



**THE RENAISSANCE CHARTER SCHOOL  
RENEWAL REPORT**

**2014 – 2015 SCHOOL YEAR  
MAY 2015**

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## Part 1: Summary of Renewal Recommendation

### I. Charter School Overview:

#### Background Information

The Renaissance Charter School	
Board Chair(s)	Sandra Geyer
School Leader(s)	Stacey Gauthier
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 30
Physical Address(es)	35-59 81st Street, Queens
Facility Owner(s)	DOE
School Opened For Instruction	2000-2001
Current Charter Term Expiration Date	5/17/2015
Current Authorized Grade Span	K-12
Current Authorized Enrollment	541
Proposed New Charter Term	4 years [May 18, 2015 – June 30, 2019]
Proposed Authorized Grade Span for New Charter Term	K-12
Proposed Authorized Enrollment for New Charter Term	541
Proposed Sections per Grade for New Charter Term	Grades K-4: 1 section per grade; Grades 5-12: 2 sections per grade

## Overview of School-Specific Data

### School Evaluation of Academic Goals as stated in Annual Report to NYSED and Renewal Application to NYC DOE

Academic Goal Analysis					
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Cumulative Charter Term Total
Total Achievable Goals	18	18	18	18	72
# Met	9	11	8	8	36
# Partially Met	5	5	2	0	12
# Not Met	2	0	2	5	9
# Not Applicable *	2	2	6	5	15
% Met	50%	61%	44%	44%	51%
% Partially Met	28%	28%	11%	0%	17%
% Not Met	11%	0%	11%	28%	13%
% Not Applicable *	11%	11%	33%	28%	19%
% Met of All Applicable Goals	56%	69%	67%	62%	63%

\* Some goals may not be applicable in all years. For example, goals related to the NYC Progress Report are not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year as Progress Reports were not issued that year.

### ES/MS students scoring at or above Level 3 on NYS assessments, compared to CSD, NYC and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	54.9%	60.8%	28.0%	30.5%
CSD 30	49.3%	52.9%	30.7%	31.9%
Difference from CSD 30 *	5.6	7.9	-2.7	-1.4
NYC	43.9%	46.9%	26.4%	28.4%
Difference from NYC *	11.0	13.9	1.6	2.1
New York State **	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	2.1	5.7	-3.1	-0.1

% Proficient in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	74.0%	79.9%	37.9%	39.9%
CSD 30	64.7%	68.7%	35.4%	40.1%
Difference from CSD 30 *	9.3	11.2	2.5	-0.2
NYC	57.3%	60.0%	29.6%	34.2%
Difference from NYC *	16.7	19.9	8.2	5.7
New York State **	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	10.7	15.1	6.8	3.7

\* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself served. CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

\*\* New York State proficiency rates were taken from data.nysed.gov.

### Student improvement on the state tests compared to other students

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile - English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School – All Students</b>	<b>64.0%</b>	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>52.0%</b>	<b>57.0%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	12.7%	16.7%	9.9%	27.9%
City Percent of Range- All Students	31.9%	40.9%	8.0%	25.7%
<b>The Renaissance Charter School – School's Lowest Third</b>	<b>67.0%</b>	<b>67.0%</b>	<b>61.0%</b>	<b>60.0%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	13.9%	29.9%	5.5%	3.3%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	19.0%	39.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile - Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School – All Students</b>	<b>72.0%</b>	<b>63.0%</b>	<b>53.0%</b>	<b>54.0%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	52.8%	38.8%	13.1%	24.1%
City Percent of Range- All Students	64.5%	57.0%	15.5%	24.7%
<b>The Renaissance Charter School – School's Lowest Third</b>	<b>73.0%</b>	<b>70.0%</b>	<b>53.0%</b>	<b>59.5%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	54.7%	53.8%	0.0%	14.0%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	61.2%	60.8%	0.0%	6.2%

A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A peer/city percent of range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of their peer group/city.

## Closing the Achievement Gap

Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities *	21.4%	37.5%	44.8%	33.3%
English Language Learner Students	20.0%	37.5%	24.0%	23.8%
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	33.3%	48.9%	47.5%	39.6%
Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities *	42.9%	33.3%	41.4%	43.3%
English Language Learner Students	50.0%	45.8%	20.0%	42.9%
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	32.4%	30.3%	48.6%	36.5%

\* Defined as students with a placement in Self-Contained, ICT, or SETSS.

## HS Performance Compared to Peer and NYC Averages

4-year Graduation Rate				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	91.8%	90.2%	88.7%	85.7%
NYC *	65.7%	64.7%	66.0%	68.4%
Difference from NYC	26.1	25.5	22.7	17.3
6-year Graduation Rate				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	94.1%	92.2%	95.9%	96.1%
NYC *	72.6%	73.2%	73.0%	72.7%
Difference from NYC	21.5	19.0	22.9	23.4
College and Career Preparatory Course Index **				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	49.0%	52.9%	60.4%	83.7%
Peer Percent of Range	-	56.8%	64.9%	89.7%
City Percent of Range	-	70.3%	78.9%	100.0%

\* The New York State graduation rate calculation method was first adopted in NYC for the Cohort of 2001 (Class of 2005). The cohort consists of all students who first entered ninth grade in a given school year (e.g., the Cohort of 2005 entered ninth grade in the 2005-2006 school year). Graduates are defined as those students earning either a Local or Regents diploma and exclude those earning either a special education (IEP) diploma or GED.

\*\* The College and Career Preparatory Course Index score was not introduced until the 2010-2011 school year and peer and city percent of range scores were not available until the 2011-2012 school year. A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A peer/city percent of range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of their peer group/city.

## Weighted Regents Pass Rates

2014					
	English	Math	Science	Global History	U.S History
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	1.28	1.09	1.26	0.96	0.87
Peer Percent of Range	88.7%	39.8%	52.0%	52.9%	27.8%
City Percent of Range	90.2%	56.5%	57.9%	65.7%	47.1%
2013					
	English	Math	Science	Global History	U.S History
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	1.10	1.30	1.32	0.97	1.08
Peer Percent of Range	65.2%	70.2%	61.5%	60.8%	56.5%
City Percent of Range	70.0%	75.9%	59.6%	65.0%	66.0%
2012					
	English	Math	Science	Global History	U.S History
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	1.29	1.65	1.56	1.53	1.32
Peer Percent of Range	52.5%	69.1%	59.5%	63.5%	60.2%
City Percent of Range	54.5%	71.0%	59.9%	60.4%	59.1%
2011					
	English	Math	Science	Global History	U.S History
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	1.49	1.47	1.25	1.4	1.25
Peer Percent of Range	91.7%	52.5%	38.6%	53.6%	57.0%
City Percent of Range	82.1%	60.5%	46.4%	57.9%	58.6%

The Weighted Regents Pass Rate measures students' progress since the corresponding eighth grade test, with more weight given to students with lower proficiency based on eight grade test results.

A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A peer/city percent of range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of their peer group/city.

## Credit Accumulation

% 1st-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	90.4%	86.3%	88.5%	100.0%
Peer Percent of Range	69.8%	65.6%	62.9%	100.0%
City Percent of Range	82.4%	72.5%	74.6%	100.0%
% 2nd-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	94.1%	83.7%	88.5%	88.5%
Peer Percent of Range	85.7%	61.7%	70.7%	70.8%
City Percent of Range	89.9%	70.0%	77.9%	78.3%
% 3rd-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	92.2%	90.6%	84.6%	83.3%
Peer Percent of Range	84.1%	78.7%	63.1%	58.6%
City Percent of Range	88.7%	84.1%	72.0%	70.4%

A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A peer/city percent of range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of their peer group/city.

## Closing the Achievement Gap

4-year Weighted Diploma Rate*				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities **	-	200.0%	-	-
English Language Learner Students	-	-	-	-
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	-	166.7%	175.0%	200.0%
College and Career Preparatory Course Index ***				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
School's Lowest Third	-	0.0%	25.0%	33.3%

\* The weighted diploma rate assigns a weight to each type of diploma based on the relative level of proficiency and college and career readiness indicated by the diploma type and based on certain student demographic characteristics.

\*\* Defined as students with a placement in Self-Contained, ICT, or SETSS.

\*\*\* The College and Career Preparatory Course Index score for the school's lowest third was not introduced until the 2011-2012 school year.

## II. Renewal Recommendation and Rationale

Based on the evidence presented herein and detailed below in Part II, the NYC DOE recommends a 4 year short term renewal.

### A. Academic Performance

At the time of this school's renewal, The Renaissance Charter School has demonstrated academic success.

#### **New York Charter Schools Act**

The New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 establishes a system of charter schools throughout New York State, with objectives that include:

#### **§ 2850 (2)**

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

Data available for The Renaissance Charter School indicates that the school has made progress towards meeting some of these objectives.

#### **Mission and Vision**

The Renaissance Charter School's mission is to provide a comprehensive academic program aligned with the New York State Common Core Learning Standards that fosters educated, responsible, humanistic young leaders who will through their own educational development and personal growth spark a renaissance in New York City and beyond. Its graduates will be global citizens with an abiding respect for peace, human rights, the environment, and sustainable development.

#### **School Specific Academic Performance**

The school entered its fifteenth year of charter operation with the 2014-2015 academic year. The school was last renewed in June 2010; as a result, the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) has four years of New York State (NYS) assessment data and four years of other academic data, such as data obtained through internal assessments and attendance information, to evaluate the academic achievement and progress of the students at The Renaissance Charter School over the retrospective charter term.

Annual aggregate English Language Arts (ELA) and math proficiency rates for The Renaissance Charter School have exceeded those of New York City in every year of the retrospective charter term; however, the gap between the school's performance and citywide performance on NYS assessments has narrowed over the last three school years. In addition, annual aggregate ELA and math proficiency rates for The Renaissance Charter School generally met or exceeded those of Community School District (CSD) 30 over the charter term,<sup>1</sup> though the school's proficiency rates fell below the CSD 30 proficiency rates on both assessments in the most recent year. Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, NYS assessments were aligned to the Common Core

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<sup>1</sup> Exceptions occurred in 2012-2013, when the school's aggregate ELA proficiency rate fell below the comparable rate for CSD 30, and in 2013-2014, when the school's aggregate ELA and math proficiency rates fell slightly below the comparable CSD 30 rates.

Learning Standards (CCLS). As such, proficiency rates for school years prior to the 2012-2013 are not directly comparable.

In 2012-2013, 37.9% of The Renaissance Charter School's students were proficient in math on the NYS assessments. The Renaissance Charter School's math proficiency was greater than that of 67% of all elementary/middle schools citywide. However, when compared to elementary/middle schools with student populations most like its own (i.e. peer schools), The Renaissance Charter School outperformed only 47% of similar schools. In addition, the school outperformed 60% of CSD 30 elementary/middle schools. In 2012-2013, 28.0% of The Renaissance Charter School's students demonstrated proficiency in NYS assessments in ELA. With this level of proficiency, The Renaissance Charter School outperformed 66% of all elementary/middle schools citywide. The Renaissance Charter School outperformed only 30% of its peer schools, though it did outperform 60% of CSD 30 elementary/middle schools.

The following year, in 2013-2014, the percent of students at The Renaissance Charter School who were proficient in math on the NYS assessments increased to 39.9%. For 2013-2014, The Renaissance Charter School's math proficiency was higher than 60% of all elementary/middle schools citywide. When compared to peer schools, The Renaissance Charter School outperformed only 30% of similar schools, yet the school outperformed 60% of CSD 30 elementary/middle schools. In 2013-2014, the percent of students at The Renaissance Charter School who demonstrated proficiency on NYS assessments in ELA also rose slightly to 30.5%. With this level of proficiency, The Renaissance Charter School outperformed 63% of all elementary/middle schools citywide, only 27% of its peer schools and 60% of elementary/middle schools in CSD 30.

In 2013-2014, The Renaissance Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was 57.0% with a City Percent of Range of 25.7%, however this only placed the school in the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile of all elementary/middle schools citywide.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the school's peer and CSD percentiles were 7% and 20%, respectively. This means that nearly all other elementary/middle schools in The Renaissance Charter School's peer group and the majority of elementary/middle schools in CSD 30 had ELA median adjusted growth percentiles greater than The Renaissance Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile in 2013-2014.

In 2013-2014, The Renaissance Charter School's math median adjusted growth percentile was 54.0% with a City Percent of Range of 24.7%, placing the school in the 15<sup>th</sup> percentile of elementary/middle schools citywide. The school's peer and CSD percentiles were 7% and 0%, respectively. This means that nearly all elementary/middle schools in The Renaissance Charter School's peer group and all other elementary/middle schools in CSD 30 had math median adjusted growth percentiles greater than The Renaissance Charter School's math median adjusted growth percentile in 2013-2014.

For the 2013-2014 school year, The Renaissance Charter School's four-year graduation rate was 85.7%. This rate was higher than the citywide average by 17.3 percentage points; however, it was also the lowest graduation rate the school had seen over the course of the charter term. The Renaissance Charter School experienced a year-over-year decline in its four-year graduation rate every year since the 2010-2011 academic year. The Renaissance Charter School's four-year graduation rate in 2013-2014 placed it in the 74<sup>th</sup> percentile of all high schools citywide. When compared to high schools with student populations most like its own (i.e. peer schools), The Renaissance Charter School outperformed 51% of similar schools. In the same year, 2013-2014, The Renaissance Charter School's six-year graduation rate was 96.1%, the highest six-year graduation rate the school reached during the current charter term. This rate was higher than the citywide average by 23.4 percentage points. The school's six-year graduation rate placed it in the

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<sup>2</sup> A City Percent of Range of 25.7% indicates that the school's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was below the average, but less than one standard deviation below the average. A percentile rank provides the percentage of schools that score lower than the school under consideration. A citywide percentile of 12% indicates that The Renaissance Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was higher than only 12% of all elementary/middle schools citywide in 2013-2014.

86<sup>th</sup> percentile of all high schools citywide. Similarly, when compared to peer schools, The Renaissance Charter School outperformed 82% of similar schools.

Credit accumulation is self-reported by charter schools to the NYC DOE. In all years of the retrospective charter term, The Renaissance Charter School's overall credit accumulation rates have been higher than both the average credit accumulation rates of its peer group schools and the average credit accumulation rates of all high schools citywide. The Peer and City Percent of Ranges for first, second and third year students were above 50% in all years, meaning that the school outperformed its peer average and the citywide average along each metric in all four academic years of the charter term for which data is available.<sup>3</sup>

In the most recent school year, 2013-2014, 100.0% of first year students at The Renaissance Charter School earned 10 or more credits, placing the school in the top 98% of all high schools citywide and in the 100<sup>th</sup> percentile of its peer group schools.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, 88.5% of second year students at The Renaissance Charter School earned 10 or more credits, placing the school in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of all high schools citywide and the 72<sup>nd</sup> percentile of its peer group schools. Finally, 83.3% of third year students at The Renaissance Charter School earned 10 or more credits, placing the school in the 68<sup>th</sup> percentile of all high schools citywide and the 53<sup>rd</sup> percentile of its peer group schools.

Weighted Regents pass rates in English, Math, Science, Global History and U.S. History have generally been at or above both the citywide averages and the averages for the school's peer group during the retrospective charter term.<sup>5</sup> However, peer and citywide comparisons show that the school performed less favorably in Math and U.S. History in the most recent school year. Peer comparisons further show that the weighted performance of students at The Renaissance Charter School fell compared to the weighted performance of students at peer schools in Math, Science, Global History and U.S. History between school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, as indicated by the Peer Percent of Range for the relevant Weighted Regents pass rates. Non-weighted Regents pass rates for students at The Renaissance Charter School declined between 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 in four exams, Integrated Algebra, Algebra 2/Trigonometry, Comprehensive English and U.S. History. However, the school's pass rate for the NYS Regents Living Environment exam has increased year-over-year since 2012-2013, reaching an 80.8% pass rate in 2013-2014.

Over the four years that data is available for the retrospective charter term, The Renaissance Charter School has met 63% of its applicable academic charter goals.<sup>6,7</sup> The Renaissance Charter School met eight of 13 applicable academic performance goals in its most recent year. Because of the move to Common Core Learning Standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not evaluate goals that measure a school's academic performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and math exams for the 2012-2013 school year. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, due to a change in state regulation, the NYC DOE will

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<sup>3</sup> A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A Percent of Range of 50.0% represents the average and indicates that the school's credit accumulation rate was equal to the average score for all high schools in the relevant comparison group.

<sup>4</sup> A percentile rank provides the percentage of schools that score lower than the school under consideration. A citywide percentile of 98%, for example, indicates that the school's credit accumulation rate was above 98% of all high schools citywide. A peer percentile of 100% indicates that the school's credit accumulation rate was above that of all of its peer schools.

<sup>5</sup> The only exceptions occurred in 2010-2011, when the school performed below both the citywide and its peer averages in Science, and in 2013-2014, when the school performed below the average of its peers in Math and below both the citywide and its peer averages in U.S. History.

<sup>6</sup> This calculation does not include goals which have not been evaluated (not applicable) either as a result of the goal no longer being measurable (e.g. NYC DOE Progress Report grades for 2013-14 school year forward) or the goal not yet measurable for the school at the time of the annual reporting (e.g. high school graduation rate for an academic year in which the school was not serving grade twelve students).

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core Learning Standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and math exams or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals for the 2012-2013 school year. Goals that compared the school to the Community School District performance were included in the analysis. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE will not include goals that are related to NYC DOE Progress Report Grades in its analysis of progress towards goals.

not evaluate goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two; further, due to the elimination of the accountability instrument, the DOE will not evaluate goals related to NYC DOE Progress Report grades beginning with the 2013-2014 school year. The school has demonstrated a trend of sustained high achievement of its stated charter goals over the four years of the charter term under review.

The school has shown evidence of a developed responsive education program and supportive learning environment. Reports from past NYC DOE visits to the school indicate that in the first two years of this charter term, the school provided a safe, orderly, and respectful learning environment. In a visit to the school in March 2012, reviewers noted that the school was “making strides towards using data effectively to group students and to meet individual student needs.”<sup>8</sup>

On its 2012-2013 NYC DOE Elementary/Middle School Progress Report, The Renaissance Charter School received an overall grade of C. The school received a B grade in both the Student Performance and School Environment sections but received an F grade for Student Progress. This ranked The Renaissance Charter School in the bottom 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile of all elementary/middle schools citywide and represented a decline in performance over the prior year. On its 2011-2012 NYC DOE Elementary/Middle School Progress Report, The Renaissance Charter School received an overall grade of B, with an A grade for Student Performance and C grades in both Student Progress and School Environment. This ranked The Renaissance Charter School in the 52<sup>nd</sup> percentile of all elementary/middle schools citywide. As its Overall Grade, the school earned a C in 2010-2011.

On its 2012-2013 NYC DOE High School Progress Report, The Renaissance Charter School received an Overall grade of A as well as an A grade for College and Career Readiness; the school earned B grades for Student Progress, Student Performance and School Environment. This ranked The Renaissance Charter School in the 69<sup>th</sup> percentile of all high schools citywide and represented an improvement over the prior year. On its 2011-2012 NYC DOE High School Progress Report, The Renaissance Charter School received an Overall grade of B as well as B grades for Student Progress and School Environment; the school earned an A grade for both Student Performance and College and Career Readiness. This ranked The Renaissance Charter School in the 63<sup>rd</sup> percentile of all high schools citywide. As its Overall Grade, the school earned a B in 2010-2011.

NYC DOE Progress Reports graded each school with an A, B, C, D, or F and were based on student progress, student performance, and school environment. Scores were based on comparing results from one school to a peer group of 40 schools with similar student populations and to all schools citywide. The Student Progress section of the NYC DOE Progress Report was the most heavily weighted of all sections; it constituted 60% of a school's grade. The grade in this section was primarily based on median adjusted growth percentiles,<sup>9</sup> which measure students' growth on state tests relative to other students with the same prior-year score. Although the NYC DOE Progress Report was discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, individual academic performance metrics from the former NYC DOE Progress Report are included in this renewal report for all years for which data was available in the current charter term.

### **Closing the Achievement Gap**

NYC DOE-authorized charter schools are also assessed based on their ability to close the achievement gap for specific student populations. In school years prior to the 2013-2014 school year, schools received additional credit on the NYC DOE Progress Report for progress and

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<sup>8</sup> Renaissance Charter School Annual Site Visit Report March 2012

<sup>9</sup> A student's growth percentile compares his or her growth to the growth of all students in the City who started at the same level of proficiency the year before. To evaluate a school on its students' growth percentile, the NYC DOE uses an adjusted growth percentile. Growth percentile adjustments are based on students' demographic characteristics and reflect average differences in growth compared to students with the same starting proficiency level. The NYC DOE evaluates a school based on its median adjusted growth percentile, the adjusted growth percentile of the middle student when all students adjusted growth percentiles are listed from lowest to highest.

performance of students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELLs), and students who start in the lowest third of proficiency citywide. Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, charter schools were assessed on the actual performance as well as the academic growth of students in these populations compared with public school students in the CSD and throughout New York City.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 36.5% of The Renaissance Charter School's students in the lowest third citywide experienced growth in math that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting math scores. This level places The Renaissance Charter School in only the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile of all elementary/middle schools citywide. In the same year, 39.6% of The Renaissance Charter School's students in the lowest third citywide experienced growth in ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting ELA scores; this level of growth places The Renaissance Charter School in the bottom 6% of all elementary/middle schools citywide.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 43.3% of The Renaissance Charter School's students with disabilities experienced growth in math that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students with disabilities citywide with the same starting math scores. This level places The Renaissance Charter School in the 39<sup>th</sup> percentile of all elementary/middle schools citywide. In the same year, 33.3% of The Renaissance Charter School's students with disabilities experienced growth in ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students with disabilities citywide with the same starting ELA scores; this level of growth places The Renaissance Charter School in the bottom 3% of all elementary/middle schools citywide.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 42.9% of The Renaissance Charter School's English Language Learner (ELL) students experienced growth in math that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other ELL students citywide with the same starting math scores. This level places The Renaissance Charter School in 64<sup>th</sup> percentile of all elementary/middle schools citywide. In the same year, only 23.8% of The Renaissance Charter School's ELL students experienced growth in ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other ELL students citywide with the same starting ELA scores; this level of growth places The Renaissance Charter School in the bottom 8% of all elementary/middle schools citywide.

Students in the lowest third citywide at The Renaissance Charter School had a four-year weighted diploma rate of 200.0% in 2013-2014. However, only 33.3% of this same group of students met the requirements for the College and Career Preparatory Course Index (CCPCI). The school did not serve the minimum percentage of students designated as in the lowest third to receive Peer or City Percent of Range data for either the weighted diploma rate or the CCPCI.<sup>10</sup>

In 2013-2014, The Renaissance Charter School did not serve the minimum number<sup>11</sup> of students with disabilities in its graduating class to receive data on the four-year weighted diploma rate for students with disabilities.

In 2013-2014, The Renaissance Charter School did not serve the minimum number<sup>12</sup> of English Language Learner students in its graduating class to receive data on the four-year weighted diploma rate for English Language Learner students.

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<sup>10</sup> For a school to be included in the NYC DOE's calculation of peer and city averages for Closing the Achievement Gap metrics and, thus, for the school to receive Peer and City Percent of Range data for Closing the Achievement Gap metrics, the school's population percentage for the relevant special population must be at least 25% of the City Percent of Range. Students in the lowest third citywide made up only 12.2% of The Renaissance Charter School student population in 2013-2014, which corresponded to a City Percent of Range of only 18.8%.

<sup>11</sup> The minimum number of students for each metric in the Closing the Achievement Gap section is five. Metrics are excluded for a school when student-sample-size criteria are not met because of confidentiality considerations and the unreliability of measurements based on small numbers.

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

The Renaissance Charter School is a partially operationally sound and fiscally viable organization. This assessment was made based on a review of the following indicators of operational and fiscal viability:

- The Renaissance Charter School's FY11, FY12, FY13, and FY14 independent financial audits;
- The Renaissance Charter School's FY15 budget and five-year projected budget;
- The Renaissance Charter School's 2014-2015 student, family and staff handbooks;
- On-site review of The Renaissance Charter School's financial and operational records;
- The Renaissance Charter School's self-reported staffing data;
- The Renaissance Charter School's Board of Trustees meeting minutes and bylaws; and
- The Renaissance Charter School's Board of Trustees financial disclosure forms.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has maintained a developed governance structure and organizational design. The current level of Board membership, nine members, is consistent with the minimum of five and the maximum of 20 members established in the Board's bylaws. There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and the school leadership team as evidenced by the school's organizational chart and by regular updates at the Board meetings, as recorded in Board meeting minutes. The Board's bylaws require six Board committees. However, the meeting minutes and school's website do not reference these committees; therefore, there is no evidence to confirm the committees are active. Quorum was achieved at all Board meetings over the course of the current charter term.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has developed a stable school culture. The Renaissance Charter School has one principal for all grades kindergarten through twelve. Although the school did have one principal transition during the course of the current charter term, the current Principal, Stacey Gauthier, has been a part of The Renaissance Charter School community since 1997, which helped create a smooth transition and a stable school culture. From 1997 – 2000 she was the Office Manager and Assistant to the Principal; from 2000 – 2007 she was the Co-Director of Operations; from 2007 – 2010 she was the Co-Principal; and since 2011 she has been the Principal of The Renaissance Charter School. For the most recent period, instructional staff turnover was only 8% of instructional staff not returning, either by choice or request, at the start of the 2014-2015 school year. Although this is the highest rate observed in the current charter term, it represents only four instructional staff members and is still considered low compared to instructional turnover rates at other NYC DOE-authorized charter schools.<sup>13</sup>

Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations. The school has at least 93 days of unrestricted cash on hand to meet operating expenses and obligations totaling \$2,317,102.

Overall, the school is financially sustainable based on its current practices. Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY14, the school generated an aggregate surplus over these audited fiscal years, and in FY14 the school operated at a surplus. Additionally, based on the financial audits from FY11 through FY14, the school generated overall positive cash flow from FY11 to FY14, and the school had positive cash flow from FY11 to FY13.

There was no material weakness noted in the four independent financial audits.

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<sup>12</sup> The minimum number of students for each metric in the Closing the Achievement Gap section is five. Metrics are excluded for a school when student-sample-size criteria are not met because of confidentiality considerations and the unreliability of measurements based on small numbers.

<sup>13</sup> Data on instructional staff turnover was self-reported by the school in its Renewal Application to the NYC DOE dated December 2014.

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

Over the charter term, The Renaissance Charter School has been compliant with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

Over the current charter term, the Board has consistently had a membership size that falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws, a minimum of five and maximum of 20 members. Per NYSED, forms for three Board members were not submitted on time with the Annual Report; however, the school self-reported that forms have been resubmitted to NYSED via the portal prior to date of this renewal report. The documents that have been submitted do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.<sup>14</sup> The Board has consistently submitted new board member credentials within the required five days of change to the Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) for review and, if necessary, approval.

The Board consistently submitted the Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) by the deadline of August 1 (or by the NYSED granted extension date) for each year of the current charter term.

NYS Charter law requires the school to post annual audits to its website. Currently, the financial audit for FY13 is available on the school's website, but the financial audits for other years of the current charter term are not available online.

The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is compliant with state requirements for teacher certification. The Charter Schools Act prohibits more than five staff members or more than 30% of the teaching staff from not being certified in accordance with requirements applicable to other public schools.

The school has submitted the required safety plan. The school has the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification.

The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization.

The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to the NYC DOE.

All staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.

The school has provided the NYC DOE with a current and complete copy of its Student Discipline Policy for the 2014-2015 academic year. This policy was determined to be in compliance with federal law.

### **D. Plans for Next Charter Term**

The Renaissance Charter School has indicated that it plans to submit a request to increase its authorized enrollment in the future, though the school has yet to formally submit a revision request. The school plans to increase its enrollment from 541 students to 630 students.

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<sup>14</sup> Source: New York State Education Department Annual Report

## Part 2: School Overview and History

The Renaissance Charter School is an elementary/middle/high school serving 549 students<sup>15</sup> in kindergarten through twelfth grade during the 2014-2015 school year. In 2000-2001 the school converted from a traditional district school to a charter school serving students across all grades kindergarten through twelve; the school is currently under the terms of its third charter. The school's authorized full grade span is for grades kindergarten through twelve.<sup>16</sup> The school's current charter term expires on May 17, 2015.<sup>17</sup> The school currently offers as a charter school a public universal Pre-Kindergarten program in New York City. The school is located in a DOE-operated<sup>18</sup> facility in Community School District 30 in Queens and is co-located with P.S. Q255, a citywide special education program.<sup>19</sup>

The Renaissance Charter School is a co-ed kindergarten through twelfth grade school located in Jackson Heights in the Borough of Queens, New York. The school's mission is to foster educated, responsible young leaders who through their own personal growth will spark a renaissance in New York. The Renaissance Charter School provides students with instruction and supports that address their respective academic needs, interests and learning styles. The school is committed to project-based and experiential learning which focuses on student interests while building content knowledge and academic skills; the experiential learning program is a core part of the school's student-centered approach because it requires students to provide substantive input into the design of their projects.

The Renaissance Charter School is an independent charter school and does not work with a management organization. The school contracts with various vendors for academic support and evaluation, back office support, and curriculum assessment and student assessment data gathering. The school's Director of Finance provides financial support services to the school and its Board. The school manages student information via the DOE's Automate the Schools (ATS) system and invoices through the NYC DOE vendor portal. The annual budget is created by the Board of Trustees of the school. The Renaissance Charter School's Board of Trustees is solely responsible for complying with all requirements of grants for the school, the Board's governing charter, and all applicable laws.

The Renaissance Charter School's Board of Trustees is led by chair Sandra Geyer, one of the school's founders. Another of the school's founders, Dr. Monte Joffe, is still a member of the school's Board and serves as Board Vice Chair. All grades of the school, kindergarten through twelve, are led by Principal Stacey Gauthier, who has been at the school since 2000 in various capacities of increasing responsibility.

The school typically enrolls new students in all grades, though kindergarten and fifth grade are considered the primary entry grades. There were 2,656 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2014 lottery. The school reports backfilling students from the waitlist during the school year across all grades.<sup>20</sup>

Over the charter term, the school enrolled and served students as follows with average class size and section count noted for the most recently completed school year, 2013-2014.

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<sup>15</sup> ATS data as of October 31, 2014

<sup>16</sup> The Renaissance Charter School has been authorized to serve students in grades kindergarten through twelve in all three charter terms.

<sup>17</sup> NYC DOE internal data

<sup>18</sup> NYC DOE internal data

<sup>19</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Management System

<sup>20</sup> Self-reported information collected through the 2014-2015 DOE Annual Charter School Survey

## Enrollment

Grade-Level Annual Enrollment *	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Kindergarten	23	23	23	25
Grade 1	25	23	22	23
Grade 2	25	25	24	23
Grade 3	25	25	23	23
Grade 4	26	26	26	24
Grade 5	54	53	54	54
Grade 6	53	54	53	54
Grade 7	54	53	54	54
Grade 8	54	56	54	55
Grade 9	53	54	54	54
Grade 10	53	54	54	53
Grade 11	54	54	51	55
Grade 12	48	48	53	48
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>545</b>

\* Enrollment figures reflect ATS data as of October 31 for each school year with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.

## Additional Enrollment Data

School Year 2013-2014 Information	Section Count	Average Class Size
Kindergarten	1	25
Grade 1	1	23
Grade 2	1	23
Grade 3	1	23
Grade 4	1	24
Grade 5	2	27
Grade 6	2	27
Grade 7	2	27
Grade 8	2	28
Grade 9	2	27
Grade 10	2	27
Grade 11	2	28
Grade 12	2	24
<b>Students Admitted Through The Lottery</b>	<b>72</b>	

\* Lottery information is based on self-reported data from the 2013-2014 DOE Annual Charter School Survey. Section counts are based on self-reported information collected as part of the school's Renewal Application. Average Class Sizes were determined by dividing ATS enrollment as of October 31, 2013 by the appropriate grade-level section count.

Please see additional demographic data in Section 4 of this report for information regarding the enrollment of special populations at The Renaissance Charter School. This information includes enrollment data for the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities as compared to the CSD and citywide averages, as well as targets recently finalized by the New York State Education Department.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, Board of Regents authorized charter schools, including those authorized by NYC DOE, will be held accountable to enrollment targets established by NYSED for students with disabilities, English Language Learner students, and students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch. Please note that the recently finalized targets are currently based on enrollment in the 2010-2011 school year and may be updated in the future.

## Part 3: Renewal Report Overview

### Renewal Report

This report contains the findings and recommendations of the NYC DOE regarding the charter school's application for charter renewal. This report is based on a cumulative record of the school's progress during the current charter term, including but not limited to oversight visits, annual reports, and formal correspondence between the school and its authorizer, the NYC DOE, all of which are conducted in order to evaluate and monitor the charter school's academic, fiscal, and operational performance. Additionally, the NYC DOE incorporates into this report its findings from the renewal application process, which includes a written application, a report on student achievement data and a school visit by the Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships and other staff from the NYC DOE.

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

### Is the school an academic success?

To assess whether a school is an academic success, the NYC DOE considers performance measures, including, but not limited to the following (as appropriate for grades served):

- New York State ELA and math assessment absolute results;
- New York State Regents exams passage rates;
- Comparative proficiency for elementary and middle schools, including growth rates for ELA and math proficiency;
- Comparative graduation rates and Regents completion rates for high schools;
- Closing the achievement gap performance relative to CSD or New York City public schools;
- New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) or other approved alternate assessments; and
- Performance data pertaining to college and career readiness.

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

### Is the school a fiscally and operationally sound, viable organization?

To assess whether a school is a fiscally and operationally sound, viable organization, OSDCP focuses on three areas: Governance Structure & Organizational Design, School Climate & Community Engagement, and Financial Health. This includes an analysis of the school's audited financial statements, based on the National Association of Charter School Authorizer's Core Performance Framework.<sup>22</sup>

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

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

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

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<sup>22</sup> Please refer to the following website for more information:  
[http://nacsa.mycrowdwisdom.com/diweb/catalog/item/id/126547/q/%20q=performance\\*20framework&c=82](http://nacsa.mycrowdwisdom.com/diweb/catalog/item/id/126547/q/%20q=performance*20framework&c=82)

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

As it pertains to compliance, the NYC DOE identifies areas of compliance and noncompliance with relevant laws and regulations as identified in the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework.

**Staff Representatives**

The following experts participated in the review of this school, including the renewal visit to the school conducted over two separate occasions on January 20 and January 21, 2015:

- Sonya Hooks, Senior Director, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Meera Jain, Director of Evaluation and Policy, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Kim Wong, Director of Operations, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- David Frank, Director of Charter Policy, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Lottie Almonte, Assigned Principal, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Lynette Aqueron, Senior School Improvement Specialist, NYC DOE Division of English Language Learners and Student Support
- Caitlin Robisch, Director of Analytics, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Paul Yen, Data Analyst, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships

## Part 4: Findings

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

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

#### High Academic Attainment and Improvement

- The school has four years of academic performance data and four years of New York State assessment data at the time of this report. For detailed information on grade-level data on NYS assessments, Regents pass rates, as well as other academic indicators, please see Appendix A.

NOTE: The 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 ELA and math proficiency percentages should not be compared directly with prior-year results. Unlike prior years, proficiency on the NYS assessments for ELA and math in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 were based on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) – a more demanding set of knowledge and skills necessary for 21<sup>st</sup> century college and career readiness.

#### ES/MS students scoring at or above Level 3 on NYS assessments, compared to CSD, NYC and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	54.9%	60.8%	28.0%	30.5%
CSD 30	49.3%	52.9%	30.7%	31.9%
Difference from CSD 30 *	5.6	7.9	-2.7	-1.4
NYC	43.9%	46.9%	26.4%	28.4%
Difference from NYC *	11.0	13.9	1.6	2.1
New York State **	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	2.1	5.7	-3.1	-0.1

% Proficient in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	74.0%	79.9%	37.9%	39.9%
CSD 30	64.7%	68.7%	35.4%	40.1%
Difference from CSD 30 *	9.3	11.2	2.5	-0.2
NYC	57.3%	60.0%	29.6%	34.2%
Difference from NYC *	16.7	19.9	8.3	5.7
New York State **	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	10.7	15.1	6.8	3.7

\* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself served. CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

\*\* New York State proficiency rates were taken from data.nysed.gov.

### Performance on the NYC Progress Report

Elementary/Middle School Progress Report Grades	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Overall Grade	C	B	C	Progress Reports were discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.
Student Progress	C	C	F	
Student Performance	C	A	B	
School Environment	B	C	B	

### HS Performance Compared to Peer and NYC Averages

4-year Graduation Rate				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	91.8%	90.2%	88.7%	85.7%
NYC *	65.7%	64.7%	66.0%	68.4%
Difference from NYC	26.1	25.5	22.7	17.3
6-year Graduation Rate				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	94.1%	92.2%	95.9%	96.1%
NYC *	72.6%	73.2%	73.0%	72.7%
Difference from NYC	21.5	19.0	22.9	23.4
College and Career Preparatory Course Index **				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>	49.0%	52.9%	60.4%	83.7%
Peer Percent of Range	-	56.8%	64.9%	89.7%
City Percent of Range	-	70.3%	78.9%	100.0%

\* The New York State graduation rate calculation method was first adopted in NYC for the Cohort of 2001 (Class of 2005). The cohort consists of all students who first entered ninth grade in a given school year (e.g., the Cohort of 2005 entered ninth grade in the 2005-2006 school year). Graduates are defined as those students earning either a Local or Regents diploma and exclude those earning either a special education (IEP) diploma or GED.

\*\* The College and Career Preparatory Course Index score was not introduced until the 2010-2011 school year and peer and city percent of range scores were not available until the 2011-2012 school year. A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A peer/city percent of range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of their peer group/city.

## Performance on the NYC Progress Report

High School Progress Report Grades	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Overall Grade	B	B	A	Progress Reports were discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.
Student Progress	A	B	B	
Student Performance	B	A	B	
School Environment	B	B	B	
College and Career Readiness *	-	A	A	

\* The College and Career Readiness grade was not introduced until the 2011-2012 school year.

## Mission and Academic Goals

According to the Renewal Application submitted to the NYC DOE by The Renaissance Charter School, as well as annual reports submitted to the New York State Education Department, over each of the four years in the retrospective charter term for which data is available, the school achieved/met academic goals as follows:

- 9 of 16 applicable academic charter goals in the first year of the charter,
- 11 of 16 in the second year,
- 8 of 12 in the third year,<sup>23</sup> and
- 8 of 13 in the fourth year.

## Progress Towards Academic Charter Goals \*

Academic Goals <sup>24</sup>	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
1. Each year, 75% of third through eighth grade students who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA exam.	Partially Met	Partially Met	N/A	Not Met
2. Each year, 75% of third through eighth grade students who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State math exam.	Partially Met	Met	N/A	Not Met

<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core Learning Standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and math exams or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals for the 2012-2013 school year. Goals that refer to comparative academic performance of the school (e.g. to the Community School District) were included in the analysis. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE will not include goals that are related to NYC DOE Progress Report Grades or, due to a change in state regulation, goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two in its analysis of progress towards goals.

<sup>24</sup> In September 2013 the NYC DOE approved a charter revision to allow The Renaissance Charter School to change the school's early grade literacy measurement tool from ECLAS-2 to the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment. As a result, beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, The Renaissance Charter School began using Fountas and Pinnell to assess student reading levels and no longer utilized the ECLAS-2 assessment. Goals pertaining to the ECLAS-2 assessment are not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year; goals pertaining to the Fountas and Pinnell assessments are not applicable prior to the 2013-2014 school year.

Academic Goals <sup>25</sup>		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
3.	Each year, 75% of fourth and eighth grade students who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State science exam.	Not Met	Met	Met	Met
4.	Each year, 75% or more of students in kindergarten through second grade will score at or above the specified level on the specified strands of the ECLAS-2 assessment.	Partially Met	Partially Met	Partially Met	N/A
5.	Beginning in 2013-2014, 80% of kindergarten students who were enrolled on BEDS day will perform at or above Level B on the Fountas and Pinnell A-Z Text Level Gradient.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not Met
6.	Beginning in 2013-2014, 80% of first grade students and 80% of second grade students who were enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above a Level G and at or above a Level K, respectively, on the Fountas and Pinnell A-Z Text Level Gradient.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Met
7.	Each grade-level cohort of the same students (i.e. students who are in the school for two years in a row) will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State ELA exam and 75% at or above Level 3 on the current year's ELA exam. If the percentage of students scoring above proficiency in a grade level cohort exceeds 75% on the previous year's ELA exam, the school is expected to demonstrate some growth (above 75%) in the current year.	Not Met	Partially Met	N/A	Not Met
8.	Each grade-level cohort of the same students (i.e. students who are in the school for two years in a row) will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State math exam and 75% at or above Level 3 on the current year's math exam. If the percentage of students scoring above proficiency in a grade level cohort exceeds 75% on the previous year's math exam, the school is expected to demonstrate some growth (above 75%) in the current year.	Partially Met	Partially Met	N/A	Not Met
9.	Each year, 75% of the ninth grade cohort will have scored at least a 65 on the New York State Regents exams in English, Math, Global Studies and Science by the end of their fourth year at the school.	Met	Met	Met	Met
10.	Each year, at least 80% of each ninth grade cohort will graduate within four years.	Met	Met	Met	Met
11.	Each year, the school will meet AYP Graduation Rate Targets.	Met	Met	Met	Met

<sup>25</sup> In September 2013 the NYC DOE approved a charter revision to allow The Renaissance Charter School to change the school's early grade literacy measurement tool from ECLAS-2 to Fountas and Pinnell benchmarking. As a result, beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, Renaissance Charter School began using Fountas and Pinnell to assess student reading levels and no longer utilized the ECLAS-2 assessment. Goals pertaining to the ECLAS-2 assessment are not valid for the 2013-2014 school year; goals pertaining to the Fountas and Pinnell assessments are not valid prior to the 2013-2014 school year.

Academic Goals <sup>26</sup>		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
12.	Each year, the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 on the State ELA exam in each tested grade will, in the majority of grades, exceed the average performance of students tested in the same grades of the CSD in which the school is located. This will be measured by an analysis of the performance compared to CSDs conducted by NYC DOE.	Met	Met	Not Met	Met
13.	Each year, the percentage of students performing at or above Level 3 on the State math exam in each tested grade will, in the majority of grades, exceed the average performance of students tested in the same grades of the CSD in which the school is located. This will be measured by an analysis of the performance compared to CSDs conducted by NYC DOE.	Met	Met	Not Met	Met
14.	Each year, the school will receive a “B” or higher on the Student Progress section of the NYC DOE Progress Report.	Partially Met	Partially Met	Partially Met	N/A
15.	Each year the percent of students in the high school accountability cohort passing the English Regents exam with a score of 65 or above by the end of their fourth year will exceed that of the students in the high school accountability cohort from a group of similar schools as determined by the NYC DOE Progress Report peer schools.	Met	Met	Met	N/A
16.	Each year the percent of students in the high school accountability cohort passing the Math Regents exam with a score of 65 or above by the end of their fourth year will exceed that of the students in the high school accountability cohort from a group of similar schools as determined by the NYC DOE Progress Report peer school.	Met	Met	Met	N/A
17.	Each year, the school will be deemed “In Good Standing” on the NYS Report Card. <sup>27</sup>	Met	Met	Met	N/A
18.	Each year, the school will have an average daily student attendance rate of at least 95%, as measured using the methodology set out in the NYC DOE Attendance Template. <sup>28</sup>	Met	Met	Met	Met

\* Goals were self-reported by the school in the school's Renewal Application submitted to NYC DOE and 2013-2014 Annual Report documentation submitted to NYSED.

<sup>26</sup> In September 2013 the NYC DOE approved a charter revision to allow The Renaissance Charter School to change the school's early grade literacy measurement tool from ECLAS-2 to the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment. As a result, beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, The Renaissance Charter School began using Fountas and Pinnell to assess student reading levels and no longer utilized the ECLAS-2 assessment. Goals pertaining to the ECLAS-2 assessment are not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year; goals pertaining to the Fountas and Pinnell assessments are not applicable prior to the 2013-2014 school year.

<sup>27</sup> Goals that reference a school's status on the 2013-2014 NYSED Report Cards are not reported on because the 2013-2014 NYS Report Cards have not yet been released.

<sup>28</sup> The high school attendance rate has been less than 95% in all years of the retrospective charter term, though the overall school attendance rate across all grades kindergarten through twelve has been above 95% in all years.

## Responsive Education Program

As part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE visited the school on two occasions in January 2015. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- **Alignment with Common Core:**
  - School leadership reported that the school has been focused on Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) alignment. Renaissance conducted a comprehensive review of its curriculum during this charter term and made substantive changes to better align it with the CCLS.
    - For instance, Renaissance modified its entire math program to better align with the CCLS.
      - In math, Renaissance now uses the CCLS-aligned Singapore Math curriculum in kindergarten through third grade, Math in Focus (Standards Edition) in grades four and five, Go Math in grades six through eight, and Prentice Pearson in grades nine through twelve.
      - In addition, Renaissance has developed and continuously enhances “home grown” curricula and units of instruction based heavily on the materials and resources of EngageNY.
    - In ELA, Renaissance has increased its emphasis on Junior Great Books in grades kindergarten through eight, and teachers across all grades use the resources of EngageNY to inform their selection of texts and literature to support the development of units of instruction.
    - Renaissance changed its early grade literacy measurement tool from ECLAS-2 to the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment beginning with the 2013-2014 academic year to better measure attainment of CCLS benchmarks. The school also expanded its use of Guided Reading and Writers Workshop.
  - School leadership reported leveraging the curriculum mapping, CCLS alignment and professional development initiatives of the Partnership for Innovation in Compensation for Charter Schools (PICCS), in which the school participated during the retrospective charter term.
    - Renaissance was a member of the initial cohort of charter schools in the federally-funded PICCS program. As a member of the PICCS consortium, Renaissance was provided access to a comprehensive data warehouse that supported effective organization, analysis and use of student data - along with extensive professional development, Professional Learning Communities (PLC) support, and access to expert technical assistance.
    - Beginning in 2011, PICCS adapted its professional development initiatives and other programs and resources to support its member schools in implementing the CCLS, including support in curriculum mapping, design of instructional units, peer review and PLCs.
      - Accordingly, Renaissance teachers engaged in grant-supported professional development that helped them adapt curricula and instruction to the CCLS.
  - One representative from each grade team at Renaissance has been working in a math collaborative with representatives from other public schools in the area using the Investigations curriculum.
  - School staff reviewed the Common Core Learning Standards sample questions and testing materials from the state with the literacy staff developer and identified changes that needed to be made within the curriculum.

- **Addressing the Needs of All Learners:**

- The school provides educational supports for students from special populations including English Language Learners and students with disabilities. These supports include expanding its use of Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes across all grades and providing intensive professional development to teachers to ensure they are able to identify student needs and differentiate instruction.
- The school provides additional educational supports for struggling students, who are identified in part as retained students and students performing below grade level. These supports include help through The Learning Center (TLC), a "managed care" program for students who either need remedial help or who wish to accelerate or enrich their studies. Part-time teachers and two full-time paraprofessionals manage the TLC study center.

- **Instructional Model and Classroom Instruction:**

- Renaissance has a "three-tiered curriculum" consisting of core studies (ELA, Math, Social Studies, Science, Spanish, and Health), project-based and experiential learning, and community involvement.
  - Renaissance has embedded project-based and experiential learning throughout its curriculum and multidisciplinary project-based learning is emphasized at all grade levels.
- The school also has a School Management Team (SMT), which is comprised of the Principal, the Director of Data and Accountability, the Director of Teaching & Learning for the elementary grades kindergarten through five, the Director of Teaching & Learning for the secondary grades six through twelve, the Director of Development and Partnerships, and the Director of Operations and Finance. The SMT meets at least weekly to discuss and make decisions about day-to-day and longer-term instructional matters including curricula, assessments, evaluation, professional development, progress made towards achieving academic goals, special education, and experiential learning projects.
- The school leverages its teacher collaboration through its use of Professional Learning Communities, which enable teachers to collaborate effectively around issues of instruction, assessment, use of data, CCLS-alignment and professional practice.

During the renewal visit, 38 classrooms across grades kindergarten through twelve were observed with the school's Principal and Directors of Teaching and Learning for the elementary grades (grades kindergarten through five) and secondary grades (grades six through twelve).

- In all observed classes, teachers were following one of the school's models of co-teaching including Integrated Co-Teaching classes.
- Class-sizes observed ranged from 16 to 27 students in size, with two teachers in all classrooms.
- Forms of questioning identified during the classroom observations included some basic fact recall, but mostly challenged students to demonstrate understanding or to analyze and apply.
- In most classrooms, checks for understanding that included questioning, polling, classwork, teacher observation, and frequent use of student turn and talk, were observed.
- In most observed classrooms, differentiation of materials, tasks, and products, through small group instruction or independent practice, was observed. These were consistent with the school model.
- In most observed classes, students were responsive to teacher directions and instruction.
- In most observed classes, students were either fully on task or mostly on task.
- Based on debriefs with the school's leadership team members after classroom visits, all classrooms had instruction that aligned with the instructional model and current academic goals of the school.

## Learning Environment

NYC DOE representatives conducted one-on-one interviews with fifteen teachers and two learning specialists during the renewal visit in January 2015. The following was noted:

- All interviewed teachers reported that they received school-based professional development both in the summer and weekly during the school year, with the administration providing professional development resources. They also reported being encouraged by the administration to get further professional development outside of the school.
- Most interviewed teachers mentioned that the Danielson Framework for Teaching was used for formal teacher evaluations, which are conducted by the school's Principal and Directors of Teaching and Learning.
- Some interviewed teachers reported that they use data in the classrooms through both formal (i.e. Common Core Learning Standards-based assessments, Fountas and Pinnell benchmarking step assessments, etc.) and informal assessments (i.e. observational notes, exit slips assessments, etc.) for groupings and lesson planning.

During the renewal visit to the school in January 2015, NYC DOE representatives conducted group interviews with students across all grades kindergarten through twelve. The following was noted:

- Most students commented that going to college was seen as an end goal after leaving The Renaissance Charter School.
- Many students talked about the benefits of the school's experiential learning program (Rensizzle Week) and the experience gained through the school's leadership, volunteer, and internship program which requires students in grades nine through twelve to participate in activities either onsite or off-site for 16 hours each semester.
- Most students commented that teachers were supportive and helpful.

According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 96% of parents agree or strongly agree “that the school has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss [their] child” and 93% of parents who responded to the survey agree or strongly agree “that the school has high expectations for [their] child.”<sup>29</sup>

According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey only 70% of teachers agree or strongly agree that “order and discipline are maintained at the school” and only 81% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that “at my school students are often harassed or bullied in school.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 49% of parent respondents strongly agree that The Renaissance Charter School has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss their child; another 47% agree with the statement. Similarly, 45% of parent respondents strongly agree that The Renaissance Charter School has high expectations for their child; another 48% agree with the statement.

<sup>30</sup> According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 14% of teacher respondents strongly agree that order and discipline are maintained at The Renaissance Charter School; another 56% agree with the statement. Of teacher respondents, 9% strongly disagree that students are often harassed or bullied in the school; 72% of teacher respondents disagree with the statement; 16% agree with the statement; and 2% strongly agree with the statement.

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

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

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

On January 21, 2015 as part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE met with a representation of the school's Board of Trustees independent of the school leadership team. Based on document review and observation, the following was noted:

- The Board currently has nine active members. This level of membership is consistent within the minimum of five members and maximum of 20 members established in the Board's bylaws.
- Officer roles specified in the Board's bylaws are Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. These positions are currently filled.
- The Board's current bylaws specify that the Board is to meet five times per year. Minutes from two board meeting held in 2011-2012, six board meetings held in 2012-2013, six board meetings held in 2013-2014, and minutes from two board meetings held in 2014-2015 were available for review. The school did not submit minutes for the 2010-2011 school year to the NYC DOE for review. All meetings held during these years as reviewed by OSDCP met quorum.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership as evidenced by the school's organization chart and School Management Team's monthly updates on academic, financial and operational performance to the Board and its committees, as recorded in Board meeting minutes. The Board is also updated on school finances by a Certified Public Accountant.
- The Board's bylaws require the following committees: an Executive Committee, a Financial/Audit Committee, a By-Laws Committee, an Educational Support Committee, a Development and External Relations Committee, and Appeals and Grievance Committee. Neither the meeting minutes nor the school's website indicate that these committees are consistently active.
- The school's founder, Dr. Monte Joffee, is still a member of the school's Board, currently serving as Vice Chair; Dr. Monte Joffee has served on the Board since 2000. Another member of the school's founding team, Sandra Geyer, has served on the Board since 2000 and is the current Board Chair. In addition, the Board Secretary, Everett Boyd, has served on the Board since 2001. The current Principal, Stacey Gauthier, has been on the Board since 2000.

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

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

- To date, the school has met its charter goal of having an annual average student attendance rate of at least 95% in all four years of the retrospective charter term.<sup>31</sup> Average daily attendance for students over the course of the charter term is provided in the table below.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> While the high school attendance rate has been less than 95% in all years of the retrospective charter term, the overall school attendance rate across all grades kindergarten through twelve has been above 95% in all years.

<sup>32</sup> The table reflects average daily attendance data taken from the NYC DOE's Automate the Schools (ATS) system for school years 2010-2011 through 2013-2014. Please note that the school self-reported aggregate attendance rates in its Renewal Application which differ from the aggregate attendance recorded in ATS for all school years. The school self-reported attendance rates of 94.7%, 95.5%, 95.1%, and 95.5% for school years 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

## Average Attendance

Elementary and Middle School Attendance				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Renaissance Charter School*</b>	<b>95.8%</b>	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>96.1%</b>	<b>95.6%</b>
NYC**	93.2%	93.9%	93.6%	93.2%
Difference from NYC	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.4
High School Attendance				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Renaissance Charter School*</b>	<b>92.9%</b>	<b>93.4%</b>	<b>92.8%</b>	<b>93.6%</b>
NYC**	85.5%	86.2%	86.1%	86.5%
Difference from NYC	7.4	7.2	6.7	7.1

\* Attendance was taken from ATS.

\*\* NYC attendance figures reflect average attendance across all general education district schools as reflected in ATS.

- Staff turnover has been consistent and relatively low, compared with other NYC DOE-authorized charter schools, over the charter term. For the most recent period, staff turnover was 8% of instructional staff not returning, by choice or request at the start of the 2014-2015 school year.<sup>33</sup> There is no evidence that this instructional staff turnover has affected student performance.
- Student mobility is presented below for the charter term without comparison to other schools, the CSD or NYC as final student retention goals were not yet finalized by the New York State Education Department for the retrospective charter term at the time of the creation of this report. Based on the NYC DOE's evaluation and not in comparison to any other school, the CSD or NYC averages, the school has not had challenges with retaining students.

## Mobility

Student Mobility out of Renaissance Charter School *				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Number of Students who Left the School	41	42	36	34
Percent of Students who Left the School	8.2%	8.4%	7.3%	6.8%

\* Figures are based on student enrollment as of October 31 for each respective school year with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012. Students in terminal grades are not included.

- The NYC DOE has made changes to the NYC School Survey during the entirety of the retrospective charter term. Questions asked have been altered, added or deleted from year to year. Also, beginning with the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, survey categories will not be measured in total points out of 10 possible points. To allow for consistency during the evaluated charter term, selected questions, consistent with the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework were identified as relevant for charter schools. These are presented below for the duration of the retrospective charter term. In the most recent year of survey results, 2013-2014, the percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing was below citywide averages for three of the four selected questions, and equal to the citywide average for one of the four selected questions. The percentage of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing was below citywide averages for two of the three selected questions, and equal to the citywide average for the third selected

<sup>33</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form in December 2014

question. The percentage of students agreeing or strongly agreeing was below citywide averages for all of the three selected questions.

- NYC School Survey Response Rates should be comparable over time, however, as the measurement of these has remained consistent. Response rates for each parents, teachers and students (if participating) are presented below for each year of the charter term. In general, the response rates for The Renaissance Charter School students, parents, and teachers have been above NYC averages in each of the four years of the retrospective charter term. The only exception occurred in 2012-2013, when the teacher response rate was lower than the citywide average.

### NYC School Survey Results

Percent of Respondents that Agree or Strongly Agree						
Survey Question		Renaissance Charter School				Citywide Average
		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014
Students*	Most of my teachers make me excited about learning.**	65%	62%	49%	47%	62%
	Most students at my school treat each other with respect.	62%	58%	65%	57%	60%
	I feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker room, cafeteria, etc.	89%	86%	86%	78%	79%
Parents	I feel satisfied with the education my child has received this year.	93%	92%	95%	92%	95%
	My child's school makes it easy for parents to attend meetings.	94%	92%	95%	94%	94%
	I feel satisfied with the response I get when I contact my child's school.	94%	92%	95%	93%	95%
Teachers	Order and discipline are maintained at my school.	89%	86%	94%	70%	80%
	The principal at my school communicates a clear vision for our school.	83%	84%	86%	73%	88%
	School leaders place a high priority on the quality of teaching.	80%	79%	86%	72%	92%
	I would recommend my school to parents.***	-	85%	94%	81%	81%

\* Students in grades kindergarten through five do not participate in the NYC School Survey.

\*\* This question was phrased as "My teachers inspire me to learn" in the 2009-2010 through 2012-2013 School Surveys.

\*\*\* This question was not introduced until the 2011-2012 School Survey.

## NYC School Survey Results

		Response Rates			
		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students*	Renaissance Charter School	100%	99%	99%	98%
	NYC	83%	82%	83%	83%
Parents	Renaissance Charter School	60%	64%	63%	62%
	NYC	52%	53%	54%	53%
Teachers	Renaissance Charter School	93%	87%	76%	94%
	NYC	82%	81%	83%	81%

\* Students in grades kindergarten through five do not participate in the NYC School Survey.

- The school's charter goals include, "parents will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the NYC School Survey in which the school receives scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety and Respect; the school will only have met this goal if 50% or more parents participate in the survey." The school met this goal in 2010-2011, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. This goal was not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year.
- The school's charter goals include, "teachers will express satisfaction with school leadership and professional development opportunities as determined by the NYC School Survey in which the school receives scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety and Respect; the school will only have met this goal if 50% or more teachers participate in the survey." The school failed to meet this goal in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 but did meet this goal in 2012-2013. This goal was not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year.
- The school's charter goals include, "students will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the NYC School Survey in which the school receives scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety and Respect; the school will only have met this goal if 50% or more students participate in the survey." The school failed to meet this goal in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 but partially met this goal in 2012-2013.<sup>34</sup> This goal was not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year.

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

- An internal survey performed by the school during the 2012-2013 school year indicated that 95% of parents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their child's education. (Less than 50% of the school's families participated in the survey.)
- The NYC DOE conducted a public renewal hearing on Wednesday, January 21, 2015 at The Renaissance Charter School in an effort to solicit public comments. Approximately 200 participants attended the hearing with 34 speaking in support of the school's renewal and none speaking in opposition.
- The NYC DOE made randomized phone calls to parents/guardians from a roster provided by the school for students in all grades. Calls to parents/guardians were made during January 2015 until twenty phone calls were completed. Of these calls, 95% provided positive feedback regarding the school.

<sup>34</sup> If the school received 7.5 or more points in one category but received less than 7.5 points in one or more of the remaining Survey categories the goal was considered 'partially met.' In the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years, The Renaissance Charter School received fewer than 7.5 points in all categories based on student responses; in 2012-2013 the school received fewer than 7.5 points in the Safety and Respect and Engagement categories only.

## **Financial Health**

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

- The Renaissance Charter School's FY14 financial audit did not list any liabilities. Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's ratio of 101.52 indicated a strong ability to meet future liabilities that the school may incur.
- Based on the FY14 financial audit, the school had sufficient cash to cover its operating expenses for at least two months without an infusion of cash. The school had 93 days of unrestricted cash on hand, totaling \$2,317,102.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2014-2015 budget to the school's actual enrollment as of October 31, 2014 revealed that the school had met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY14 financial audit, the school had no debt obligations.

## **Financial Sustainability**

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

- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY14, the school generated an aggregate surplus over these audited fiscal years, and in FY14 the school operated at a surplus.
- Because no liabilities were listed in its FY14 financial audit, the school's debt-to-asset ratio cannot be calculated.
- Based on the financial audits from FY11 through FY14, the school generated overall positive cash flow from FY11 to FY14, and the school had positive cash flow from FY11 to FY13.

There was no material weakness noted in the four independent financial audits for FY11 through FY14.

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

Over the charter term, The Renaissance Charter School has been compliant with most applicable laws and regulations, with exceptions noted below.

As of the review in February 2015, the Board of Trustees for The Renaissance Charter School is in compliance with:

- **Membership size.** Over the charter term, the Board has consistently had a membership size that falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws, a minimum of five and maximum of 20 members. The Board currently has nine members.
- **Posting of minutes and agendas.** The Board has consistently made all Board minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to or at Board meetings by posting on the school's website.
- **Notification of Board Member Resignations/Submission of New Board Members for Approval.** The board has consistently submitted board resignation notices or new board member credentials within the required five days of change to OSDCP for review and, if necessary, approval.
- **Submission of all required documents.** The school has posted to its website its annual audit for each year of the charter term, as required in charter law.

As of the review in February 2015, the Board of Trustees for The Renaissance Charter School is out of compliance with:

- **Required number of monthly meetings.** The school's bylaws indicate that the Board is to hold five meetings a year. In years 2010-2011 through 2013-2014, the Board held the required number of monthly meetings, as evidenced by the Board Yearly Meeting Schedule and/or the posted meeting minutes. Required meetings are those which met quorum. Although the Board held a number of meetings compliant with its bylaws, the current Charter Schools Act requires that the Board hold monthly meetings over a period of 12 calendar months, per year. The Board has not updated its bylaws to comply with this requirement.
- **Submission of all required documents.** Per NYSED, forms for three Board members were not submitted on time with the Annual Report; however, the school self-reported that forms have been resubmitted to NYSED via the portal prior to date of this renewal report. The documents submitted do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.<sup>35</sup>

As of the review in February 2015, the charter school is in compliance with:

- **Application and Lottery.** For the 2014-2015 school year the school had an application deadline of April 1, 2014 and lottery date of April 2, 2014, adhering to charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1. Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently adhere to this requirement. However, in the 2014-2015 school year, the school had a non-compliant enrollment policy in that the school did not uphold returning student status for eighth grade students who applied to another NYC public high school. The school has since updated its enrollment policy and is compliant.
- **Student Discipline Plan.** The school has provided the NYC DOE with a current and complete copy of its Student Discipline Policy for the 2014-2015 academic year. This policy was determined to be compliant with federal law.
- **Timely submission of documents.** The Board did consistently submit the Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) by the deadline of August 1 (or by the NYSED granted extension date) for each year of the current charter term.
- **Fingerprint clearance.** All staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.
- **Teacher certification.** The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is compliant with state requirements for teacher certification. The Charter Schools Act

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<sup>35</sup> Source: New York State Education Department Annual Report

prohibits more than five staff members or more than 30% of the teaching staff from not being certified in accordance with requirements applicable to other public schools.

- **Safety Documents.** The school has submitted the required safety plan. The school has the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification.
- **Immunization.** The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization.
- **Insurance.** The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to the NYC DOE.
- **Fire Emergency.** One or more of the school leaders were trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.
- **Timely Submission of Invoicing and Reconciliation Documents.** Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently submit complete invoicing and reconciliation documents by the associated deadlines.

### Enrollment and Retention Targets

- Amendments to Article 56 of the New York State Consolidated Laws: Education, which relates to Charter Schools, call for charter schools, as a consideration of renewal, “to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets” for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program. The amendments further indicate “Repeated failure to comply with the requirement” as a cause for revocation or termination of the charter.
  - The law directs schools to demonstrate “that is has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students” in the event it has not yet met its targets.
  - The NYC DOE, as authorizer, will annually monitor the school’s performance against these targets and the efforts it makes to meet this state requirement.
  - As of the creation of this report, charter school enrollment and retention targets as required by the NYS Charter Schools Act were still in a proposed status; these targets have since been finalized. The information presented below for enrollment is compared to NYC CSD and NYC averages, as well as the recently finalized current enrollment targets developed by NYSED. It should be noted that these targets were developed using a different methodology than that used to develop the school-specific enrollment rates for each special population as presented below.<sup>36</sup>
- In all years of operation in the retrospective charter term, including the most recent completed school year 2013-2014, The Renaissance Charter School:
  - served a lower percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch compared to both the CSD 30 and citywide percentages;
  - served a lower percentage of students with disabilities compared to both the CSD 30 and citywide percentages, with the exception of the 2011-2012 and 2013-2014 school years, in which the school served a higher percentage of students with disabilities than the CSD 30 rate; and
  - served a lower percentage of English Language Learner students compared to both the CSD 30 and citywide percentages.

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<sup>36</sup> Please see the following website for more information: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/enrollment-retention-targets.html>

## Enrollment of Special Populations<sup>37</sup>

Special Population		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014 State Enrollment Target (Current)
Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) <sup>38</sup>	<b>Renaissance Charter School</b>	<b>58.9%</b>	<b>60.9%</b>	<b>65.7%</b>	<b>73.8%</b>	<b>87.7%</b>
	CSD 30	77.3%	85.2%	86.5%	86.4%	
	NYC	78.3%	80.8%	80.7%	80.4%	
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	<b>Renaissance Charter School</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>13.5%</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>
	CSD 30	13.1%	13.0%	13.7%	14.4%	
	NYC	17.3%	17.4%	18.0%	19.2%	
English Language Learners (ELL)	<b>Renaissance Charter School</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>28.7%</b>
	CSD 30	23.5%	21.8%	21.0%	20.1%	
	NYC	15.1%	14.7%	14.4%	14.0%	

Additional Enrollment Information				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grades Served	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12
CSD(s)	30	30	30	30

<sup>37</sup> Comparisons of a charter school's special populations to the CSD and City are made relative only to the grades served by the school. For example, if a charter school serves grades kindergarten through five, comparisons of that school's special populations will only be made relative to grades kindergarten through five in the CSD and citywide. CSD comparisons are particular to the grades served in each CSD each year. Enrollment rates reflect demographic characteristics as of June 1 and enrollment as of October 31 for each given school year, with the exception of enrollment in the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.

State enrollment targets were generated by a calculator developed by the State Education Department (SED). Once a school's CSD, total enrollment and grade span are entered, the calculator generates a school-specific enrollment target. The CSD for a multi-district school is the primary CSD as determined by each school. The enrollment is determined by the total number of students enrolled as of October 31, 2013. Any school with an unusual grade configuration (i.e. K, 6-9) should use an available grade configuration provided by SED that is most aligned as determined by the DOE, otherwise a school's actual grade span is used. For more information regarding SED's methodology behind the calculation of charter school enrollment and retention targets, please refer to the memo at <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2012Meetings/July2012/712brca11.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> The Renaissance Charter School ran its own school food program for the entirety of the retrospective charter term. As a result, the percentage of students receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch in each year was self-reported by the school as part of its Renewal Application dated December 2014. Please note that the NYC DOE's ATS records indicate that 60.1%, 60.6%, 66.1% and 41.7% of students at The Renaissance Charter School were eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch for school years 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, respectively. Please note that the 2013-2014 figure taken from ATS reflects only those students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch based on HRA (Human Resources Administration) eligibility and does not reflect those students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch based on the NYC DOE's eligibility form.

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

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

The Renaissance Charter School has indicated that it plans to submit a request to increase its authorized enrollment in the future, though the school has yet to formally submit a revision request. The school plans to increase its enrollment from 541 students to 630 students.

## Part 5: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

### Renewal Process

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

The NYC DOE does not automatically grant charter renewal, and no charter operator is entitled to renewal. Rather, a school must prove that it has earned renewal and is worthy of continuing the privilege of educating New York City public school students. To make such determinations, the NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) renewal team performs a comprehensive review of the school's academic, operational and fiscal performance over the course of the charter which includes an analysis of the school's renewal application. This application is built around the four essential questions of the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework and includes a retrospective analysis of the school's prior track record as well as a prospective plan for the school. In reviewing this information, a school must be able to demonstrate that it can satisfy the four essential questions of the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework:

1. Is the school an academic success?
2. Is the school a fiscally and operationally 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?

The school presents evidence to support its application for renewal by providing a compelling response to these overarching questions that demonstrates its students have made significant academic progress, is serving students equitably, has sustainable operations to be successful in the next charter term, and that the school has met the goals and objectives pledged in its current 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.

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 also important factors that inform a renewal decision. For more information on how OSDCP makes renewal recommendations to the Chancellor, please see the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework overview in Part 6 of this report.

### Statutory Basis for Renewal

The New York State Charter Schools Act ("the Act") authorizes the creation of a system 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:

#### **§2850:**

- (a) Improve student learning and achievement;
- (b) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- (e) Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and

- (f) Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

When granted, a charter is valid for up to five years. For a school chartered under the Act to operate beyond the initial charter term, the school must seek and obtain renewal of its charter.<sup>39</sup>

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.

(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.

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.

The determination of whether to approve a renewal application rests in the sole discretion of a charter school's authorizer.

A school seeking renewal of its charter must submit a renewal application to the charter entity to which the original charter application was submitted.<sup>40</sup> As one such charter entity, the New York City Department of Education ("NYC DOE") 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;

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<sup>39</sup> See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

<sup>40</sup> See generally §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4).

- A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private;
- Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school including the charter school report cards and certified financial statements;
- Indications of parent and student satisfaction; and
- The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the board of regents 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.<sup>41</sup>

Where the NYC DOE approves a renewal application, it is required under the Act to submit the application and a proposed charter to the Board of Regents for its review and approval.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> § 2851(4)(e) added with the 2010 amendments to the Act.

<sup>42</sup> See § 2852(5).

## Part 6: NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework

The Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) team may recommend to the Chancellor three potential outcomes for charter schools applying for renewal: full-term renewal (with or without conditions), short-term renewal (with or without conditions), or non-renewal.

After the OSDCP renewal site visit, the OSDCP team incorporates its findings from the visit into this renewal report. The evidence and findings align to the four essential questions of the NYC DOE accountability framework and may include classroom observations, leadership interviews, assessment results, School Survey results, public hearings and other community feedback, as well as a variety of other data. Schools will be given the opportunity to correct factual errors in this report. If the OSDCP renewal team determines that renewal is not warranted, the school will be informed in writing of the reasons for the non-renewal. If OSDCP approves the renewal application and the Chancellor recommends renewal for the school, prior to the school's charter expiration date, OSDCP will send the renewal report and recommendation along with the school's renewal application and other supporting evidence to the Board of Regents for its approval.

### ***Full-Term Renewal, With or Without Conditions***

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 clearly and consistently demonstrated high academic attainment and/or consistent and significant student academic progress, has met the majority of its charter goals, has demonstrated financial stability, has demonstrated operational viability, has attained sufficient board capacity, and has an educationally sound learning environment in order to gain this type of renewal.

### ***Short Term Renewal, With or Without Conditions***

In cases where a school is up for renewal of its initial charter and has two years or fewer of state-assessment results, or where any school has demonstrated mixed academic results or has uncertain organizational or financial viability, a short-term renewal with conditions may be considered.

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

Renewal is not automatic. 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.

### ***Grade Expansions or Enrollment Changes***

A school may seek material charter revisions as part of the renewal process. In the case of a grade expansion or change in authorized enrollment, these material charter revisions are considered separately from the charter renewal. Charter renewal, with or without conditions, is not a guarantee of approval for a proposed material charter revision.

## The NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework

To help Chancellor-authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the OSDCP 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 and operationally 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?

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. These factors include academic, fiscal, operational and environmental indicators of a charter school's performance. Additionally, some of the indicators we evaluate relate to expected performance as defined in the New York State Charter Schools Act including evidence of improved student learning and achievement, special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure, use of different and innovative teaching methods, parent and student satisfaction, and enrollment and retention of special student populations. Further detail about the application of the framework to school reflection and evaluation is provided beginning on page 17 of the NYC DOE Chancellor-Authorized Schools Accountability Handbook for 2014-2015.

What follows is a framework that outlines strands, indicators, and potential evidence for each of the four essential questions. The framework identifies what OSDCP looks at in determining whether a school is successful enough to earn a new charter term, with or without conditions, and the duration of the charter term recommended by NYC DOE. As schools use the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework, they should remember that charter schools exist to deliver improved student achievement for the students they serve, particularly at-risk students, so the schools are 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, while also recognizing the importance of closing the achievement gap and offering high-quality learning opportunities for all students.

### 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
- Meet other rigorous academic goals as stated on school charter
- Demonstrate increasing student achievement/growth
- Are closing the achievement gap for at risk students, including special needs and ELL students
- Are surpassing academic performance measures of DOE identified peer-schools
- Are surpassing academic performance measures compared with district/city proficiency averages

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

- Grades 3-8 NYS ELA Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- Grades 3-8 NYS Math Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- Grades 4 and 8 NYS Science Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- HS 4- and 6-Year Graduation Rates
- Grades 8-12 NYS Regent Exam Results
- 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
- When applicable, NYSAA or other approved alternate assessments results
- Results on state accountability measures
- Charter School Academic Goals
- School-reported internal assessments
- NYC DOE Progress Reports or School Quality Reports<sup>43</sup>

### **1b. Instructionally Sound and 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 and Common Core Learning Standards
- Use instructional models and resources that are consistent with school mission and flexible in addressing the needs of all learners
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- Utilizes a coherent and effective interim assessment system (e.g., use of formative, interim, and summative assessment data) for monitoring progress, predicting performance, and adjusting instruction
- Have an effective process for supporting improved classroom instruction, including frequent observation and feedback
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Use a defined process for evaluating and supporting curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals

<sup>43</sup> Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE replaced the DOE Progress Report with the DOE School Quality Report. The 2012-2013 school year is the last year NYC public schools will have a Progress Report score. The Progress Report and School Quality Report contain similar indicators of performance.

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

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

### 1c. Learning Environment

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

- Provide a safe, respectful, and stable academic environment conducive to student learning (one with efficient transitions and safe hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.)
- Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best effort academically and to actively engage in their own learning and the life of the school
- 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
- Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and supported
- Have 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:

- Classroom observations
- NYC DOE School Survey results (students, parents and teachers)
- School mission and articulated values
- Student management plan (code of conduct, school values, discipline policy, positive incentive system, etc.)
- Student attendance and retention rates
- Student discipline data (referral, suspension, expulsion)
- Parent complaint/concern information
- Self-administered satisfaction survey results
- Interviews with school leadership, staff, and, if appropriate, students
- Scheduled student engagement opportunities (e.g., student advisory, internships, student government, student led conferences, peer tutoring, peer mediation, etc.)
- School calendar and class schedules

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

### 2a. Mission and Goals

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

- Have an animated mission statement and clearly articulated goals (both academic and non-academic) that staff, students and community embrace
- Demonstrate an active self-evaluation process that involves regular monitoring, an examination of practices based on outcomes against goals, and reporting on progress towards school goals
- Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring data

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

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

## 2b. Leadership and Governance Structure

Schools with successful leadership and governance 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 Law and conflict of interest laws, 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
- 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
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provides 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 and core operational policies
- School calendar
- Professional development plans
- Stakeholder interviews (board, school leadership and staff)

## 2c. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

- A healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student-centered, and open to parents and community support
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the NYC DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Strong community-based partnerships that support and advocate for the school
- Engage families actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- 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
- Share instructional and operational practices with the larger NYC school community and actively seek opportunities for partnering and collaboration
- 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

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

- NYC DOE School Survey satisfaction parent, teacher, and, if appropriate student results
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs
- Participation in NYC DOE initiatives and efforts to collaborate/partner with other NYC schools
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)
- 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
- Student/Family and Staff Handbooks

## 2d. Operational Health

Schools that are effective, sustainable organizations have many of the characteristics below:

- A safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Demonstrate efficient and orderly daily operations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage and insurance and facility documents
- An effective process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, supporting, and evaluating school leadership and staff
- A flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- Consistently meet student enrollment and retention targets as established by SED (applicable to schools renewed after 2010)
- Communications with NYC DOE are timely, comprehensive, and appropriate
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees

Evidence of an operationally viable organization may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- Appropriate insurance documents
- Operational policies and procedures
- Operational organizational chart
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- School safety plan
- Immunization completion rate information
- Appropriate AED/CPR certifications

## 2e. Financial Sustainability

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

- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, at 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
- Consistently clean financial audits and compliant escrow accounts
- If applicable, strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school's design and academic program
- School leadership and Board maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- School leadership and Board oversee financial and operational responsibilities in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to decision-making
- Demonstrate financial planning for future school years, including per-pupil and space-related cost projections

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 audits, escrow accounts and other fiscal reporting documents
- Financial leader(s) resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships

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

#### **3a. Approved Charter and Agreement**

Schools in substantial compliance with the school's charter and charter agreement have the characteristics below:

- Implement 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
- Implement 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 Comprehensive Review reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership/Board and staff interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

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

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have the characteristics below:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for Free and Reduced Price Lunch, ELL and Special Education students to those of their community school district of location<sup>44</sup> 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 enrollment process and annual waiting lists with integrity
- Employ instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and meet all certification requirements

<sup>44</sup> School-specific targets for enrollment and retention were developed by the NY State Education Department. This requirement of the New York State Charter Schools Act applies to schools renewed after 2010.

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

- School reporting documents
- School's NYSED Annual Report
- Student recruitment plan and resources
- Student management policies and promotion and retention policies
- Student/Family Handbook
- Student discipline policy and 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 the characteristics below:

- Safe and secure facilities with no significant compliance concerns
- Consistently clean annual audits, up-to-date escrow accounts, and complete 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 comply with NYC DOE OSDCP's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members
- Inform NYC DOE OSDCP, and where required, receive OSDCP 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
- Stakeholder interviews

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

### 4a. School Expansion or Model Replication

In anticipation of a new charter term, a school may consider various growth options: replication, expansion to new grades or increased enrollment, or alteration of its 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 determine community needs and to communicate regarding the school's 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 revision or merger applications
- 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 (for example, human resource policies for growing your own talent, 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)
- School develops contingency plans especially for facilities or financial scenarios

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

- Charter renewal application
- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organizational 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 without major changes through expansion or replication, 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 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

## Appendix A: School Performance Data

### Students scoring at or above Level 3

Grade-Level Proficiency in English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>				
Grade 3	52.0%	80.0%	34.8%	43.5%
Grade 4	46.2%	65.4%	15.4%	37.5%
Grade 5	75.9%	48.1%	14.8%	15.1%
Grade 6	64.8%	77.8%	26.4%	29.6%
Grade 7	38.9%	64.2%	37.0%	27.8%
Grade 8	45.3%	42.9%	37.0%	40.7%
<b>DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 30 *</b>				
Grade 3	2.3	27.0	3.6	9.5
Grade 4	-6.1	10.0	-13.5	3.9
Grade 5	19.2	-8.1	-18.5	-15.1
Grade 6	14.8	24.3	-0.4	1.9
Grade 7	-5.8	11.6	4.3	-3.2
Grade 8	2.8	-4.0	5.6	5.7
<b>DIFFERENCE FROM NYC</b>				
Grade 3	3.9	31.0	6.7	13.6
Grade 4	-4.8	13.0	-11.8	6.4
Grade 5	26.9	-4.1	-13.8	-13.3
Grade 6	21.2	32.5	3.1	4.3
Grade 7	2.4	20.9	11.6	1.0
Grade 8	10.3	3.9	11.6	11.9

Grade-Level Proficiency in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>The Renaissance Charter School</b>				
Grade 3	56.0%	88.0%	52.2%	43.5%
Grade 4	53.8%	76.9%	19.2%	50.0%
Grade 5	94.4%	64.8%	27.8%	38.9%
Grade 6	77.4%	88.9%	34.0%	20.4%
Grade 7	75.9%	86.8%	51.9%	42.6%
Grade 8	66.0%	76.8%	40.7%	51.9%
<b>DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 30 *</b>				
Grade 3	0.1	24.6	17.3	1.3
Grade 4	-12.6	5.2	-19.5	6.2
Grade 5	23.8	-4.7	-5.5	-2.4
Grade 6	12.9	20.0	-2.7	-21.2
Grade 7	8.8	17.3	18.6	4.9
Grade 8	2.3	7.6	5.1	18.0
<b>DIFFERENCE FROM NYC</b>				
Grade 3	1.2	31.0	19.0	4.8
Grade 4	-8.5	11.2	-16.0	10.0
Grade 5	31.5	-0.4	-1.8	0.1
Grade 6	21.4	29.6	5.1	-13.4
Grade 7	20.4	29.5	26.9	13.0
Grade 8	13.5	21.6	15.0	29.1

\* CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

## Regents Pass Rates

The Renaissance Charter School			
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Integrated Algebra	81.8%	75.4%	63.1%
Algebra 2 / Trigonometry	46.7%	72.0%	38.5%
Comprehensive English	96.4%	86.0%	78.4%
U.S. History	94.6%	98.0%	78.7%
Chemistry	100.0%	55.0%	67.3%
Physics	-	-	-
Living Environment	77.6%	77.8%	80.8%
Language Other Than English	-	-	-

## Appendix B: Additional Accountability Data

### NYC DOE Accountability Reports

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

[Annual Comprehensive Review 2012-2013](#)

[Annual Comprehensive Review 2013-2014](#)