

**NEW HEIGHTS ACADEMY
CHARTER SCHOOL**

**RENEWAL REPORT
JANUARY 2010**

Joel Klein, Chancellor

Eric Nadelstern, Chief Schools Officer

Michael Duffy, Executive Director, Charter School Office

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

New Heights Academy Charter School is a middle and high school serving approximately 760 students from grade 5 through grade 12 in the 2009-2010 school year.¹ The school opened in 2006 with grades 5 and 9. It has no plans to grow further.² It is currently housed in a private facility in District 6.³

The school population comprises 12.7% Black, 87.2% Hispanic, 0% White, and 0% Asian students. 52.1% of students are designated eligible for free or reduced lunch.⁴ The student body includes 19.9% English language learners and 12.1% special education students. Boys account for 48.7% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51.3%.⁵

The school earned an A on its progress report in 2009 and an A in 2008. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 94%.⁶ The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.⁷

Renewal Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter School Office conducted a thorough review of this schools' Retrospective Renewal Report; annual reporting documents; surveys, student achievement data; and state, local and federal accountability metrics as well as a detailed audit of the schools finance, operations and governance practices. In addition, the CSO conducted a detailed site visit on the following dates: November 4,5,6, 2009.

The following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Michael Duffy, Executive Director, Charter School Office, NYC DOE
- Nancy Meakem, Director of Evaluation, Charter School Office, NYC DOE
- Aamir Raza, Director of Oversight and Accountability, Charter School Office, NYC DOE
- Rana Khan, Director of Operations, Charter School Office, NYC DOE
- Anyeli Matos, Associate Director of Operations, Charter School Office, NYC DOE
- Fred Lisker, Special Education Specialist, NYC DOE
- Christina Lewis, Cambridge Associates
- Aquila Haynes, Associate Director of Community Engagement, Charter School Office, NYC DOE

Renewal Recommendation:

NYC DOE CSO recommends that the State Board of Regents approve the application for renewal of the New Heights Academy Charter School for a period of 5 years consistent with the terms of the renewal application.

The NYC DOE-OCS has found New Heights Academy Charter School to be an academically successful school that is organizationally viable and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations pertaining to its current charter. Based on the findings delineated below, New Heights Academy Charter School is an educationally and fiscally sound organization, is likely to improve student learning and achievement, and meets the requirements of the charter Schools Act and applicable law.

¹ NYC DOE ATS system

² NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

³ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

⁴ Demographic data drawn from NYC DOE ATS enrollment database as of 10/31/09.

⁵ Demographic data drawn from NYC DOE ATS enrollment database as of 10/31/09.

⁶ NYC DOE School Progress Report. This document is posted on the NYC DOE website at <http://www.schools.nyc.gov> and is also included in Part 7 of this report.

⁷ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

Part 2: Findings

What the school does well

- The school leadership is reflective and focused on data, self-evaluation, and school improvement.
 - New Heights Charter School has grown considerably since it first opened, almost quadrupling the student and staff population by the start of the academic year 2009-10. One of the school's strengths is school leadership's ability to reflect and evaluate the impact of this and other challenges that the school faces. As a result, the school has developed effective plans and strategies to ensure a continued focus on improving student achievement.
 - The school has successfully used Understanding by Design to create a curriculum that is standards-based and vertically aligned for all subjects in grades 5-12. Subject specialists initially developed the curriculum year by year. As the school has grown in size, the leadership team has realized the need for greater curriculum continuity between the different grades and departments. As a result, new teachers participate in training at the end of the school year, giving them the opportunity to refine and review the curriculum for the coming year. School leaders feel that this change in practice has enabled new teachers to quickly become familiar with the work of the school and become a part of the team. In addition, all teachers feel confident and better prepared to focus on developing lessons plans that engage students and provide academic rigor and challenge. A team of subject area coaches regularly monitors and reviews instructional practice and is accountable to the school leadership team. They provide professional development and mentoring to help teachers refine and improve their practice.
 - Concerns that student achievement did not match the effort that teachers put into planning lessons or reflect the high level of training they received led the school to focus on student learning outcomes rather than teaching. This is evident in the modified approach that the school has taken in lesson observations, which has enabled the school to provide teachers with precise feedback on student engagement and achievement. While it is too soon to see any significant effects on achievement data from this approach, teachers agree that the more focused feedback has helped them to improve their practice and become more reflective about their work. Evidence from lesson observations indicates that, with clear learning objectives and well-planned tasks, most students are actively engaged in their learning.
- The school is a safe, secure learning environment that fosters high expectations for students' engagement and success.
 - School leaders have ensured that over the past two years, the building work and renovations provide an attractive, secure, and well-equipped learning environment. Famous quotations and names of colleges decorate the hallways and serve to remind the school community of the school's mission to provide students with the skills, knowledge, and desire to pursue success in college and careers. The school's core values of perseverance, responsibility integrity, discipline, and enthusiasm (PRIDE) reflect the high expectations that the school has for its students. All new students PRIDE academy at the start of the school year that sets out these expectations very clearly. Additionally, all new families attend an orientation session in June or August. Students feel that the school is strict but they are happy to conform to the PRIDE code of conduct as they realize it is for their benefit. Parents agree that the school has a family atmosphere that is welcoming and supportive to students and their families. Students demonstrate their evident love of learning through their enthusiasm and generally

high levels of engagement in lessons, as well as in the quality of their work and their improving academic results.

- The school has aligned its curriculum to State and City standards in all core subjects and has designed it to provide a continuous learning experience from grade 5 through grade 12. The school's excellent use of technology enhances both teaching and learning.
 - Teachers have effectively used Understanding by Design to create a standards-based, vertically aligned curriculum for all subjects across all grades. Students have the opportunity to learn Japanese as a modern foreign language, in addition to studying a varied program in the arts that includes music, art, and drama. The school teaches reading and writing skills across the curriculum areas and links relevant math skills to science lessons. As a result, students have many opportunities to develop and consolidate their skills while acquiring knowledge and understanding in different subject areas. The school has a well-equipped fitness gymnasium but limited sports facilities. However, it does offer a well-supported, comprehensive sports program as part of its extracurricular activities.
 - The school has a clear commitment to using technology as a tool for both teachers and students. The school is equipped with smart boards in all classes. Teachers receive training on the software and make effective and innovative use of this technology across the school. As observed during the visit, they enhance English and social studies lesson by the use of video clips and live media. In math and science, students use hand-held Senteo controllers, allowing an instant response to informal and formal assessments. In addition, students use laptop computers for research, word processing, and making power point presentations to their peers as part of their course work. As a result, both teachers and students have well-developed technological skills. Both groups agree that this more exciting and interactive teaching has led to significantly increased student engagement in lessons.
- There is a clear school wide focus on improving assessment and the use of data to track students' progress during their time at New Heights.
 - The school has effectively implemented a yearly assessment cycle. Over the past two years, it has enhanced this by the use of interim assessments that correspond to the New York State English language arts, math, social studies, and science exams in the middle school, and to the Regents exams in the high school. In addition, teachers have developed subject based formal and informal assessments for each unit of study. Teachers use Excel worksheets to track the progress of students in their classes. The school has developed a common grading policy, and well-established rubrics in all subjects that indicate the expectations at each level. Charts displayed in the classrooms show whether students have completed their assignments for each unit and are on track to gain the necessary credits for graduation.
- A strong, collaborative leadership team provides opportunities for all staff to develop their talents and encourages teachers to take on leadership responsibilities.
 - The leadership team works in collaboration, meeting regularly to discuss, monitor and revise school issues and progress. As a result, they have a very clear focus on what needs to be done to drive school improvement. They have developed a focus in providing effective professional development that enables teaching staff to improve their skills, and to regularly monitor how this works in practice. They have developed strategies and procedures to ensure that regular professional development focuses on identified school priorities. In addition, individual teachers receive support and mentoring from a team of coaches. The coaches provide a tier of middle managers who are accountable to the leadership team and responsible for carrying out many of the informal lesson observations and providing constructive feedback. The school has internally promoted a staff

developer to Middle School Director and a teacher to Staff Developer. Both were part of the original staff, demonstrating the school's commitment to developing future leaders.

- All teachers have an annual professional portfolio that includes their personal and professional goals as well as evidence of their continuing professional development. Teachers' goals link closely to school goals, thus ensuring an awareness of whole school issues and providing a clear focus for the year. Teachers are required to spend time visiting other classes and other schools, as well as participate in inquiry teams investigating a chosen area. For example, one group researched methods for improving student engagement and shared their findings with all staff. As a result, teachers are reflective about their work and agree that the school provides them with the necessary support to enable them to improve and develop their teaching skills
- The school has developed partnerships with parents and communicates effectively with its diverse population.
 - The school has developed strong partnerships and communication with parents. This helps parents to be regularly involved in the work of the school and the progress of their children. Parents interviewed know what their children's goals are and what they have to do to achieve them. The school has developed a very clear handbook for families setting out its rules and expectations. Parents appreciate the school's efforts to reach out to them in their home language. They are encouraged to email the school or individual teachers if they have concerns or questions. This is in addition to the school's open door policy where parents can always discuss their concerns with a member of staff. Parents are also able to access their children's progress in assessments or homework tasks through a web based program and many use this facility. The school actively encourages parents to support the school through a volunteer program. The appointment of a bilingual parent coordinator has further improved parental involvement. The school has provided bilingual workshops on how parents can support their children at home since its opening year, in addition to providing information about graduation and college applications. The school also has plans to initiate programs in learning English and computer skills especially for parents to develop their skills in these areas.
- The school's Board of Trustees has functioned effectively in furthering the school's mission and vision and maintains sound finances and internal controls.
 - The Board noted several accomplishments over the course of five years including, private facility financing, staff recruitment and retention, improvement in test scores, and the overall learning environment and community engagement. If a full renewal is granted, the Board plans to concentrate upon sustaining improvement in graduation and Progress Report data, continuing board development and creating an interim plan for school leadership succession.
 - The school continues to maintain an appropriate degree of segregation of functions and proper internal controls at all levels. All processes were found intact and evidence shows that the school is following its adopted financial and human resource policies. The financial statements of NHACS were prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) acceptable in the United States of America.
 - According to the school's audited financial statements for year ended June 30, 2009, the school possessed assets totaling \$3,804,898 and total liabilities of \$782,182. Of the total net assets of \$3,022,756, only \$13,661 remain restricted for use purposes. NHACS has close to one million dollars in liquid assets that

could be converted to cash within 90 day period. The school remains in good financial condition to meet its obligations.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop data systems to incorporate item analysis and ways of tracking individual student progress and trends over time.
 - School leaders recognize the need to develop a data system that allows teachers and other staff to more thoroughly monitor and track students' progress over their time at New Heights. Currently, teachers collect data from tests and assessments for the present year in order to track progress. However, the school is not yet able to provide teachers with efficient access to historical data to track students' progress over time or to monitor individual and group trends in each subject area. As a result, teachers do not always have a clear picture of students' past performance, nor are they able to identify trends and patterns in student learning.
- Ensure that teachers are consistent in their use of data to plan differentiated lessons that meet the needs of all learners.
 - Teachers are in the early stages of using data to plan lessons differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. In many lessons, teaching focuses on grade level expectations rather than the abilities and different starting points of individual students. As a result, low achieving students can struggle with reading content that is beyond their comprehension skills, and high achieving students are not always sufficiently challenged or extended in their thinking. Where teachers use differentiated activities effectively, for example, using writing frames or graded reading material, students remain on task and make progress in their learning. However, this is not yet a consistent school-wide practice.
- Continue to improve the performance and achievement levels of the different subgroups within the school population including special education students and English language learners.
 - The school is in the early stages of developing effective strategies for identifying and supporting students who do not make progress. Each grade has a 'learning strategist' whose role is to provide support for students identified as at risk. This includes students with difficulties and English language learners. The school determines the levels of support through an accurate assessment of individual need and includes a range of activities such as small group tutorials or support in lessons. The assistant director of support services coordinates their work and liaises with service providers and social workers. Because of this, the school has become more effective at understanding and addressing the needs of its different subgroups. However, school leaders recognize that this is an area that needs careful monitoring. Their goal is to ensure that the provision and support effectively meets the needs of these students and is consistent throughout the school.
- Continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of school plans and strategies on school quality, to ensure that as the school grows, systems and structures are consistent, sustainable, and fully embedded.
 - The school leadership acknowledges that in order to sustain and maintain the current success of the school and further improve students' achievement they need to continually monitor and revise their plans. While current planning accurately identifies necessary changes, the school should also identify interim goals and characteristics of success against which it can track progress.

- The school experienced turnover its financial division. The school has replaced the prior Chief Financial Officer with a DFO. It is essential that the board and school leadership continue to provide opportunities for professional development and set clear outcome measures for all current and new staff.

Part 3: Charter School Goals

The New Heights Academy Charter School has sufficiently met the goals set forth in its charter agreement. Please see the below table of Charter Goals which is excerpted from the school's retrospective report and has been verified by the Charter School Office.

New Heights Academy Charter School – Academic Goals					
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Absolute	85% of the cohort of students enrolled continuously at NHACS from grades 9 - 12 will graduate within 4 years.	No graduating class	No graduating class	85% of the continuously enrolled cohort (and 93% of the entire 11 th grade cohort) is fully credited and on track to graduate on time next year	No results for this future year
		NA	NA	Yes	
Comparative	The cohort of students who are enrolled continuously at NHACS from grades 5 through 8 will score 35% higher than their New York City peers in District 6 on the New York State grade 8 ELA and Mathematics exams.	Underperformed District 6 by 5.2% in ELA 10.5% in Math	Outperformed District 6 by 13.3% ELA 5.5% Math	Outperformed District 6 by 14.0% ELA 14.7% Math	
		No	Yes	Yes	
Comparative	Each cohort of NHACS students will annually increase their achievement as measured by average report card grades and New York City and New York State ELA and Mathematics assessments.	No data available for comparison	MS increased report card average and overall performance on the NYS ELA and Math exams; HS did not increase report card average.	Overall average (grades 6, 7, 10, and 11) increase of 3 percentage points on the report cards from year 1 to year 3.	
		NA	No	Yes	
Absolute	95% of each cohort of NHACS students will meet promotional criteria by the end of the summer school session each year.	The average of both grades was 85% meeting promotional criteria.	The average of all 4 grades was 91% meeting promotional criteria.	The average of all 5 grades (*before summer school grades are computed) is 96% meeting promotional criteria.	
		No	No	Yes*	

Part 4: Charter School Performance Data

The New Heights Academy Charter School met its goals for student academic achievement as measured by New York State exams in English Language Arts and Math as demonstrated in the below chart of student achievement data.

These charts presents the percentage of students at the school scoring at or above grade level (performance level 3 or greater) on the New York State ELA and Math exams as well as a comparison to the percentage of students at or above grade level in District 6 and New York City.

Percent of Students Performing at or Above Grade Level – Whole School⁸

ELA				
	2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>NHA</i>				
<i>CS</i>	n/a	34.4%	45.8%	62.8%
<i>CSD 6</i>		34.1%	43.1%	58.0%
<i>NYC</i>		52.5%	59.0%	70.3%

Math				
	2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>NHA</i>				
<i>CS</i>	n/a	50.0%	65.1%	77.2%
<i>CSD 6</i>		53.7%	65.9%	77.1%
<i>NYC</i>		66.9%	75.9%	83.3%

Percent of Students Performing at or Above Grade Level – By Grade

Grade 5						
			2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>ELA</i>	<i>NHA</i>					
	<i>CS</i>		n/a	34.4%	44.8%	n/a
	<i>CSD 6</i>			37.7%	57.9%	
	<i>NYC</i>			57.7%	70.6%	
<i>Math</i>	<i>NHA</i>					
	<i>CS</i>		n/a	50.0%	60.4%	n/a
	<i>CSD 6</i>			58.8%	68.4%	
	<i>NYC</i>			72.9%	80.7%	

Grade 6						
			2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>ELA</i>	<i>NHA</i>	<i>CS</i>	n/a	n/a	46.9%	54.2%

⁸ Charter school, district and city test results taken from NYSED testing data:
<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/ela-math/>

		CSD 6			37.1%	62.8%
		NYC			54.2%	74.2%
	<i>Math</i>	NHA				
		CS	n/a	n/a	69.8%	64.6%
		CSD 6			63.8%	68.8%
		NYC			73.4%	78.7%

Grade			2006	2007	2008	2009
7						
<i>ELA</i>	NHA					
	CS	n/a	n/a	n/a		71.6%
	CSD 6					62.1%
	NYC					72.5%
<i>Math</i>	NHA					
	CS	n/a	n/a	n/a		89.7%
	CSD 6					79.4%
	NYC					82.4%

Student Attendance Rate⁹

	2005- 2006	2006- 2007	2007- 2008	2008- 2009
Student Attendance Rate	n/a	95.1%	94.5%	94.0%

⁹ Attendance rate taken from charter school annual reports.

Part 5: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

I. PROCESS BACKGROUND

A. Statutory Basis for Renewal

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

- Improve student learning and achievement;
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems by holding the schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.¹⁰

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.¹¹

A school seeking renewal of its charter must submit a renewal application to the charter entity to which the original charter application was submitted.¹² As one such charter entity, the New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”) institutes a renewal application process that adheres to the Act’s renewal standards:

- A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in its charter;
- A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private;
- Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school including the charter school report cards and certified financial statements;
- Indications of parent and student satisfaction.

Where the NYCDOE approves a renewal application, it is required under the Act to submit the application and a proposed charter to the Board of Regents for its review and approval.¹³

¹⁰ See § 2850 of the Charter Schools Act of 1998.

¹¹ See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

¹² See generally §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4).

¹³ § 2852(5)

B. NYCDOE's Charter Renewal Process

The expiration of charters and their renewal based on a compelling record of success is the linchpin of charter school accountability. The NYCDOE's processes and procedures reflect this philosophy and therefore meet the objectives of the Act.¹⁴

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

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

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

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

This report contains the findings and recommendations of the NYCDOE regarding a school's application for charter renewal. This report is based on a cumulative record of the school's progress during its charter term, including but not limited to oversight visits, annual reports, and formal correspondence between the school and its authorizing entities, all of which are conducted in order to identify areas of weakness and to help the school to address them. Additionally, the NYCDOE incorporates into this report its findings from the renewal application process, which includes a written application, completion of student achievement data templates, and a school visit by the Office of Charter Schools of the NYCDOE ("NYCDOE-OCS").

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

¹⁴ The NYCDOE charter renewal application is available on the Office of Charter Schools website at <http://www.nycenet.edu/OurSchools/Region84/Creation/default.htm>.

Part 6: Framing Questions and Key Benchmarks

I. FRAMING QUESTIONS:

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

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

II. RENEWAL BENCHMARKS:

Benchmark 1: Performance and Progress

An academically successful school can demonstrate outstanding student performance outcomes according to the following statistical analyses:

1. Absolute
2. Comparative
3. Value-Added / Progress
4. NCLB

Benchmark 2: Rigorous Instructional Program Strong School Environment

In addition to outstanding student performance outcomes, a school that is an academic success has the following characteristics:

- Rigorous Instructional Program that includes:
 - Clearly-defined essential knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn, and that are aligned with state standards
 - Curriculum that is organized coherently across subjects and grades, and reflects the school's mission and goals
 - Academic expectations that adults in the school clearly and consistently communicate to students
 - Classroom lessons with clear goals aligned with the curriculum
 - Classroom practices that reflect competent instructional strategies
 - Assessments and data that the school systematically generates and uses to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning, and that has led to increased student performance
 - Formal and successful strategies to identify and meet the needs of students at-risk of academic failure, students not making acceptable progress towards achieving school goals, students who are ELL, and special education students
- A School Environment that Promotes Successful Teaching and Learning that includes:
 - An environment where students and staff feel safe and secure
 - Behavioral and cultural expectations that adults in the school clearly and consistently communicate to students
 - Clear policies and strategies to address student behaviors to promote learning—those behaviors that are both appropriate and inappropriate
 - Documented discipline policies and procedures for general and special education students that the school enforces fairly and consistently with appropriate due process
 - A professional culture focused on teaching and learning, with a qualified and competent teaching staff
 - Professional development activities at or sponsored by the school that are aligned with the mission and goals of the school, support the instructional program, meet student needs, and result in increased student achievement
 - A system for ongoing teacher evaluation and improvement that builds the school's capacity to reach its academic goals, with effective strategies to assist inexperienced or struggling teachers

Benchmark 3: Non-Academic Performance

A school that is organizationally viable can demonstrate outstanding non-academic performance outcomes according to the following statistical analyses:

- Absolute
- Comparative
- Value-Added

Benchmark 4: Governance and Internal Controls

In addition to outstanding non-academic performance outcomes, a school that is a viable organization has the following characteristics:

- Effective School Governance that includes:
 - A clear and common understanding of the school's mission, priorities, and challenges among all members of the board of trustees and school leadership, as evidenced by the strategies and resources used to further the academic and organizational success of the school
 - An evidenced commitment to serving a student population that reflects the full range of students throughout the city.
 - Policies, systems, and processes that facilitate effective governance of the school and that are followed consistently
 - Meaningful opportunities for staff and parents to become involved in school governance
 - Avenues of communication from the board of trustees to other members of the school community and vice-versa
 - Communication between the school leadership and school staff that facilitates coordinated actions and messages toward other members of the school community
 - Processes to address parent, staff, community, and student concerns appropriately and in a timely manner
 - Annual evaluations of the school leadership, based on clearly-defined goals and measurements
 - A board of trustees with a diversity of opinions and perspectives that promotes a healthy and vigorous dialogue of ideas
 - A process for board development to build its capacity to oversee the school's operations and to ensure the school's continued progress
 - A conflict of interest policy and code of ethics that are followed consistently
 - Activities that are in substantial compliance with the Open Meetings Law and Public Officers Law
 - An active and ongoing relationship with independent legal counsel that reviews relevant documents, policies, and incidents, and makes recommendations as needed

Benchmark 5: Sound Financial Controls

In addition to outstanding non-academic performance outcomes, a school that is a viable organization has the following characteristics:

- Healthy and Sound Financial Practices that include:
 - A long range financial plan that guides school operations
 - Realistic budgets that are monitored and adjusted when appropriate
 - Effective oversight, and financial decisions that further and reflect the school's mission, program, and goals
 - Internal controls and procedures that are followed consistently and that result in prudent resource management
 - Capacity to correct any deficiencies or audit findings
 - Financial records that are kept according to GAAP
 - Adequate financial resources to ensure stable operations
 - Processes that maintain and successfully manage the school's cash flow
 - Non-variable income streams that support critical financial needs

Benchmark 6: Parent and Student Satisfaction

A school that is a viable organization has the following characteristics:

Parent and Student Satisfaction, demonstrated by survey results as well as other valid and reliable measures.

Benchmark 7: Sufficient Facilities and Physical Conditions

In addition to outstanding non-academic performance outcomes, a school that is a viable organization has sufficient facilities and physical conditions conducive to the school implementing its program and meeting its goals.

Benchmark 8: Sufficient Reporting

A school that is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations has the following characteristics:

- Sufficient Reporting that includes
 - Annual reports and financial reports submitted completely and by deadline
 - Responses to DOE's or SED's requests for information or for changes to school operations (in accordance with legal requirements) in a timely manner

Benchmark 9: Appropriate Admissions Policy

A school that is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations has the following characteristics:

- An Appropriate Admissions Policy that includes
 - Opportunities for all interested parents to submit a complete application for enrollment
 - A random selection process that is conducted fairly, and when a wait list is generated, it is used appropriately to ensure a fair admissions process

Benchmark 10: Compliance with All Applicable Laws and Regulations

A school that is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations has the following characteristics:

- A Record of Substantial Compliance with:
 - Applicable health laws and regulations
 - Title I regulations
 - IDEA regulations to meet the needs of special education students

Part 7: NYC DOE School Progress Reports

Please see the attached progress reports for this school.

NYC Department of Education Progress Report 2008-09 MIDDLE

Progress Report Grade

A

What does this grade mean?

Schools are assigned letter grades based on their overall Progress Report score. Schools that get As and Bs are eligible for rewards. Schools that get Ds and Fs, or 3 Cs in a row, face consequences, including change in school leadership or school closure.

How did this school perform?

- This school's overall score for 2008-09 is 103.8
- This score places the School in the 99 percentile of all Middle schools Citywide—i.e., 99 percent of those schools scored lower than this school

This Progress Report is for:

SCHOOL	New Heights Academy Charter School (84M353)
SCHOOL LEADER	Stacy Wnitt
ENROLLMENT	191
SCHOOL TYPE	MIDDLE
PEER INDEX	2.9

Category	Calculated Score	Category Grade
School Environment	15.0 out of 15	A
Student Performance	25.0 out of 25	A
Student Progress	60.0 out of 60	A
Additional Credit	3.8 (15 max)	
Overall Score	103.8 out of 100	A

Quality Review Score
This school did not receive a Quality Review in 2008-09.

State Accountability Status
Based on its 2008-09 performance, this school is:
In Good Standing
This status is determined by the New York State Department of Education under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. It is separate from the school's Progress Report Grade.

How scores translate to grades:

- Schools receive letter grades based on their overall score
- Schools with an overall score between 68.0-100 receive a letter grade of A
- 70% of schools earned an A in 2008-09

Middle School Table – Overall Grades

Grade	Score range	City summary
A	68.0-100	77.6% of schools
B	54-67.9	18.5% of schools
C	43.0-53.9	3.0% of schools
D	33.0-42.9	0.9% of schools
F	0-32.9	0% of schools

In This Report:

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School Environment uses parent, teacher and secondary student surveys and other data to measure necessary conditions for learning: attendance, academic expectations, communication, engagement and safety and respect.

Student Performance measures student skill levels in English Language Arts and Math.

Student Progress measures average student improvement from last year to this year in English Language Arts and Math.

Closing the Achievement Gap gives schools additional credit for exemplary gains among high-need students.

The back page provides specific information about how the school performed in each of these areas.

Additional Information

Closing the Achievement Gap

Schools earn additional credit when their high-need students make exemplary gains. These gains are based on the percentage of high-need students who improve by at least one-half of a proficiency level in English Language Arts or Math (e.g., student improves from 2.25 to 2.75 in ELA, or 3.20 to 3.70 in Math).

This component can only improve a school's Progress Report grade. It cannot lower a school's grade.

Credit	Exemplary Proficiency Gains	Student Group
		English Language Arts
+0.75	25.6%	English Language Learners
+1.5	41.7%	Special Education Students
+1.5	31.4%	Hispanic Students in the Lowest Third Citywide
-	-	Black Students in the Lowest Third Citywide
-	-	Other Students in the Lowest Third Citywide
		Mathematics
	20.9%	English Language Learners
	25.0%	Special Education Students
	29.4%	Hispanic Students in the Lowest Third Citywide
-	-	Black Students in the Lowest Third Citywide
-	-	Other Students in the Lowest Third Citywide

(-) indicates less than 15 students in this category

Peer Schools

Each school's performance is compared to the performance of schools in its peer group. Peer schools are those New York City public schools with a student population most like this school's population. Each school has up to 40 peer schools.

For Elementary and K-8 Schools, peer schools are determined based on the percentage of students at each school that are English Language Learners, Special Education, Black/Hispanic and Title I eligible.

For Middle Schools, peer schools are determined based on the average ELA and Math proficiency levels of the school's students before they entered Middle School.

The peer schools for New Heights Academy Charter School are:

DBN	School Name	DBN	School Name
09M344	Academy of Collaborative Education	06M143	J.H.S. 143 Eleanor Roosevelt
18K068	I.S. 068 Isaac Biddersee	12K267	Bronx Latin
08X376	Antonia Pantoja Preparatory Academy A College Board S	18K211	I.S. 211 John Wilson
01M509	Marta Valle Secondary School	12K286	Fannie Lou Hamer Middle School
11X142	J.H.S. 142 John Philip Sousa	09X117	I.S. 117 Joseph H. Wade
10K243	West Bronx Academy for the Future	10X399	M.S. 399
32K347	I.S. 347 School of Humanities	14K330	Urban Assembly School for the Urban Environment
09X166	J.H.S. 166 Roberto Clemente	06M218	I.S. 218 Salome Lirera
01M332	University Neighborhood Middle School	06M346	Community Health Academy of the Heights
08K366	Urban Assembly Academy of Civic Engagement	12K099	J.H.S. 099 Herman Ridder
11K370	School of Diplomacy	13K596	Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VII Middle Sch
13K336	Academy of Business and Community Development	14K020	J.H.S. 050 John D. Weis
12K341	Accion Academy	12X190	I.S. 190
12K271	East Bronx Academy for the Future	27K053	I.S. 053 Brian Piccolo
12K318	I.S. X318 Math Science & Technology Through Arts	18K588	Middle School for Art and Philosophy
17K353	Elijah Stroud Middle School	10X391	M.S. 391
03M256	M.S. 256 Academic & Athletic Excellence	15K463	Secondary School for Journalism
16K584	M.S. 584	05M469	Choir Academy of Harlem
12K217	School of Performing Arts	12X129	P.S. 129 Twin Parks Upper
19K442	New Horizons School	04M445	J.H.S. 045 John S. Roberts

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Results by Category

SCHOOL **New Heights Academy Charter School**
SCHOOL LEADER **Stacy Winiff**

HOW TO INTERPRET THIS CHART

A school is evaluated by asking how far its score in each category has moved along the range of scores for all schools. These charts show that movement as a percentage. In the example to the right, the school's score is 75% of the way from the lowest to the highest score in the City.

If a school performs at the top end of the range, the bar will be fully shaded. If a school performs at the low end of the range, the bar will not be shaded. If a school performs in the middle of the range, half the bar will be shaded.



In this example, the school's attendance is 95%. This is 75% of the way from the lowest attendance at any school (80%) to the highest attendance (100%).

Below, the green charts on the left compare the school to its peer group. The blue charts on the right compare the school to schools Citywide. Peer scores count three times as much as City scores. Peer and City ranges are based on the outcomes of schools from 2005-08.

School Environment

Comprises 15% of the Overall Score

This Year's Score: **Survey Scores (10 points)**
15 out of 15

A

Academic Expectations:
Communication:
Engagement:
Safety and Respect:
Attendance (5 points)

Your School's Score	Your School Relative to Peer Horizon:	Your School Relative to City Horizon:	Number of students
8.1	100.0%	85.2%	
7.5	104.3%	96.2%	
7.5	100.0%	86.7%	
7.9	104.0%	81.8%	
96.5%	137.6%	89.3%	

Student Performance

Comprises 25% of the Overall Score

This Year's Score: **English Language Arts**
25 out of 25

A

Percentage of Students at Proficiency (Level 3 or 4):
Median Student Proficiency (1.00-4.50):
Mathematics
Percentage of Students at Proficiency (Level 3 or 4):
Median Student Proficiency (1.00-4.50):

Your School's Score	Your School Relative to Peer Horizon:	Your School Relative to City Horizon:	Number of students
62.8%	166.4%	70.5%	188
3.11	127.5%	67.5%	188
77.7%	121.5%	75.6%	188
3.43	111.2%	71.7%	188

Student Progress

Comprises 60% of the Overall Score

This Year's Score: **English Language Arts**
60 out of 60

A

Percentage of Students Making at Least 1 Year of Progress
Percentage of Students in School's Lowest 1/3 Students Making at Least 1 Year of Progress
Average Change in Student Proficiency for Level 1 and Level 2 Students
Average Change in Student Proficiency for Level 3 and Level 4 Students
Mathematics
Percentage of Students Making at Least 1 Year of Progress
Percentage of Students in School's Lowest 1/3 Students Making at Least 1 Year of Progress
Average Change in Student Proficiency for Level 1 and Level 2 Students
Average Change in Student Proficiency for Level 3 and Level 4 Students

Your School's Score	Your School Relative to Peer Horizon:	Your School Relative to City Horizon:	Number of students
73.9%	105.5%	108.2%	198
98.4%	116.1%	116.0%	62
0.34	112.5%	90.0%	100
0.03	119.2%	103.4%	98
76.2%	104.7%	87.0%	198
76.7%	79.5%	71.2%	60
0.32	70.7%	57.9%	60
0.14	102.2%	91.8%	138

Progress report Grade

A

What does this grade mean?

Schools are assigned letter grades based on their overall Progress Report score. Schools that get As and Bs are eligible for rewards. Schools that get Ds and Fs, or 3 Cs in a row, face consequences, including change in school leadership or school closure.

How did this school perform?

- This school's overall score for 2007-08 is 87.3
- This score places the School in the 96 percentile of all middle schools Citywide—i.e., 96 percent of those schools scored lower than this school
- This school did not have a 2008 target because it did not receive a grade last year

This Progress Report is for:

SCHOOL	New Heights Academy Charter School (84M353)
SCHOOL LEADER	Stacy Winitz
ENROLLMENT	384
SCHOOL TYPE	MIDDLE SCHOOL
PEER INDEX	2.9

Category	Calculated Score	Category Grade
School Environment	15.0 out of 15	A
Student Performance	21.6 out of 25	A
Student Progress	47.7 out of 60	A
Additional Credit	3.0 (15 max)	
Overall Score	87.3 out of 100	A

How scores translate to grades:

- Schools receive letter grades based on their overall score
- Schools with an overall score between 65.9–106 receive a letter grade of A
- 30% of schools earned an A in 2007-08

Middle School Table – Overall Grades

Grade	Score range	City summary
A	65.9–106	30% of schools
B	49.7–65.8	45% of schools
C	39–49.6	16% of schools
D	29.4–38.9	7% of schools
F	11.1–29.4	2% of schools

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School Environment

uses parent, teacher and secondary student surveys and other data to measure necessary conditions for learning: attendance, academic expectations, communication, engagement and safety and respect.

Student Performance

measures student skill levels in English Language Arts and Math.

Student Progress

measures average student improvement from last year to this year in English Language Arts and Math.

Closing the Achievement Gap

gives schools additional credit for exemplary gains among high-need students.

The back page provides specific information about how the school performed in each of these areas.

Quality Review Score

This school did not receive a Quality Review in 2007-08.

State Accountability Status

This school does not have a State accountability status for 2006-07.

Additional Information

Closing the Achievement Gap

Schools earn additional credit when their high-need students make exemplary gains. These gains are based on the percentage of high-need students who improve by at least one-half of a proficiency level in English Language Arts or Math (e.g., student improves from 2.25 to 2.75 in ELA, or 3.20 to 3.70 in Math). Schools earn additional credit for any one of the five high-need categories of students if the percentage of students in that category who achieve exemplary gains is in the top 40% of all schools citywide.

This component can only improve a school's Progress Report grade. It cannot lower a school's grade.

Credit	Exemplary Proficiency Gains	Student Group
English Language Arts		
+1.5	36.5%	English Language Learners
-	-	Special Education Students
+1.5	31.8%	Hispanic Students in the Lowest Third Citywide
-	-	Black Students in the Lowest Third Citywide
-	-	Other Students in the Lowest Third Citywide
Mathematics		
-	-	English Language Learners
-	-	Special Education Students
-	-	Hispanic Students in the Lowest Third Citywide
-	-	Black Students in the Lowest Third Citywide
-	-	Other Students in the Lowest Third Citywide

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01M509	Marta Valle Secondary School	12X286	Fannie Lou Hamer Middle School
11X142	J.H.S. 142 John Philip Sousa	09K117	I.S. 117 Joseph H. Wade
10X243	West Bronx Academy for the Future	10X399	M.S. 399
32K347	I.S. 347 School of Humanities	14K330	Urban Assembly School for the Urban Environment
09X166	J.H.S. 166 Roberto Clemente	06M218	I.S. 218 Salome Urena
01M332	University Neighborhood Middle School	06M346	Community Health Academy of the Heights
08X366	Urban Assembly Academy of Civic Engagement	12X098	J.H.S. 098 Herman Ridder
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13K336	Academy of Business and Community Development	14K050	J.H.S. 050 John D. Welts
12X341	Accion Academy	12K190	I.S. 190
12X271	East Bronx Academy for the Future	27K053	I.S. 053 Brian Piccolo
12X218	LS. X218 Math Science & Technology Through Arts	18K558	Middle School for Art and Philosophy
17K353	Eljah Stroud Middle School	10X391	M.S. 391
03M256	M.S. 256 Academic & Athletic Excellence	15K463	Secondary School for Journalism
16K584	M.S. 584	05M465	Choir Academy of Harlem
12X217	School of Performing Arts	12K129	P.S. 129 Twin Parks Upper
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School Environment

Comprises 15% of the Overall Score

This Year's Score:
1.007 x 15 = 15

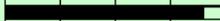
A

Survey Scores (10 points)

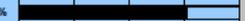
Academic Expectations:

7.9

91.3%



77.8%

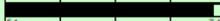


8.1

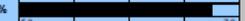
Communication:

7.3

95.7%



88.5%

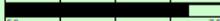


7.4

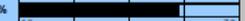
Engagement:

7.1

84.0%



73.3%

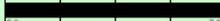


7.5

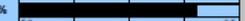
Safety and Respect:

7.9

104.0%



81.8%

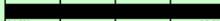


7.8

Attendance (5 points)

96.1%

132.5%



86.3%



93.5%

Student Performance

Comprises 25% of the Overall Score

This Year's Score:
0.865 x 25 = 21.6

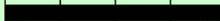
A

English Language Arts

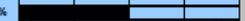
Percentage of Students at Proficiency (Level 3 or 4):

45.8%

108.8%



50.6%

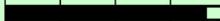


43.2%

Median Student Proficiency (1.00-4.50):

2.93

92.2%



51.8%



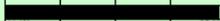
2.97

Mathematics

Percentage of Students at Proficiency (Level 3 or 4):

65.1%

98.5%



61.9%

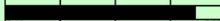


65.9%

Median Student Proficiency (1.00-4.50):

3.16

87.9%



57.2%



3.30

Student Progress

Comprises 60% of the Overall Score

This Year's Score:
0.795 x 60 = 47.7

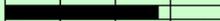
A

English Language Arts

Percentage of Students Making at Least 1 Year of Progress

63.8%

70.9%



75.0%

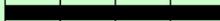


72.3%

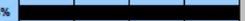
Percentage of Students in School's Lowest 1/3 Students Making at Least 1 Year of Progress

96.3%

108.6%



109.4%

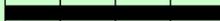


93.9%

Average Change in Student Proficiency for Level 1 and Level 2 Students

0.33

108.3%



86.7%

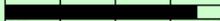


0.37

Average Change in Student Proficiency for Level 3 and Level 4 Students

(0.05)

88.5%



75.3%



(0.02)

Mathematics

Percentage of Students Making at Least 1 Year of Progress

62.5%

68.6%



57.7%



74.4%

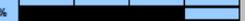
Percentage of Students in School's Lowest 1/3 Students Making at Least 1 Year of Progress

78.4%

83.7%



75.0%



89.5%

Average Change in Student Proficiency for Level 1 and Level 2 Students

0.25

53.7%



45.6%

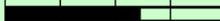


0.44

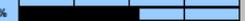
Average Change in Student Proficiency for Level 3 and Level 4 Students

(0.04)

62.2%



55.1%



0.18