

¹⁹ All data from NYC DOE website. <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>.

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

Part 5: Bronx Community Charter School Charter Renewal Visit



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

BRONX COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL VISIT REPORT

OCTOBER 2012

Part A: Executive Summary

Renewal Review Process Overview:

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

The following experts participated in the review of this school on October 17-18, 2012:

- Richard Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSAS
- Gabrielle Mosquera, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE CSAS
- Kamilah O'Brien, Director of Operations, NYC DOE CSAS
- Lynnette Aqueron, NYC DOE Division of Students with Disabilities & ELLs
- Sonia Park, Executive Director, NYC DOE CSAS
- Laurie Pendleton, Consultant to NYC DOE CSAS

Part B: Renewal Visit Observations

Areas of Strength

The school has a clear, coherent academic program and progressive instructional design that is consistent with the charter's vision and mission.

- The school's reading curriculum is based on a balanced literacy approach and uses curriculum units based on the work of Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. There is evidence that the Common Core State Standards are being incorporated into the units, though rigor of this incorporation could improve.
- The school's authentic, project-based, hands-on instructional model is clearly evident. Most instruction observed on the days of the visit incorporated a workshop approach. In a second grade math class students were observed working in pairs and small groups to organize collections and using this information to order numbers. Teachers encouraged students to "show their thinking" and were taking notes on the strategies students were using to solve problems. The students were using appropriate academic vocabulary as well as effective speaking and listening skills in their work groups. Similarly in reading classrooms, teachers encouraged student engagement by using such instructional strategies as "Turn and Talk" and "Thumbs Up If You Know the Answer." During the group discussion, students in this classroom used such language as, "I agree with..." or "I disagree with you because...". They were also able to carry on a discussion on the topic with very little intervention or support from the teacher, indicating that students had internalized discussion protocols and were experienced in having productive partner and group discussions.
- Teachers also provided direct instruction that included opportunities for meaningful student engagement. First grade students were observed practicing counting routines and completing story problems by finding multiple ways to find solutions, and second grade students received a mini-lesson on strategies to follow when reading "tricky words." They were then asked to practice these strategies in their own reading books.
- Strong co-teaching models were observed on the days of the visit. The school has two teachers in each classroom, allowing for a variety of configurations including parallel teaching, alternative teaching, and station teaching. In some classrooms each teacher was leading a smaller group in direct instruction, read aloud, or class discussion. In other classes, one teacher was leading the lesson while the other teacher circulated and provided support and still in other classes, both teachers were supporting students during the workshop portion of the lessons.
- The school's academic schedule allows for intensive small-group work that was observed in most classrooms on the days of the visit.
- The school provides a variety of opportunities for students to develop an "activist mindset." These activities include meeting with local politicians, growing and eating healthy food, learning about the Bronx River Forest, adopting street trees, planting bulbs, organizing a yearly blood drive, collecting Box Tops and registering voters.

- The school's co-directors observe staff both formally and informally using a teacher created list of expectations along with Kim Marshall's teaching rubric and provide both written and verbal feedback. Staff interviewed on the days of the visit said they welcome this feedback from co-directors and coaches and find it helpful.

The school's environment is calm, safe, and respectful and conducive to learning.

- Throughout the school there was evidence of a thoughtful approach to helping students become independent learners through the explanation of clear procedures and routines. Behavioral expectations were posted in all classrooms, as was evident from student-created work outlining expectations for academic studies such as reading workshop and independent reading.
- The school's environment is clean and print-rich, with multiple examples of student work posted both inside and outside classrooms. On the days of the visit, for example, there were multiple examples of student work showing the results of a whole school study on the human body.
- On the days of the visit, teachers often reviewed expectations for both behavior and academic work with students prior to student independent work. Once expectations were established, students in the majority of classrooms got right to work with a clear sense of purpose. As students worked, teachers provided both academic support and feedback on behavior ensuring students maintained their focus on the task at hand.
- In one observed class the teacher encouraged a student to find evidence in the text that would support his viewpoint, which differed from the teacher's. This type of academic risk-taking is encouraged and supported throughout the classes.
- The school takes a positive approach to student behavior that focuses on teaching the student strategies to manage their own behavior. There were multiple examples of this positive self-talk observed on the days of the visit including uses of a behavior charts, mentor teachers, and check-ins with other staff.
- Students were observed to be on task, and frequently engaged in their learning. During workshop activities, students were encouraged to support the learning of others by providing resources and talking through possible strategies.
- During the student interviews, students shared such school goals as: everyone should learn something every day; everyone should be comfortable with classmates; and everyone has the chance to say what they're thinking.

The school has structures in place to meet the needs of all learners.

- Services for special needs students are being provided in compliance with the student's Individual Education Plans and classroom teachers have copies of the IEPs and are aware of specific accommodations.
- The school implements a Child Study Team to identify and intervene with students who are at risk of not making adequate progress.
- The school has expanded the Targeted Academic Support period used in grades 3 and 4 last year to every grade level this year. During these periods teachers work

with students in small groups to address specific skills at their current instructional level. Teaching teams use assessment data to create these groupings.

- This year, the school has added dedicated reading and math intervention teachers who provide pull out services for students who are identified as far below grade level and push-in support during math workshop for students who are approaching grade level.
- The school's Special Education department reports that they have a good working relationship with the local CSE to support compliance.
- On the day of the visits a variety of ICT models were being used effectively in the classrooms.
- In many classrooms, students were observed using differentiated materials that were tied to the lesson objectives.

The school has a dedicated, reflective, and mission-aligned board, school leadership team and staff.

- The school has benefitted from its continuity of leadership (both-co-directors have been with the schools since its founding; several Board members have also been on the board since the founding, others since 2009) and low staff attrition.
- The school has established a collaborative professional climate. Teachers meet weekly in grade team meetings where they plan lessons, analyze student work, and discuss student progress. Grade teams use "Lab Sites" in which members of the team teach a lesson with support and coaching from either the ELA or Math coaches. The visitation team observed a Lab Site lesson and found teachers received immediate feedback and coaching on the effectiveness of their lesson allowing them to adjust instruction to meet student needs.
- The school has a stable and engaged board that supports school mission, has active committees, meets as scheduled, and provides informed oversight.

The school has strong parent support as evidenced by satisfaction results on NYC DOE School Survey, parent participation in the survey, and attendance and participation at conferences and school social and advocacy events.

- Parent satisfaction on the DOE satisfaction survey has been well above average for all four NYC DOE School Surveys of its first term, 2009-2012, and overall satisfaction (parents and teachers) has been above or well above average in all four assessed categories. Parent participation has been equal (one year) or above (all other years) city averages.
- The school reports that parents volunteer regularly in classrooms, and several were observed doing so on the days of the visit. The school also reported that parent workshops and other school and family activities are well attended.
- Thrice yearly parent conferences are held during which extensive narrative reports on student's academic and social progress are shared. These reports provide information on the work habits, strengths, interests, and goals for each student and the conferences provide an opportunity for teachers and parents to discuss student growth and to set goals for progress. The school reports nearly 100% participation in parent conferences.

The school is a fiscally sound and viable organization.

- The school has ended each fiscal year with a significant surplus while maintaining a private space, staffing each classroom with two certified teachers, and offering competitive salaries.
- School has clear fiscal policies and procedures and separation of duties as delineated in the school's handbook.
- The school has consistently received clean audits.

Areas of Growth

The school should continue to refine its instructional practice to improve its academic results, demonstrate significant progress toward the academic goals in its charter, and demonstrate greater measurable academic growth for its students.

- The school has had only two years of NYS assessment data so far, grade 3 in 2011 and grade 3 and 4 in 2012 and received an overall C on its 2011 Progress Report and an overall D on its 2012 Progress Report. In both years, the school's Student Progress grade was an F.
- While the overall percentage of students scoring at Level 3 or above increased from 2011 to 2012 in both ELA (+7.8 points) and Math (+10.9 points)²⁰, a closer look at the results indicated that this increase in proficiency was part of a larger pattern of incremental gains for Bronx Community students. For a subset of those students who scored just below Level 3 in 2011 it was sufficient to move them from just below to at or slightly above 3 in 2012. These overall results, however, were well below the gains registered by peer schools for students at the same performance level at the start of the 2011-12 school year, which led to the F in Student Progress and the overall D in the 2012 PR.
- The school's proficiency levels (students scoring 3 or above) in Math were below district and city averages in both 2011 and 2012. In ELA they were below the district in 2011 and equal to the district in 2012 but below the city in both years.
- All staff and board members interviewed on the days of the visit were frank in their disappointment with the school's performance on state assessments and the school's related performance on the DOE's Progress Report. They are clear about their plans for improving performance through better use of data, adjusting programs as necessary, and adjusting professional development and practice to improve results while leveraging the effective instructional practices and support structures that are well in place and aligned to the school's mission.
- During classroom observations, the consistency of rigor in instruction and tasks varied from lesson to lesson. For example, although reading instruction was typically of a high caliber of delivery, students were often sent to practice the skills learned using texts

²⁰ 2010-11 AND 2011-12 Progress Reports.

that were below grade level. In another observed class, the non-fiction text that some groups were working with in small group instruction was challenging but the texts students were using in independent reading were below grade level. Similarly in a Math workshop class observed, the student investigation was real-world involving arrays with the groups engaged in the task, but the challenge level of the task involved low-level math skills and concepts. Methods, frequency and effectiveness of checks for understanding also varied in observed classrooms—this was true when moving from direct instruction to guided or independent practice and for certain small group independent activities. To ensure resources, tasks and student work contain appropriate rigor, the school should continue its efforts to:

- align expectations for student work to Common Core State Standards and to provide models, checklists, rubrics, and examples to hold students accountable for work of higher quality.
- support grade level teams to work together to ensure that the rigor of assessments clearly match the expectations of the Common Core State Standards.
- use professional development and teacher observations to support teachers in providing academic feedback to students as strong and as supportive as process and behavioral feedback.
- reflect on instructional practices and determine effective strategies to improve pacing and checks for understanding and ensure that all independent practice has a way to verify and adjust learning as necessary.
- continue to improve reading proficiency in response to assessment data, for example, the school has added the Wilson Foundations Program and Leveled Literacy to support students who are struggling to make progress and reach grade level.
- thoughtfully monitor implementation of new instructional support programs and systems such as Dreambox to ensure not only quality implementation but also to measure the effectiveness of these programs.

The school should continue to develop its culture of high expectations and accountability.

- The school is encouraged to create clear goals for student achievement and to track progress towards these goals on a consistent basis and to communicate this information to the Board of Trustees and teachers. The school should continue their plans to inform families of student progress on interim standardized exams to increase family understanding of student academic progress.
- The school's professional staff is encouraged to create goals for their grade levels and classrooms that support the school-wide goals for student achievement to increase staff accountability.

Continue to intensify the school's use of instructional data to target and adjust instruction.

- The school's leadership and teachers have both identified the need for more consistent interim assessments that will provide feedback on student mastery of learning objectives and can be used to identify gaps, more flexibly student groups and to target

their learning, and evaluate the success of intervention programs in accelerating student learning.

- The school is encouraged to continue their plans to implement an interim assessment program, selecting between final program candidates Ed Vistas or Achievement Network, to provide objective and measurable growth data for students in grades 3-5.²¹
- The school is encouraged to follow its intention to expand the understanding and effective use of data at all levels of the organization, including its intention to hire a coach-consultant to work with school leaders and to leverage the resources of Ed Vistas or the Achievement Network to assist staff with analyzing interim assessment data and effectively adjusting instruction in response to instructional data.
- Although the Child Study Team works to identify student learning needs, the resulting action plans reviewed did not specifically address these needs and there was little evidence that goals for measuring student progress were being used to monitor the effectiveness of the strategies.

The school should continue its efforts to ensure school serves a comparable at-risk population as its district of location.

- As of November 2012, the school's population included 78% of its students receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRL), which is slightly higher than the 76.5% in the district, 13% of its students have IEPs compared to 16.8% in the district, slightly lower, but only 7.7% of its students were English Language Learners (ELL) compared to 20.9% in the district.
- The school should implement the new lottery preferences for ELL students that it has planned for its next charter term and continue to monitor its ongoing recruitment efforts based on the results of these efforts, making any necessary adjustments to achieve their goal and attain compliance with the 2010 charter law.

Continue to improve operational systems and compliance.

- Systems are in place for collecting attendance and tardies but it is not clear, based on staff interviews, how these data are monitored and who is expected to act on the information.
- The school is encouraged to monitor compliance regarding the number of fire drills required per year. At the time of the visit, the school was not on track to meet the required number of drills.²²

²¹ Following the Renewal Visit, the school reported via email (dated 11/28/12) that it has chosen Achievement Network and had conducted its first interim assessment and data day.

²² Following the Renewal Visit, the school reported and documented via email (dated 11/28/12) that it had met the requirement of holding eight fire drills by its Thanksgiving Break.

Part 6: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

A. Statutory Basis for Renewal

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

- Improve student learning and achievement;
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems by holding the schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.²³

When granted, a charter is valid for up to five years. For a school chartered under the Act to operate beyond the initial charter term, the school must seek and obtain renewal of its charter.²⁴

A school seeking renewal of its charter must submit a renewal application to the charter entity to which the original charter application was submitted.²⁵ As one such charter entity, the New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”) institutes a renewal application process that adheres to the Act’s renewal standards:

- A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in its charter;
- A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private;

²³ See § 2850 of the Charter Schools Act of 1998.

²⁴ See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

²⁵ See generally §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4).

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

Where the NYCDOE approves a renewal application, it is required under the Act to submit the application and a proposed charter to the Board of Regents for its review and approval.²⁶

B. NYCDOE's Charter Renewal Process

The expiration of charters and their renewal based on a compelling record of success is the linchpin of charter school accountability. The NYCDOE's processes and procedures reflect this philosophy and therefore meet the objectives of the Act.²⁷

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

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

1. Has your school been an academic success?
2. Has your school been a viable organization?
3. Has your school complied with applicable laws and regulations?

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

This report contains the findings and recommendations of the NYCDOE regarding a school's application for charter renewal. This report is based on a cumulative record of the school's progress during its charter term, including but not limited to oversight visits, annual reports,

²⁶ § 2852(5)

and formal correspondence between the school and its authorizing entities, all of which are conducted in order to identify areas of weakness and to help the school to address them. Additionally, the NYCDOE incorporates into this report its findings from the renewal application process, which includes a written application, completion of student achievement data templates, and a school visit by the Charter Schools Accountability and Support team of the NYCDOE (“NYCDOE CSAS”).

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

Part 7: The CSAS Accountability Framework

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

To help NYC DOE authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the CSAS team has developed an Accountability Framework built around four essential questions for charter school renewal:

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

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

What follows is a framework that outlines strands, indicators, and potential evidence for each of the four essential questions. The framework identifies what CSAS looks at in determining whether a school is successful enough to earn a new charter term, with or without conditions. As schools use the Accountability Framework, they should remember that charter schools exist to deliver improved student achievement for the students they serve, particularly at-risk students, so they can be high-quality choices for families. This reminder should help a school apply this framework to its own performance analysis, underscoring the state and city’s commitment to superior academic performance as the most important factor in a school’s performance.

1. Is the School an Academic Success?

1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

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

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

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

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

1b. Mission and Academic Goals

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

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

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

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

1c. Responsive Education Program

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

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

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

- Instructional planning documents (alignments, scope and sequences, curriculum maps, unit and lesson plans, etc)
- Student/teacher schedules
- Classroom observations
- Student Intervention / Response to Intervention program description and resources
- Special Education/ELL progress monitoring documentation
- Interim assessment results
- Student and teacher portfolios
- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation
- Professional development plans and resources
- School calendar and daily schedules
- DOE School Surveys and internal school satisfaction surveys
- Instructional leader and staff interviews

1d. Learning Environment

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

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

- Provide opportunities for students to actively engage in their own learning and in the life of the school
- Have a plan with formal or informal structures or programs in place that provide students opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens (for example: a character education, citizenship, or community involvement or service program)

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

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

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

2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

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

- Have a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations, with clear lines of accountability for the Board, school leadership and all staff
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate officers, committees, and a purposeful blend of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter
- Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly but not limited to open-meeting laws and conflict of interest regulations, and is fully compliant with its Board approved by-laws (number of meetings, quorum, posting of calendar, agenda and minutes)
- Have a defined process for Board reflection on effectiveness, assessing developing needs, and plan for professional growth
- Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time and despite circumstance
- Implements a school leadership structure that is aligned with charter and that is sufficient to fulfill school's mission and achieve its accountability goals and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization is identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implements a process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, and evaluating the

effectiveness of the school's staff that is clearly defined in staff handbook

- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers, including both formal and informal observations

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

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, calendar of meetings, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Board resources for evaluating school leadership and staff, including rubric/performance metrics
- Board resources for self-reflection and professional growth
- Board development plan
- Board interviews
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar
- Professional development plan for leadership staff
- School leadership and staff interviews

2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

- Create and maintain a healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered, and aligned with school mission and values
- Implement flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- Encourage professional conversations about effective performance and quality instruction among staff, through, for example, such means as regular and periodic teaming (grade level teams, data days, etc.) and peer observations
- Have systems in place to evaluate professional development effectiveness and provide ongoing support for school-wide and individual initiatives
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Engage parents actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- Develop strong community-based partnerships who support and advocate for the school
- Have a clear procedure for parents and staff to express concerns to school leadership and the Board, as appropriate, including a clearly articulated escalation path to authorizer

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

- DOE School Survey satisfaction parent, teacher, and, if appropriate student results
- Internal satisfaction surveys
- Staff handbook
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- School Professional Development Plan and staff feedback on professional development events
- Resources for evaluations and observations, scheduled opportunities for professional collaboration, staff feedback on professional development events
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent/Student Handbook
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)

2c. Financial and Operational Health

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

- Consistently meet student enrollment and retention targets
- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, as school leadership and Board levels, in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to short- and long-term decision-making
- Have clearly established policies and procedures for overall fiscal and operational health of the school (onboarding of all new staff, record-keeping, processing requests of HR services, application and enrollment calls, visitors, volunteers, etc.)
- Maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Receive consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, have strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school design and academic program
- Ensure a safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage

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

- School budget, P&Ls, and monthly/quarterly cash-flow reports
- Financial leader(s) job description, resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Financial audits
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships
- Operational policies and procedures, including training resources
- Staff turnover and retention records
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- School safety plan
- Appropriate insurance documents

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

3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

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

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

- Authorized charter and signed agreement
- Charter revision request approval and documentation
- School mission
- School policies and procedures
- Annual Site Visit reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership, Board, staff and community interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting

- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location²⁸ or are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages for enrollment and retention
- Implement school policies related to student discipline and promotion and retention that are fully compliant with laws and regulations related to students with disabilities and due process regulations
- Conduct an independently verified fair and open lottery and manage with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employ instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and certification requirements

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

- School reporting documents
- School's Annual Report
- Student recruitment plan and resources
- Student management policies and promotion and retention policies
- Family/Student handbook
- Student discipline records
- Parent complaint/grievance records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Demographic data (school, district, and other as appropriate)
- Staff roster, fingerprint clearance for all staff, certification status of all instructional staff

3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

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

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

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

²⁸ School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

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

4a. School Expansion or Model Replication

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

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

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

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Charter (replication) Application
- Leadership and Board interviews

4b. Organizational Sustainability

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

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

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

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organization chart
- Staff rosters
- Staff handbook
- Leadership and staff interviews
- Budget

4c. School or Model Improvements

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

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

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

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) with partners or important vendors

Part 8: NYC DOE School Progress Reports

Please see the attached progress reports for this school.

Part 9: Annual Site Visit Report

Please see below the historical annual site visit reports for this school.



**Charter School Annual Site Visit Report
Charter Schools Accountability and Support
2011-2012**

BRONX COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

MARCH 2012

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Bronx Community Charter School (Bronx Community) is an elementary school serving approximately 251 students from Kindergarten through fourth grade in the 2011-12 school year.²⁹ The school is in the fourth year of its first charter term and plans to expand to fifth grade during its current charter term (ending in 2013), with eventual expansion plans through grade eight by adding one grade per year if approved for renewal.³⁰ It has not stated any plans for replication during its current or next charter term. The school is currently split-sited, with both campuses located in private space in District 10. The school's student body includes 72.8% students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, 4.9% English Language Learners, and 12.8% special education students.³¹

The school reported a low student turnover rate (3.6%) from the beginning of the year through February 29, 2012.³² There are currently 152 students on its waitlist.³³ The average attendance rate for school year 2011-12 was 95%.³⁴

Bronx Community has received only one NYC DOE Progress Report thus far (in 2010-11), for which it earned a C.³⁵ The school received above average scores on the 2010-11 NYC DOE School Survey in all categories (Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement, Safety and Respect), with 52% of parents and 95% of teachers responding. The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability measures.³⁶

Bronx Community Charter School is an independent charter school not associated with a charter management organization (CMO) or other parent organization. The school has had the same two co-directors, Martha Andrews and Sasha Wilson, since its founding.

Annual Review Process Overview:

²⁹ Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (2/28/12)

³⁰ NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

³¹ NYC DOE ATS system, April 2012; the school's self-reported numbers (2/28/12) are similar to those from the ATS system pull with regard to students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (74%; 186 out of 251) and special education students (11.6%; 29 out of 251), but vary with regard to English Language Learners (9.6%; 24 out of 251)

³² Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (2/28/12)

³³ Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (2/28/12)

³⁴ Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (2/28/12)

³⁵ NYC DOE Progress Report webpage: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm>

³⁶ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

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

The following experts participated in the review of this school on March 6, 2012:

- Gabrielle Mosquera, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE CSAS
- Laurie Pendleton, Consultant to NYC DOE CSAS

Part 2: Findings

Areas of Strength:

- The school's project-based, hands-on instructional model is evident throughout all grade levels, and its co-teaching structure is being implemented consistently in classrooms.
 - A second grade class was observed constructing bar graphs using the favorite foods of their classmates. Third grade classrooms were working in pairs to create fractions of different sizes and describing the models to each other. A second grade writing workshop focused on creating a persuasive letter based on something students would like to see changed. In this lesson, the teacher shared an engaging model letter and asked students for feedback.
 - The school focuses on teaching students to be deliberate thinkers who defend what they think and support each other in learning. In a third grade classroom students were observed sharing ideas for how to accomplish a task. One student asked another, "Can you help me make this?" Another answered, "Here's an idea for how to do it." A teacher in this same classroom asked a student to explain their procedure for tackling a math problem. At the close of the explanation another student said, "I did it a different way." The teacher helped the class compare both procedures.
 - All of the classroom instruction observed emphasized student reflection. Teachers in multiple classrooms asked students to share their thinking with their classmates. When a wrong answer was shared in a fourth grade math class, the teacher asked the student to rethink his steps to see where he might have gone wrong.

- Strong expectations for both academics and behavior are delivered through a supportive environment. Observed redirection of student behavior was instructional and the tone of delivery was one of respect. Clear expectations for behavior were shared and reinforced with students through such teacher comments as, “What are learners doing now?” “Please explain to me what your job is right now,” “How can I help you?” and “Excellent choice!”
- Co-teachers share the instructional weight equally and with intention. In the fourth grade writing class, one teacher was observed supporting individuals as they worked on their writing assignment while another was meeting with a small group of students. In the second grade classroom, the teachers conferred with each other to make decisions about how best to adjust the lesson to the needs of the students. The Kindergarten classroom had a small group of students out of the room working on science exploration with a teaching assistant while the co-teachers held small group instruction and conducted individual assessments.
- The school has increased its focus on using data intentionally to increase support of targeted students.
 - The school assesses all students using Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) and Words Their Way, and this year added Fountas and Pinnell at grades 3-4 three times a year. This data is then analyzed by the school’s leadership, teaching teams and literacy specialists to determine how to best meet the needs of both individual students and grade levels. The co-directors meet biweekly with teachers to lead discussions about student growth, create student growth plans, and track student progress. School leaders also coordinate the work of the learning specialists as well as special education and ELL support.
 - Based on research from the Teachers College at Columbia University, the school recalibrated its definition of “on grade level” for its self-created internal assessments, leading to more students being identified as performing below grade level than in previous years. However, both the school leaders and the teachers feel this move has resulted in a clearer understanding of the challenges facing their students. The school prepared a document for parents that clearly explains the change in assessments and helps parents understand their student’s current level of learning as well as their goals.
 - Teachers interviewed report there is a lot more data available this year and the electronic collection method is helpful. One teacher noted that data “provides a clear picture of where students are and I find it useful and teacher friendly.” Another added that the data tools are helpful and not burdensome.
 - The school has undertaken a thoughtful plan in response to state assessment data from 2011. All students in the 3rd and 4th grades took practice reading and math tests in early November and again in January. The teachers helped students understand the structure of the test and questioning strategies. Teachers have also worked with the literacy and math specialists to create lessons focused on specific skills found on the assessment. Practice tests show growth from November to January. On the third grade multiple-choice math, 50% of students scored a 3 or 4 in January compared to 16% in November. On the ELA for 3rd grade, 40% of students scored a 3 or 4, compared to 34% in November. The 4th grade results are not as strong as the 3rd grade. The 4th grade math practice test shows 28% receiving a 3 or 4 which is lower than last year’s actual exam results for this cohort. In response, the school used this test data to identify a group of students in the approaching category. This group has been receiving

intensive instruction during the test preparation period as well as additional targeted support. 44% of 4th graders scored a 3 or 4 in ELA compared to 30% on the spring assessment.

- The school has cultivated a strong professional learning community with a focus on improving instruction and meeting the needs of all students.
 - The school's co-directors are instructionally knowledgeable and teachers report both leaders provide tailored and meaningful feedback to them aligned with the school's mission. The co-directors observe each teacher three times a year and provide extensive written feedback. Teacher evaluations are collaborative and focus on the improvement of teaching and learning. There appears to be a great deal of trust between teachers and administrators. Teachers interviewed shared that they appreciate the feedback they receive and find it helpful in improving their practice. The co-directors provide consistent messages about expectations to teaching teams.
 - Teachers have ample time to meet to analyze data, plan lessons, and discuss student growth. These meetings are supported by one of the co-directors. One teacher reported she feels they are getting better and better at academic support meetings where they target individual students and create concrete goals for improvement.
 - Interviewed teachers reported that Professional Development is thoughtfully planned and meets their needs. A current focus of PD has been the Common Core standards. Teachers are in the process of exploring what "Response to Literature" looks like across the grade levels. The teachers described a recent PD on how to improve feedback to students which resulted in the use of a Google document to collect ideas. Interviewed teachers find such structures to be very supportive and improve communication throughout the school.
 - The school attempts to internally promote by hiring student teachers as full-time teachers after they complete their placement, and additionally provides a two week pre-service training in August. According to school leaders, both of these practices are intended to ensure the continuation of the mission and common expectations.

- The school has clear structures in place to encourage open communication with families.
 - The school provides narrative student Progress Reports to parents three times a year at parent-teacher conferences. These reports are aligned with Common Core measures and provide extensive information on the work habits, strengths, interests, and goals for each student. These conferences are spread out over the year and have different foci; the fall conference concentrates on student development and goal-setting, while the March and June conferences cover academic progress. Teachers interviewed also reported increased informal parent communication this year around goal-setting and classroom practices.
 - This year the school identified students who could be retained much earlier than before and began communicating this to parents in January. Communication included both a phone call and a letter describing the specific areas challenging each student (e.g., reading level, sight word bank, decoding). School leaders report that this specificity has helped differentiate each retention conversation and set progress goals, and that parents have been largely receptive this.
 - The school holds a community event each month to encourage connection among its parents, who come from a variety of different neighborhoods.

School leaders stated that Bronx Community's Community Council (comprised of parents, guardians, and other community members) meets regularly and collaborates with them on ideas for events.

- The school's operations have continued to run smoothly this year despite new challenges presented by the school being split-sited this year, with grades K-2 in one site and grades 3-4 in an annex site several blocks away.
 - School leaders made several intentional changes to accommodate the split-siting, the foremost of which was dividing their own supervisory duties. (Sasha Wilson oversees grades K-2 at the main site and Martha Andrews oversees grades 3-4 at the annex.) School leaders have also placed adequate numbers of support staff in each location and divided the schedules of instructional specialists and specials teachers between each building. Additionally, the school day begins and ends with all grades together at the main site, and the school uses All-School Study and All-School Sing to further unify the grades.
 - School leaders report that Bronx Community is in excellent financial health. As of December 31, 2011 the school had close to \$2 million in net assets. They have designed a new building they plan to move into after the start of the 2012-2013 school year. According to school leaders, a construction consultant visits the building site every two weeks, and the school's annex lease will be paid for by its new landlord until the new building is ready for move-in.

Areas of Growth:

- The school should continue to refine instructional practice to advance learning outcomes. Its first year NYS Assessment results, while at only one grade, were below both district and city averages in ELA and in Math.
 - In third grade, 29.4% of students scored a Level 3 or above on the 2011 ELA assessment, compared to 37.7% of district third graders and 48.1% of citywide third graders.
 - Additionally, 35.3% of third graders scored a Level 3 or above on the 2011 Math assessment, compared to 45.6% of district third graders and 54.8% of citywide third graders.
- The school should continue to refine the use of data by using current assessment practices and resulting data to project growth on New York State assessments and to make mid-course corrections when the data are not showing positive trends.
 - The school reports substantial growth on student assessment data from fall to winter of this school:
 - In first grade, fall reading assessment data showed 30% of students meeting or exceeding grade level expectations. According to winter results, this number has risen to 54%.
 - Similar growth has been seen in second grade, with fall results showing 36% of students at or above grade level and 52% at reading level on winter assessments.
 - The percentage of third grade students at grade level grew from 30% to 48%. Data for the fourth grade comparison was not yet available at the time of the visit.
 - Although this growth is significant, the school should compare results on internal assessments to same student results on the NYS assessments,

- where appropriate, to establish validity of internal assessments and expand use as a predictor and value as a diagnostic for targeting instruction.
- As data collects over time, longitudinal analysis can be done to determine what proficiency scores on second or first grade correlate to success on third grade state assessments.
 - The school's move to the Rediker Student information System in the 2011-2012 school year is an opportunity to develop systems for tracking student data, viewing longitudinal progress and comparing subgroup performance. The school is encouraged to use this system to track and analyze data about student growth from year to year.
 - Several teachers interviewed stated that although time is currently set aside around assessments to analyze and use data, they wish they had even more time to collaborate.
- The school should continue to should continue to enact measures to be in full compliance with the 2010 amended Charter Schools Act as it relates to recruitment and retention of Special Education students, students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, and ELL students. The school's proportions of two of these high-needs groups is strong, with the percentages of students eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch (72.8%) and Special Education students (12.8%) are comparable or close to comparable to those of the District 10 (75.2% for Free or Reduced Price Lunch; 16.7%, for Special Education).³⁷
 - However, Bronx Community's ELL population currently comprises 4.9% of its overall student population, which is significantly lower than the 21.2% average ELL population of District 10.³⁸ The school is encouraged to continue documenting both its outreach to new ELL students and considering new strategies if ELL enrollment doesn't improve or improves only marginally, as well as monitoring the academic progress made among current ELLs.

³⁷ NYC DOE ATS System, April 2012

³⁸ NYC DOE ATS System, April 2012

Part 3: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

The CSAS Accountability Framework

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

5. Is the school an academic success?
6. Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?
7. Is the school compliant with its charter and all applicable law and regulations?
8. What are the school's plans for its next charter term?

1. Is the School an Academic Success?

1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

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

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

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

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

1b. Mission and Academic Goals

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

- Have an animating mission statement that staff, students and community embrace
- Set ambitious academic and non-academic goals that entire school community knows and embraces

- Have processes for regular monitoring and reporting on progress toward school goals
- Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring data

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

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

1c. Responsive Education Program

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

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

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

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

- DOE School Surveys and internal school satisfaction surveys
- Instructional leader and staff interviews

1d. Learning Environment

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

- Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best efforts
- Use a comprehensive approach to student management, including positive behavioral expectations and a clear discipline policy to build and sustain a safe, orderly, and supportive classroom environment
- Provide for safe, respectful, efficient transitions, hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.
- Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and supported
- Provide opportunities for students to actively engage in their own learning and in the life of the school
- Have a plan with formal or informal structures or programs in place that provide students opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens (for example: a character education, citizenship, or community involvement or service program)

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

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

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

2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

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

- Have a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations, with clear lines of accountability for the Board, school leadership and all staff
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate officers, committees, and a purposeful blend of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter
- Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly but not limited to open-meeting laws and conflict of interest regulations, and is fully compliant with its Board approved by-laws (number of meetings, quorum, posting of calendar, agenda and minutes)
- Have a defined process for Board reflection on effectiveness, assessing developing needs, and plan for professional growth
- Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time and despite circumstance
- Implements a school leadership structure that is aligned with charter and that is sufficient to fulfill school's mission and achieve its accountability goals and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization is identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implements a process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's staff that is clearly defined in staff handbook
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers, including both formal and informal observations

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

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, calendar of meetings, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Board resources for evaluating school leadership and staff, including rubric/performance metrics
- Board resources for self-reflection and professional growth
- Board development plan
- Board interviews
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar
- Professional development plan for leadership staff
- School leadership and staff interviews

2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

- Create and maintain a healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered,

and aligned with school mission and values

- Implement flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- Encourage professional conversations about effective performance and quality instruction among staff, through, for example, such means as regular and periodic teaming (grade level teams, data days, etc.) and peer observations
- Have systems in place to evaluate professional development effectiveness and provide ongoing support for school-wide and individual initiatives
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Engage parents actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- Develop strong community-based partnerships who support and advocate for the school
- Have a clear procedure for parents and staff to express concerns to school leadership and the Board, as appropriate, including a clearly articulated escalation path to authorizer

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

- DOE School Survey satisfaction parent, teacher, and, if appropriate student results
- Internal satisfaction surveys
- Staff handbook
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- School Professional Development Plan and staff feedback on professional development events
- Resources for evaluations and observations, scheduled opportunities for professional collaboration, staff feedback on professional development events
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent/Student Handbook
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)

2c. Financial and Operational Health

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

- Consistently meet student enrollment and retention targets
- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, as school leadership and Board levels, in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to short- and long-term decision-making
- Have clearly established policies and procedures for overall fiscal and operational health of the school (onboarding of all new staff, record-keeping, processing requests of HR services, application and enrollment calls, visitors, volunteers, etc.)
- Maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Receive consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, have strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school design and academic program
- Ensure a safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage

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

- School budget, P&Ls, and monthly/quarterly cash-flow reports
- Financial leader(s) job description, resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Financial audits
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships
- Operational policies and procedures, including training resources
- Staff turnover and retention records
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- School safety plan
- Appropriate insurance documents

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

3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

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

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

- Authorized charter and signed agreement
- Charter revision request approval and documentation
- School mission
- School policies and procedures
- Annual Site Visit reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership, Board, staff and community interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location³⁹ or are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages for enrollment and retention
- Implement school policies related to student discipline and promotion and retention that are fully compliant with laws and regulations related to students with disabilities and due process regulations
- Conduct an independently verified fair and open lottery and manage with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employ instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and certification requirements

³⁹ School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

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

- School reporting documents
- School's Annual Report
- Student recruitment plan and resources
- Student management policies and promotion and retention policies
- Family/Student handbook
- Student discipline records
- Parent complaint/grievance records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Demographic data (school, district, and other as appropriate)
- Staff roster, fingerprint clearance for all staff, certification status of all instructional staff

3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

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

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

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

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

4a. School Expansion or Model Replication

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

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

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

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Charter (replication) Application
- Leadership and Board interviews

4b. Organizational Sustainability

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

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

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

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organization chart
- Staff rosters
- Staff handbook
- Leadership and staff interviews
- Budget

4c. School or Model Improvements

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

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

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

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) with partners or important vendors



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

BRONX COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

MAY 2011

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

52 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Bronx Community Charter School is an elementary school serving approximately 176 students from grade kindergarten through grade 3 in the 2010-2011 school year.⁴⁰ The school opened in 2008 with grades kindergarten through 1. It has plans to grow to serve students in grades kindergarten through 5.⁴¹ It is currently housed in private space in District 10.⁴²

The school population comprises 36.4% Black, 58.9% Hispanic, 1.7% White, 1.2% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 0.57% Multiracial. 80.1% of students receive free/reduced price lunch, compared to 79.0% for the district.⁴³ The student body includes 13.1% English language learners (ELL) and 10.2% special education (SPED) students, compared to 22.8% ELL and 17.3% SPED for the district.⁴⁴

The school has not yet received a Progress Report grade. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.0%.⁴⁵ The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.⁴⁶

Annual Review Process Overview:

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

The following experts participated in the review of this school on May 26, 2011:

- Rick Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSO
- Jessica Fredston-Hermann, Analyst, NYC DOE CSO
- Sylvia Rabiner, Consultant

⁴⁰ NYC DOE ATS system

⁴¹ NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

⁴² NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

⁴³ Demographic Data drawn from NYC DOE ATS System

⁴⁴ NYC DOE ATS system; data pulled on June 30, 2011

⁴⁵ NYC DOE School Progress Report

⁴⁶ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

Part 2: Findings

Areas of Strength

- The school has developed a strong, student-centered learning environment that utilizes a project-based, hands-on instructional model.
 - The school's environment is clean and print-rich, with multiple examples of student work and artwork displayed in classrooms and hallways. Abundant teaching tools include word walls and reading and writing strategies.
 - The school has a dynamic, hands-on project-based inquiry approach to instruction consistent with its belief that children learn best as active participants. Students are engaged in and excited about their work. Among the school's current projects are the Kindergarten Family Study, First Grade Neighborhood Study, and Second Grade Food Study. The research question the Second Grade students explored was "Where Do We Get Our Food?" Their research included visiting a Whole Foods store, Arthur Avenue markets, and Chinatown. Third Graders visited the Transportation Museum and Queens Museum as part of a project on studying New York City one hundred years ago.
 - There is emphasis on reading and writing in all grades. In the kindergarten class students were observed writing and illustrating stories about personal experiences they would "publish"; first graders were observed creating a table of contents for stories they were writing; and in a second grade classroom a group of students was observed sharing stories with a teacher who was helping them develop their ideas.
 - There are clear and consistent norms and expectations for cooperative student behavior posted in all classrooms, among these the motto "We are first graders. We work together. We play together. We learn together." Clear guidelines for collaborative student communication are posted in classrooms, such as "I agree with you because..." and "I disagree with you because." In a third grade classroom, a group of students was observed deciding which artifacts to put in their classroom museum. One girl told another "I disagree with you because I think we can say if someone touches a light bulb they can get a shock."
 - Time is set aside for Work Choice electives in all grades during which students play a role in the selection of activities which include sewing, model building, woodworking, art, cooking, and examining how appliances work. In kindergarten, students participate in a number of different activities; by the time they reach second and third grade, they are asked to begin specializing according to their interests.
 - The school provides a range of supports for at-risk students, including two CTT classrooms and support of a special education provider who works with students with mandated services two days a week. School leadership reports a good relationship with the local CSE.

- There is a strong professional learning community ethos with high levels of trust and collaboration between administration and staff, and among staff.
 - Teachers are provided with time every Monday from 4-5 pm and Friday from 2-4 pm for professional development as well as 45-50 minutes within the school day for grade team meetings once a week. This time is used for planning, reviewing and revising curriculum, reflecting on daily lessons, developing strategies for co-teaching, and working with the

literacy and math specialists. Teachers meet for two weeks in August prior to the opening of school to do additional curriculum planning.

- The school is committed to strengthening its co-teaching model to provide more individual targeted student support. Consultants from Goldmansour and Rutherford provided a summer workshop and follow-up visits to support teachers in the most effective use of two teachers to a classroom. Observed lesson plans included directives for both teachers in the room, and co-teachers were observed providing targeted small-group support as well as working with students one-on-one.
 - One important aspect of professional development is the system of intensive three week cycles aligned to school-wide initiatives during which math and literacy specialists work closely with teachers to plan, conduct targeted observations, and provide feedback both to individual teachers and to teacher teams. A key aspect of each cycle is the lab site structure during which a grade team plans and participates in teaching, observing and debriefing a lesson. On the day of the visit, reviewers observed a second grade lab site, during which two teachers conducted a mini lesson on spelling patterns while other teachers observed to determine which aspects of the lessons were concise and which repetitive. One teacher interviewed commented that “Lab site is a great opportunity to work on what the teacher needs to focus on and get specific feedback.”
 - There is committed, capable school leadership monitoring the school mission and providing effective guidance to staff and students. School leadership and teachers are self-reflective and open to feedback with the goal of improving the school. Teacher evaluations are collaborative, engaging teachers in determining the areas in which they need to further develop their instructional practice around the question “What Makes a Good Teacher”. School leaders provide extensive written feedback following classroom observations.
 - The school is committed to developing teacher talent through intentional support. The school has worked with student teachers from Bank Street, LIU, Sarah Lawrence, and City College, and has hired a number of student teachers to work at the school at the end of their placements.
- The school is developing a culture of data-driven decision making and employs tools to monitor student performance and inform teaching and learning.
 - The school employs the Terra Nova, the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment), a Spelling Inventory, a Narrative Writing assessment and Word Study (for Kindergarten and first grade). Math assessments are given at the conclusion of each math unit. The school is currently exploring more effective math assessments in conjunction with other charter schools.
 - Teachers use formal and teacher-designed assessments to guide the placement of students in flexible reading and math groups, as well as to identify students in need of further academic intervention.
 - The school is launching a flexible online program – Rediker System- which is customized and consistent with the school’s instructional goals to support nuanced and long-term data collection including individual student portfolios, narrative and work samples.
 - The school maintains a consistent connection to parents and mobilizes parents within the school community as conduits for student success.
 - There are many activities designed to engage parents: a family parade and orientation for the opening of school, an arts festival, classroom tours, and monthly workshops on topics of interest to parents.

- Parents are informally engaged in school decision making, such as the architectural design of the new school building. A parent representative sits on the Board of Trustees, and parents have formed a Community Council. School leadership stated that parents on the Community Council have worked hard this year to coordinate a number of fundraisers for the school, and added that parent involvement in general at the school is “terrific.”
 - Parents receive a biweekly newsletter from teachers and a monthly newsletter from the school directors.
 - The school provides narrative reports for parents in November, March and June. The teachers use a range of data to write extensive reports detailing the strengths, interests, social development, work habits, and goals for each student. Twice a year teachers meet with parents for conferences to set goals for students and review their progress.
 - The importance of families to the school community is visually represented in the school through the “Meet the Bronx Community Families” posters in the hallway, and discussions and displays from the Kindergarten Family Study Project in which kindergarteners bring their families in to class to be interviewed.
- There is careful stewardship of public funds to create and sustain a quality school of choice option in the community.
 - The school reports a conservative forecasting approach with seven-year budget projections and sound oversight by its board finance committee to give school confidence in its expansion plans.

Areas of Growth

- The school should continue to refine its outreach strategies for recruitment of ELL/SPED students and document its efforts for ongoing monitoring of effectiveness in reaching comparable percentages with its CSD.
 - The student body includes 13.1% English language learners (ELL) and 10.2% special education (SPED) students, both of which are lower than the district averages of 22.8% ELL and 17.3% SPED.⁴⁷
- As the school continues to grow and expand, it should continue to focus on sustainability, both of structural supports and school culture.
 - The school is encouraged to consider a plan for distributed leadership to maintain its strong school culture.
- The school is encouraged to continue its current work to advance instruction to improve student learning and improve student achievement results.
 - At the time of the visit, the school stated that it was looking into purchasing a Student Information System for the 2011-12 school year. The school should continue to develop systems for tracking student data, viewing longitudinal progress, and comparing subgroup performance. The school is also encouraged to focus on how the data collected is used by teachers in the classroom for targeted differentiated instruction and small-group support.

⁴⁷ NYC DOE ATS system; data pulled on June 30, 2011

- The school is encouraged to continue refining its instructional approach to ensure that instruction reliably results in learning that both improves students' state assessment results and secures the higher-level learning that comes with project-based instruction and authentic assessments, both of which are critical to the school's mission. School efforts in content development, aligning student work against expectations contained in the Common Core, and more effective use of technology to meet the needs of all learners, particularly in addressing skills-based deficiencies, are all promising initiatives and should be continued and monitored for success.

Part 3: Framing Questions

FRAMING QUESTIONS:

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

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

Annual Site Visit Rubric:

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

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

- School is current with all safety recruitments and drills.
- AED machines are in operation and school staff is trained in CPR