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Chancellor

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**HARLEM CHILDREN'S ZONE  
PROMISE ACADEMY  
CHARTER SCHOOL  
RENEWAL REPORT**

**JANUARY 9, 2009**

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## **I. Introduction**

### 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.<sup>1</sup>

When granted, a charter is valid for up to five years. For a school chartered under the Act to operate beyond the initial charter term, the school must seek and obtain renewal of its charter.<sup>2</sup>

A school seeking renewal of its charter must submit a renewal application to the charter entity to which the original charter application was submitted.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See § 2850 of the Charter Schools Act of 1998.

<sup>2</sup> See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

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

<sup>4</sup> § 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.

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.

### Review Process

In preparing this renewal decision, the NYCDOE-OCS reviewed site visit reports from each year of the school's charter, annual reports, financial audits, achievement data and other information provided by the school in the Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy I Charter School Renewal Application Part I: Retrospective, as well as additional data from the NYCDOE Progress Report.

In addition, a site visit was conducted at the school from November 5-7, 2008 by NYCDOE-OCS. Reviewers observed classrooms and reviewed documentation on finances, teacher

certification, IEPs, curricula, student data, etc. The team also spent a great deal of time interviewing leadership, the board of trustees, teachers, students, parents, teaching assistants, operational staff, behavior specialists, and other staff in the building. The review team consisted of the following individuals:

- Jeannemarie Hendershot, Associate Director of Accountability NYCDOE-OCS
- Aamir Raza, Director of Oversight and Policy, NYCDOE-OCS
- Fred Lisker, Senior School Improvement Specialist, NYCDOE Office of Special Education Initiatives
- Christopher Hawkins, Charter Accountability Analyst, NYCDOE-OCS
- Michael Duffy, Executive Director, NYCDOE-OCS
- Christina Grant, Deputy Director, NYCDOE-OCS
- Tania Shinkawa, Director of Middle School Planning, NYCDOE-Office of Portfolio Development
- Jo Cheadle, Cambridge Education

After the visit, the team continued to review documents collected at the visit, requested additional data, and reviewed all documentation related to the school. All of this information was compiled, using the NYCDOE-OCS Benchmarks for Renewal, and are laid out as findings in this report.

## II. School Description and History

The Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy Charter School opened its doors on two campuses in Central Harlem in September 2004, serving kindergarten and sixth grade. The school was founded by many of the board members involved with Harlem Children's Zone, Inc., a nationally renowned non-profit organization with the mission of providing an array of social and educational services to families residing within 100 block radius of the Harlem Children's Zone in Central Harlem. The founding board consisted of Geoffrey Canada, the CEO of Harlem Children's Zone; Kenneth Langone, Stanley Druckenmiller, Mitchell Kurz, Dorlin Reyes, Phyllis Mills, and Alfonso Wyatt. Kenneth Langone continues to chair the board of trustees, and five of the seven founding board members still serve on the board.

The school's mission, as expressed in the charter is:

*Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy Charter School provides a first-rate, year-round, extended-day education to K-12 students living in underperforming school districts. All children and their families have access to the full array of supportive services of the Harlem Children's Zone community network. The rigorous academic program and extensive support systems develop mind, body, character and prepare students to attend, excel in, and graduate from college.*

In the first year of the school, a superintendent was in place in addition to an elementary and middle school principal. At the end of the first year, the original elementary principal left and the current elementary principal, Dennis McKesey, was hired to run the program. At the end of the second year, a new middle school principal, Glen Pinder, was brought on to help strengthen discipline and school culture in the middle school. The school's superintendent left after the school's second year and the position has recently been filled by Dr. Daryl Rock. Shortly before the superintendent left, Phyllis Siwiec was hired as assistant superintendent. She has served in an interim acting superintendent capacity since the departure of the superintendent.

In the spring of the third year of operation, the board reviewed the school's performance and was troubled by the performance of students in the eighth grade, who were intended to rise to ninth grade the following September. The board did not feel that the school was prepared to meet these students' needs at the high school level, and that it would be in the best interest of the students and the school to help find these students placements elsewhere and postpone the high school program for one year. The board requested a revision to the charter for this postponement, and it was approved by the Board of Regents. When the board shared this information with the school community, parents were very upset and the school needed to spend a great deal of time rebuilding trust with some of the families that had expected their children to complete high school at HCZPA. However, the school extended opportunities to these students to come back to the school and participate in the after-school program, and many of the students have taken HCZPA up on their offer, returning frequently for support.

In the fall of this school year, HCZPA welcomed a new fifth grade class through the lottery and began its first year serving high school grades. The board hired the middle school math and science coach, Hayden Lyons, to be the principal of the high school. There are currently three Directors of Instruction, one at each level of the school. The group of students that began as kindergarteners are now in fourth grade at the middle school site. This is the first class that has matriculated from the elementary site to the middle school site. The number of students in the middle school building has doubled since last year because of the additional grades served in that building. All of these changes have created additional challenges for the middle school this year.

**Challenges:**

- According to the NYCDOE Progress Report peer index, the school has accepted lower performing students than many other charter schools in the middle grades.
- Having to temporarily postpone the high school program created distrust among some parents at the school and forced HCZPA to devote time and resources to remedying the situation in place of planning for the future high school.
- Operating in two sites has been an obstacle to clear communication between teachers on different grade levels and has prevented the school from creating a seamless K-12 curriculum and school culture.

The tables below provide demographics for the student body at the school. This data should be used to understand the context in which the school has operated during this chartering period.<sup>5</sup>

**Enrollment as articulated in the school’s charter**

Grade	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
K	100	100	100	100	100
1		100	100	100	100
2			100	100	100
3				100	100
4					100
5					
6	100	100	100	100	100
7		100	100	100	100
8			100	100	100
9				100	100
10					100
11					
12					
Total	200	400	600	800	1000

**Actual Enrollment**

Grade	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
K	100	96	86	86	100
1		97	93	92	84
2			92	93	94
3				85	92
4					84
5					89
6	99	94	77		
7		85	80	71	
8			65	77	71
9					66
10					
11					
12					
Total	199	372	493	507	680

<sup>5</sup> Source: New York State Report Cards, 2004-05; 2005-06; 2006-07; and Promise Academy Charter School Renewal Application: Part I.

### Ethnicity

Race/ ethnicity	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	# of students	% of enrollment						
American Indian, Alaskan, Asian, or Pacific Islander	0	0%	0	0%	2	0%	0	0%
Black (Not Hispanic)	179	90%	331	86%	447	89.7%	446	89.4%
Hispanic	21	11%	52	14%	46	9.3%	47	9.4%
White (Not Hispanic)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%

### Other Demographics

	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	# of students	% of enrollment						
Limited English Proficient	0	0%	0	0%	9	1.8%	7	1.4%
Free Lunch Eligible	172	86%	163	43%	227	45.2%	288	57.4%
Special Education	-	-	36	7.3%	42	8.4%	55	11%

\*Note: 2006-07 percentages are out of 497 students as opposed to 493 students reflected above because percentages were taken at different times during the year. Free Lunch numbers were taken at a slightly different time point from other numbers, so total N's for calculating percentages differ from all other numbers. For 07-08, total was 502. For 06-07, total was also 502.

### Oversight History

School Year	Year of Operation	Oversight Visit	Feedback to School
2004-05	1	11/19/04 and 5/17/05: Visits from NYCDOE	Reports commending the school for good practice in a number of instructional areas and recommending the school address the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Certification of special education teacher</li> <li>▪ Teacher certification overall</li> <li>▪ Immunization records</li> <li>▪ Late teacher hiring limited the pool of applicants</li> </ul>
2005-06	2	Spring 2006: Visit from NYCDOE	Report from NYCDOE noting a great deal of positive practice and the following issues to be addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Documenting financial and HR policies more clearly</li> </ul>

School Year	Year of Operation	Oversight Visit	Feedback to School
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conflict of interest policy</li> </ul>
2006-07	3	<p>11/15/07 and 11/28/07: Visit from NYSED 6/14/07: Visit from NYCDOE in conjunction with Cambridge Education</p>	<p>Report from NYSED recommended the school address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enrollment (filling empty seats in upper grades from waitlist)</li> <li>▪ Instructional strength</li> <li>▪ Fingerprinting clearance</li> <li>▪ Admissions procedures (date of lottery different from charter)</li> <li>▪ Provision of alternative instruction</li> </ul> <p>Report from NYCDOE recommending the following areas for improvement:</p> <p>Elementary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collection and analysis of data to analyze groups of students</li> <li>▪ Using data to plan for school improvement</li> <li>▪ Using data to differentiate instruction</li> <li>▪ Lesson planning with clearly communicated objectives</li> <li>▪ Improve quality of instruction</li> <li>▪ Clarify roles and accountabilities of school administration and BOT</li> <li>▪ Define separation of roles between the board, school’s professional leadership, and HCZ organization</li> <li>▪ Empowerment of school leaders and staff to carry out day to day operations</li> <li>▪ Board training</li> </ul> <p>Middle School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Generate and organize assessment info to give clear picture of attainment and progress of different groups of students</li> <li>▪ Ensure teachers receive assessment data at the start of each year</li> <li>▪ Ensure that all lessons make clear what is to be learned and by whom</li> <li>▪ Ensure monitoring of lessons focus on what students are learning rather than what teachers are doing</li> <li>▪ Define separation of roles between the board, school’s professional leadership, and HCZ organization</li> <li>▪ Empowerment of school leaders and staff to carry out day to day operations</li> <li>▪ Board training</li> </ul>

Harlem Children’s Zone Promise Academy Charter School Renewal Report

School Year	Year of Operation	Oversight Visit	Feedback to School
2007-08	4	4/15/08-4/16/08: Site visit from NYCDOE in conjunction with Cambridge Education	<p>Report from NYCDOE recommending the following areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop ways in which data can identify differences in performance of groups</li> <li>▪ Display progress of students graphically</li> <li>▪ Develop and refine use of technology</li> <li>▪ Increase level of challenge for highest performing students</li> <li>▪ Ensure teachers and assistants benefit from common planning time</li> <li>▪ Provide teachers with annual, measurable goals for professional growth</li> <li>▪ Ensure compliance in the provision of service to English language learners</li> </ul>
2008-09	5	11/5/08-11/7/08: Renewal visit from NYCDOE in conjunction with Cambridge Education	This report constitutes the findings from the renewal visit and recommendation for renewal.

### **III. Findings and Recommendation**

#### **A. Findings**

Recommendation: NYCDOE-OCS recommends that the State Board of Regents approve the application for renewal of the Promise Academy Charter School for a period of **5 years** consistent with the terms of the renewal application.

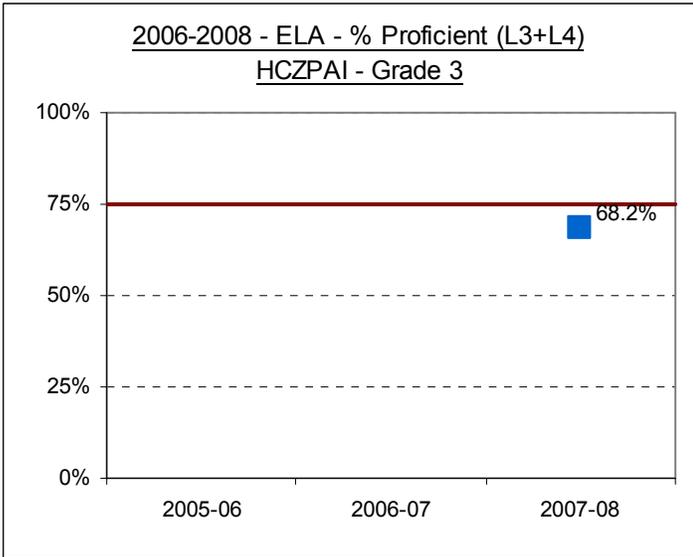
In order for the NYCDOE-OCS to recommend that a Chancellor-authorized charter school be awarded a five-year renewal of its charter, a school must show that it has met its goals as outlined in the charter or at least made consistent and meaningful progress towards meeting those outcome measures and goals. The NYCDOE-OCS has found Promise 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, Promise 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.

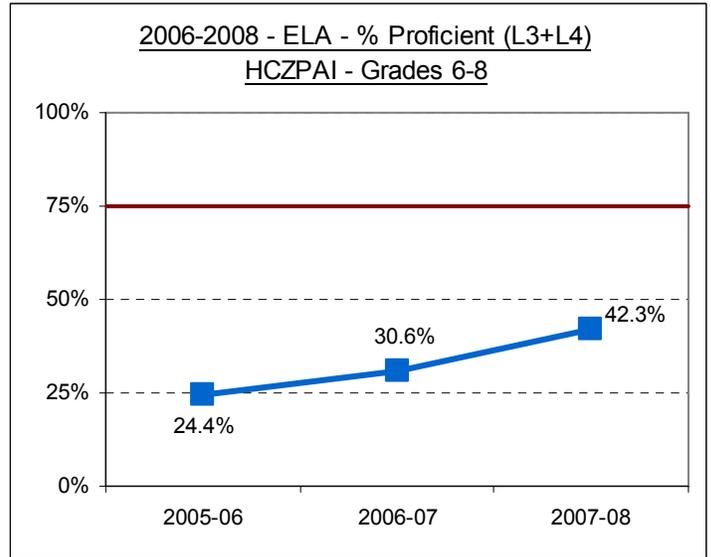
**A. Has the School Been an Academic Success?**

**Finding 1:**

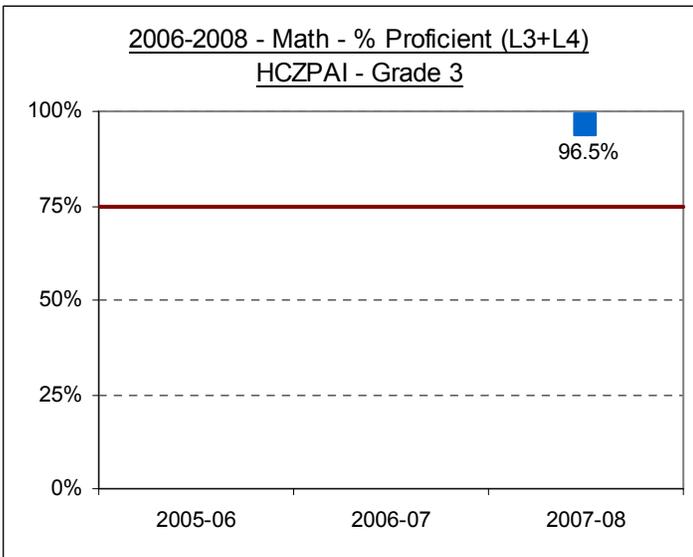
NY State ELA and Math assessment results from 2005-2008 data for grades 3 & 6-8.



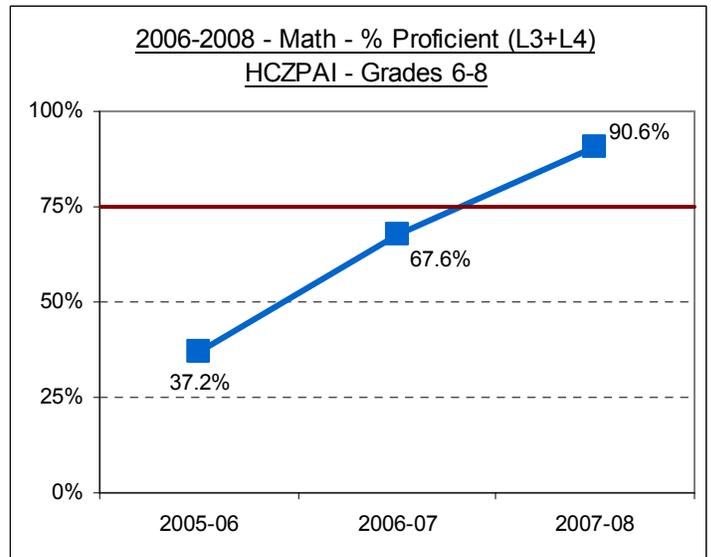
**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**



**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**

*Student performance at HCZPAI has increased steadily in both ELA and math over the course of this chartering period. According to the NYCDOE Progress Report, students at the school have made better progress in both ELA and math than similar schools. The school now outperforms its Community School District (CSD) in both subjects, however fewer than half of the students at the school have demonstrated proficiency in ELA.*

**Finding 2:**

*The curriculum and the use of data to drive instruction is a constant work in progress at Promise Academy. The school has worked consistently over the course of its first charter to improve practice and find ways to help all students become proficient readers and writers. The school has switched curricular programs in the elementary school and is now using Harcourt Reading and Math to guide the curriculum. In the middle school, the school is moving towards implementation of the workshop model. The high school curriculum is a standards-based curriculum targeted at preparing students for college. This portion of the curriculum is still under development. Data is now being used effectively to drive instruction at all levels of the school.*

**Finding 3:**

*HCZPAI has done an excellent job in creating a positive learning environment for students at two school sites. Utilizing the resources and existing programs within the larger HCZ organization, the school provides healthy meals, enrichment activities, after-school programming, extended day and year education, as well as support for student health and social-emotional well-being. Although the school's mission is expressed differently at each site through very distinct leadership styles, students and families clearly understand the college-prep mission that the school is working to fulfill on behalf of their children.*

**B. Has the School Been a Viable Organization?**

**Finding 1:**

*Promise Academy Charter School has highly committed and knowledgeable board members. Several of the board members are exploring innovative strategies like performance incentives besides other measures to meet the goals outlined in the charter agreement. The board expressed pride in the progress made and the challenges faced in the past 5 years of the school's operation. The board has been reflective and willing to look in all directions to find solutions that will benefit the student body and the community that the school serves. The board has been and will continue focusing on board development and keeping accountability at the forefront of all initiatives taken at the board and school level.*

**Finding 2:**

*Promise Academy Charter School spends a high portion of its public and private revenue on educational programs (93.1%). Overall, the state of finances at the school remains weak. According to the June 30, 2008 audit reports, the school had liquid assets (could be used within 90 days) totaling \$444,806 (excludes property and equipment) but the school's short-term liability exceeded current assets by \$210,220. The findings (see details in financial section of the report) listed in the recent audited financial statements raise concerns about the school's bookkeeping procedures, internal controls, and the soundness of services (per agreement) provided by the Harlem Children's Zone. Lastly, it is unclear how the school plans to combat the continuing economic downturn given their financial condition and weak financial procedures.*

**Finding 3:**

*The school has reported high levels of parent satisfaction over the course of its charter. On internal measures, which were unreliable due to the use of an unbalanced scale in the school designed survey instrument, rates of parent satisfaction were extremely high. The 2008 NYCDOE Learning Environment survey revealed similarly high rates of satisfaction.*

**C. Has the School Been in Compliance with All Applicable Laws and Regulations?**

**Finding:**

*Compliance with IDEA has been very high at Promise Academy. An effective special education coordinator has maintained all IEPs in good order and annual reviews have consistently been conducted on time. The school experienced challenges with teacher certification at some points during the charter, but most of these issues have been resolved.*

**B. Conclusion and Recommendation**

The Department of Education Office of Charter Schools recommends that Promise Academy Charter School, as an educationally and fiscally sound organization, likely to improve student learning and achievement, and meets the requirements of the charter Schools Act and applicable law, be renewed for a term of **5 years to serve grades K-12.**

### **III. Discussion of Findings by Benchmark**

#### **A. Renewal Question #1: Has the School Been an Academic Success?**

##### **Benchmark 1A:**

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

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

##### **Discussion of Benchmark 1A:**

As stated in Finding #1 above, the School has not met all of the academic goals that it set for itself in its application.

##### **Academic Goals:**

1. Students are proficient readers and writers of the English Language and understand and apply mathematical computation to solve problems.
2. Students understand, analyze, and evaluate the history and geography of Harlem, New York State, the United States and the world.
3. Students understand and apply scientific concepts, principles, and theories to solve problems and conduct experiments.
4. Students are able to understand and perform in areas of the arts (dance, music, theatre, visual arts and in 7-12 media arts).

**Academic Goal 1:**

*Students are proficient readers and writers of the English Language and understand and apply mathematical computation to solve problems.*

**Measure A:** Students who have completed at least two consecutive years at HCZ Promise Academy will meet or exceed the performance of Region 10<sup>6</sup> students on the New York State ELA and math tests (as determined by the distributions across levels 1 through 4).

HCZPAI has met Measure A of Academic Goal 1.

2 Year - % Proficient (L3+L4) - NY State ELA Assessment - HCZPAI vs. CSD 5						
Grade Level	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	HCZPAI	CSD 5	HCZPAI	CSD 5	HCZPAI	CSD 5
Grade 3	-	-	-	-	67.9%	43.0%
Grade 6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 7	-	-	-	-	52.1%	51.5%
Grade 8	-	-	27.6%	26.2%	33.3%	29.6%

**Table 1**

2 Year - % Proficient (L3+L4) - NY State Math Assessment - HCZPAI vs. CSD 5						
Grade Level	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	HCZPAI	CSD 5	HCZPAI	CSD 5	HCZPAI	CSD 5
Grade 3	-	-	-	-	96.3%	76.1%
Grade 6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 7	-	-	-	-	83.1%	59.5%
Grade 8	-	-	63.1%	31.7%	97.4%	46.4%

**Table 2**

As demonstrated in Tables 1 and 2, in every year that the school has had two consecutive years of students that were in an NYS assessment grade level, the school has outperformed the community school district.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Since the Region structure is no longer in place at the NYCDOE, the school has been compared to its Community School District 5.

<sup>7</sup> In 2005-06 there were not students who had taken the NYS State assessments for two consecutive years.

**Measure B:** For each cohort of students who have completed at least two consecutive years at HCZ Promise Academy, the average score on the nationally normed reading test, likely to be the Terra Nova, will increase by 1 NCE a year until the average NCE of the cohort is at or above 50<sup>8</sup>.

HCZPAI has met 2 of the 5 goals of Measure B of Academic Goal 1.

Iowa Test of Basic Skills - Reading - 2005-2006 School Year						
Grade	N	Average NCE		+1 NCE / yr?	+50 NCEs	Met Goal?
		October 2005	July 2006			
1st	80	55.9	56.6	No	Yes	n/a

**Table 3**

Iowa Test of Basic Skills - Reading - 2006-2007 School Year						
Grade	N	Average NCE		+1 NCE / yr?	+50 NCEs	Met Goal?
		July 2006	May/June 2007			
1st	81	50.2	51.9	Yes	Yes	n/a
2nd	74	55.6	53.8	No	Yes	n/a
7th	66	36.7	40.1	Yes	No	Yes
8th	63	38.8	39.6	No	No	No

**Table 4**

Iowa Test of Basic Skills - Reading - 2007-08 School Year						
Grade	N	Average NCE		+1 NCE / yr?	+50 NCEs	Met Goal?
		June 2007	June 2008			
1st	81	63.6	51.0	No	Yes	n/a
2nd	84	58.8	51.5	No	Yes	n/a
3rd	73	54.1	46.9	No	No	No
7th	71	36.6	39.8	Yes	Yes	Yes
8th	74	39.5	39.9	No	No	No

**Table 5**

Tables 3, 4 and 5 exhibit the performance of HCZPAI students on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), a nationally normed reading test that the school chose because they felt it was closely aligned with the NY State standards.

The column titled “+1 NCE / yr?” measures whether the students measured have made +1.0 NCE gains from the performance in the beginning of the year to the performance at the end of the year. HCZPAI has made +1.0 NCE per year with 3 of the 10 measured cohorts. Although achieving Measure B of the goal is not determined by whether the school makes one full year of NCE growth, the data above is worth mentioning. The column titled “+50 NCEs” measures whether the specific cohort has averaged at least 50 NCEs on the ITBS. HCZPAI has surpassed the threshold of +50 NCEs with 6 of the 10 measured cohorts. Considering Measure B which dictates that the results “will increase by 1 NCE a year until the average NCE of the cohort is at or above 50,” and therefore, any measures of NCE growth or regression at or above 50 NCEs are discarded when analyzing HCZPAI’s achievement of the measure (Column “Met Goal?”). According to this standard, the school has met 2 of the 5 possible instances of +1.0 NCE growth with a starting average NCE score below 50.

<sup>8</sup> For cohorts in which the beginning average NCE is 50 or higher, the goal is considered to be not applicable.

Measure C: For each cohort of students who have completed at least two consecutive years at HCZ Promise Academy, the average score on the nationally normed math test, likely to be the Terra Nova, will increase by 1 NCE a year until the average NCE of the cohort is at or above 50.

HCZPAI has met 5 of the 7 goals of Measure C of Academic Goal 1.

Iowa Test of Basic Skills - Math - 2005-2006 School Year						
Grade		Average NCE		+1 NCE / yr?	+50 NCEs	Met Goal?
		October 2005	July 2006			
1	85	46.6	49.8	Yes	No	Yes

Table 6

Iowa Test of Basic Skills - Math - 2006-2007 School Year						
Grade		Average NCE		+1 NCE / yr?	+50 NCEs	Met Goal?
		July 2006	May/June 2007			
1st	81	39.8	51.2	Yes	Yes	Yes
2nd	78	46.1	52.2	Yes	Yes	Yes
7th	66	42.1	47.1	Yes	No	Yes
8th	62	48.6	46	No	No	No

Table 7

Iowa Test of Basic Skills - Math - 2007-08 School Year						
Grade		Average NCE		+1 NCE / yr?	+50 NCEs	Met Goal?
		June 2007	June 2008			
1st	79	52.25	40.96	No	No	n/a
2nd	84	52.48	55.55	Yes	Yes	n/a
3rd	73	52.64	48.73	No	No	n/a
7th	71	45.79	48.04	Yes	No	Yes
8th	57	42.16	41.33	No	No	No

Table 8

Tables 6, 7 and 8 exhibit the performance of HCZPAI students on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), a nationally normed math test that the school chose because they felt it was closely aligned with the NY State standards.

The column titled “+1 NCE / yr?” measures whether the students measured have made +1.0 NCE gains from the performance in the beginning of the year to the performance at the end of the year. HCZPAI has made +1.0 NCE per year with 6 of the 10 measured cohorts. Although achieving Measure C of the goal is not determined by whether the school makes one full year of NCE growth, the data above is worth mentioning. The column titled “+50 NCEs” measures whether the specific cohort has averaged at least 50 NCEs on the ITBS. HCZPAI has surpassed the threshold of +50 NCEs with 3 of the 10 measured cohorts.

Considering Measure C which dictates that the results “will increase by 1 NCE a year until the average NCE of the cohort is at or above 50,” and therefore, any measures of NCE growth or regression at or above 50 NCEs are discarded when analyzing HCZPAI’s achievement of the measure (Column “Met Goal?”). According to this standard, the school has met 5 of the 7 possible instances of +1.0 NCE growth with a starting average NCE score below 50.

**Measure D:** At least 80% of students will score at least 65% on HCZ Promise Academy’s ELA Year-End Assessments, which measure mastery of the school’s grade-level standards.

HCZPAI has met 7 of the 16 goals of Measure D of Academic Goal 1.

HCZPAI - Year End Assessment - ELA - 2005-08							
Grade	2004-05	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
		% Scoring +65%	Goal Met?	% Scoring +65%	Goal Met?	% Scoring +65%	Goal Met?
K	No Assessments Developed	Over 80%	Yes	95%	Yes	96%	Yes
1		78%	No	92%	Yes	97%	Yes
2		-	-	57%	No	91%	Yes
3		-	-	-	-	84%	Yes
6		70%	No	35%	No	-	-
7		76%	No	64%	No	73%	No
8		-	-	77%	No	74%	No

**Table 9**

Table 9 examines whether HCZPAI met its goal of 80% of each grade level attaining or exceeding a 65% score on the Year-End ELA Assessment. During the first year, HCZPAI failed to develop a year-end assessment and is therefore unable to reflect or report on the mastery of the school’s grade level standards. During the remaining three years, HCZPAI met 7 of the 16 goals (44%) of Measure D.

Measure E: At least 80% of students will score at least 65% on HCZ Promise Academy’s math Year-End Assessments, which measure mastery of the school’s grade-level standards.

HCZPAI has met 4 of the 12 goals of Measure E of Academic Goal 1.

HCZPAI - Year End Assessment - Math - 2005-08								
Grade	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
			% Scoring +65%	Goal Met?	% Scoring +65%	Goal Met?	% Scoring +65%	Goal Met?
K					84%	Yes	91%	Yes
1					69%	No	87%	Yes
2					61%	No	95%	Yes
3	No Assessments Developed		Did Not Report		-	-	77%	No
6					46%	No	-	-
7					73%	No	65%	No
8					65%	No	78%	No

**Table 10**

Table 10 examines whether HCZPAI met its goal of 80% of each grade level attaining or exceeding a score of 65% on the Year-End Math Assessment. During the first year, HCZPAI failed to develop a year-end assessment and is therefore unable to reflect or report on the mastery of the school’s grade level standards. The school failed to report on the 2005-06 results in the retrospective submitted to the NYCDOE-OCS. During the remaining two years, HCZPAI met 4 of the 12 goals (25%) of Measure E.

Measure F: For each cohort of students who have completed at least two consecutive years at HCZ Promise Academy, the average score on the nationally normed reading test, likely to be the Terra Nova, will increase by 1 NCE a year until the average NCE of the cohort is at or above 50.

Measure G: For each cohort of students who have completed at least two consecutive years at HCZ Promise Academy, the average score on the nationally normed math test, likely to be the Terra Nova, will increase by 1 NCE a year until the average NCE of the cohort is at or above 50.

Measure H: At least 80% of students will score at least 65% on HCZ Promise Academy's ELA Year-End Assessments, which measure mastery of the school's grade-level standards.

Measure I: At least 80% of students will score at least 65% on HCZ Promise Academy's math Year-End Assessments, which measure mastery of the school's grade-level standards.

At the time of the Renewal Visit, HCZPAI was in the first year of serving high school students (9<sup>th</sup> grade). Thus, the five measures above (F-J) cannot be evaluated as they are all dependent on HCZPAI serving at least one full year of high school.

**Academic Goal 2:**

*Students understand, analyze, and evaluate the history and geography of Harlem, New York State, the United States and the world.*

**Measure A:** Students, who have completed at least two consecutive years at HCZ Promise Academy, will categorically outperform Region 10<sup>9</sup> students on the New York State Grade 5 Elementary-Level Social Studies Test and New York State Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Test (as determined by the distribution across levels 1 through 4).

HCZPAI has met Measure A of Academic Goal 2.

<u>% Proficient (L3+L4) - NY State Grade 8 Social Studies</u>			
<u>HCZPAI vs. CSD 5 vs. City</u>			
	<b>HCZPAI</b>	<b>CSD 05</b>	<b>CITY</b>
2007-08	38.2%	25.0%	38.8%
2006-07	18.5%	17.6%	30.3%

**Table 11**

<u>% Proficient (L3+L4) - NY State Grade 5 Social Studies</u>			
<u>HCZPAI vs. CSD 5 vs. City</u>			
	<b>HCZPAI</b>	<b>CSD 05</b>	<b>CITY</b>
2007-08	No 5th Grade		
2006-07	No 5th Grade		

**Table 12**

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<sup>9</sup> Since the Region structure is no longer in place at the NYCDOE, the school has been compared to its Community School District 5.

**Measure B:** At least 80% of students will score at least 65% on HCZ Promise Academy’s social studies Year-End Assessments, which measure mastery of the school’s grade-level standards.

HCZPAI has met 5 of the 9 goals of Measure B of Academic Goal 2.

HCZPAI - Year End Assessment - Social Studies - 2005-08						
Grade	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07		2007-08	
			% Scoring +65%	Goal Met?	% Scoring +65%	Goal Met?
K	No Assessments Developed	No Assessments Developed	No Assessments Developed		95%	Yes
1			No Assessments Developed		75%	No
2			No Assessments Developed		91%	Yes
3			-	-	85%	Yes
6			72%	No	-	-
7			68%	No	87%	Yes
8			83%	Yes	61%	No

**Table 13**

Table 13 examines whether HCZPAI met its goal of 80% of each grade level attaining or exceeding a 65% score on the Year-End Social Studies Assessment. During the first two years, HCZPAI failed to develop a year-end assessment (three years in the elementary school), and is therefore unable to reflect or report on the mastery of the school’s grade level standards. During the remaining two years, HCZPAI met 5 of the 9 goals (56%).

Measure C: A greater percentage of HCZ Promise Academy students will pass a Global History & Geography and U.S. History & Government Regents exam by 11th grade than students in Region 10. This measure only applies to students who have completed at least three consecutive years at HCZ Promise Academy.

Measure D: At least 80% of students will score at least 65% on HCZ Promise Academy's social studies Year-End Assessments, which measure mastery of the school's grade-level standards.

At the time of the Renewal Visit, HCZPAI was in the first year of serving high school students (9<sup>th</sup> grade). Thus, the two measures above (C & D) cannot be evaluated as they are all dependent on HCZPAI serving at least one full year of high school.

**Academic Goal 3:**

*Students understand and apply scientific concepts, principles, and theories to solve problems and conduct experiments.*

Measure A: Students, who have completed at least two consecutive years at HCZ Promise Academy will categorically outperform Region 10<sup>10</sup> students on the New York State Grade 4 Elementary Level Science Test and New York State Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Test (as determined by the distribution across levels 1 through 4).

HCZPAI has met 1 of 2 goals of Measure A of Academic Goal 3.

<u>% Proficient (L3+L4) - NY State Grade 8 Science</u>			
<u>HCZPAI vs.CSD 5 vs. City</u>			
	<b>HCZPAI</b>	<b>CSD 05</b>	<b>CITY</b>
2007-08	67.1%	40.1%	51.7%
2006-07	24.6%	29.3%	42.0%

**Table 14**

<u>% Proficient (L3+L4) - NY State Grade 4 Science</u>			
<u>HCZPAI vs.CSD 5 vs. City</u>			
	<b>HCZPAI</b>	<b>CSD 05</b>	<b>CITY</b>
2007-08	No 4th Grade		
2006-07	No 4th Grade		

**Table 15**

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<sup>10</sup> Since the Region structure is no longer in place at the NYCDOE, the school has been compared to its Community School District 5.

**Measure B:** At least 80% of students will score at least 65% on HCZ Promise Academy’s science Year-End Assessments, which measure mastery of the school’s grade-level standards.

HCZPAI has met 3 of the 9 goals of Measure B of Academic Goal 3.

HCZPAI - Year End Assessment - Science - 2005-08						
Grade	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07		2007-08	
			% Scoring +65%	Goal Met?	% Scoring +65%	Goal Met?
K	No Assessments Developed	No Assessments Developed	No Assessments Developed		91%	Yes
1					87%	Yes
2					95%	Yes
3			-	-	77%	No
6			68%	No	-	-
7			68%	No	68%	No
8			60%	No	59%	No

**Table 16**

Table 16 examines whether HCZPAI met its goal of 80% of each grade level attaining or exceeding a 65% score on the Year-End Math Assessment. During the first two years, HCZPAI failed to develop a year-end assessment (three years in the elementary school), and is therefore unable to reflect or report on the mastery of the school’s grade level standards. During the remaining two years, HCZPAI met 3 of the 9 goals (33%).

Measure C: At least 80% of students will score at least 65% on HCZ Promise Academy's science Year-End Assessments, which measure mastery of the school's grade-level standards.

At the time of the Renewal Visit, HCZPAI was in the first year of serving high school students (9<sup>th</sup> grade). Thus, the two measures above (C & D) cannot be evaluated as they are all dependent on HCZPAI serving at least one full year of high school.

**Academic Goal 4:**

*Students are able to understand and perform in areas of the arts (dance, music, theatre, visual arts and in 7-12 media arts).*

Measure A: Each year, all students will create or perform at least three works of art that demonstrate arts standards in skill, technique and originality.

HCZPAI has met 4 of 9 goals of Measure A of Academic Goal 4.

HCZPAI - Arts Goals - 2005-08								
Grade	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	3 Works of Art	Goal Met?						
K	100%	Yes	51%	No	99%	Yes*	99%	Yes*
1	-	-	90%	No				
2	-	-	-	-				
3	-	-	-	-	-	-		
6	100%	Yes	0%	No	90%	No		
7	-	-	77%	No				
8	-	-	-	-				

**Table 17**

\* Although the goal is that “all students” will demonstrate three works of art, the school was close enough in both categories to merit satisfaction by the NYCDOE-OCS.

The school has not fully met Measure A of Academic Goal 4. However, as witnessed during recent site visits and the last two years of participation date, the school has demonstrated a clear commitment to delivering a thorough arts program to all of the grades it serves.

Measure B: By the end of their 8th grade year, 80% of students who have completed at least two consecutive years at HCZ Promise Academy, will be able to respond critically, in written form, to a variety of arts genres connecting their individual creations to historical and contemporary multi-cultural works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.

HCZPAI has met Measure B of Academic Goal 4.

In 2004-5 and 2005-06, HCZPAI did not serve an 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In 2006-07 the school reported that:

*In 2006-2007, the goal was met. Indeed, all of the school’s 8<sup>th</sup> grade students wrote critical responses to art work in a variety of genres connecting what they created with what other artists have done.*

The school did not report on 2007-08.

**Additional Data & Analysis<sup>11</sup>**

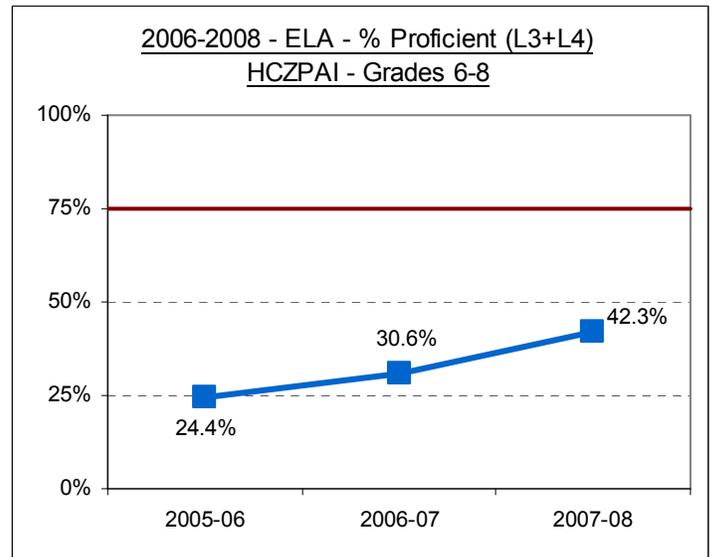
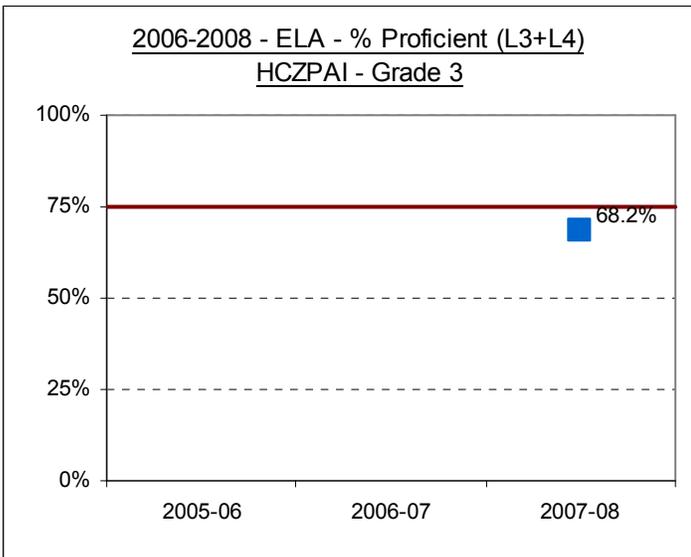
NY State ELA Assessment

1A.1 - Absolute:

ELA	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Grade 3	-	-	68.2%
Grade 6	24.7%	35.3%	-
Grade 7	24.1%	32.4%	52.1%
Grade 8	-	23.7%	33.3%
Grades 6-8	24.4%	30.6%	42.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24.4%</b>	<b>30.6%</b>	<b>51.7%</b>

**Table 18**

Tables 18 and 19 show the performance of all students in grades 3 & 6-8 at Harlem Children’s Zone Promise Academy Charter School on the NY State ELA assessment over the past three years. The NY State ELA data over the past three years shows a trend of continued and consistent school wide progress towards the 75 percent threshold of proficiency standard for high performing charter schools.



**Table 19**

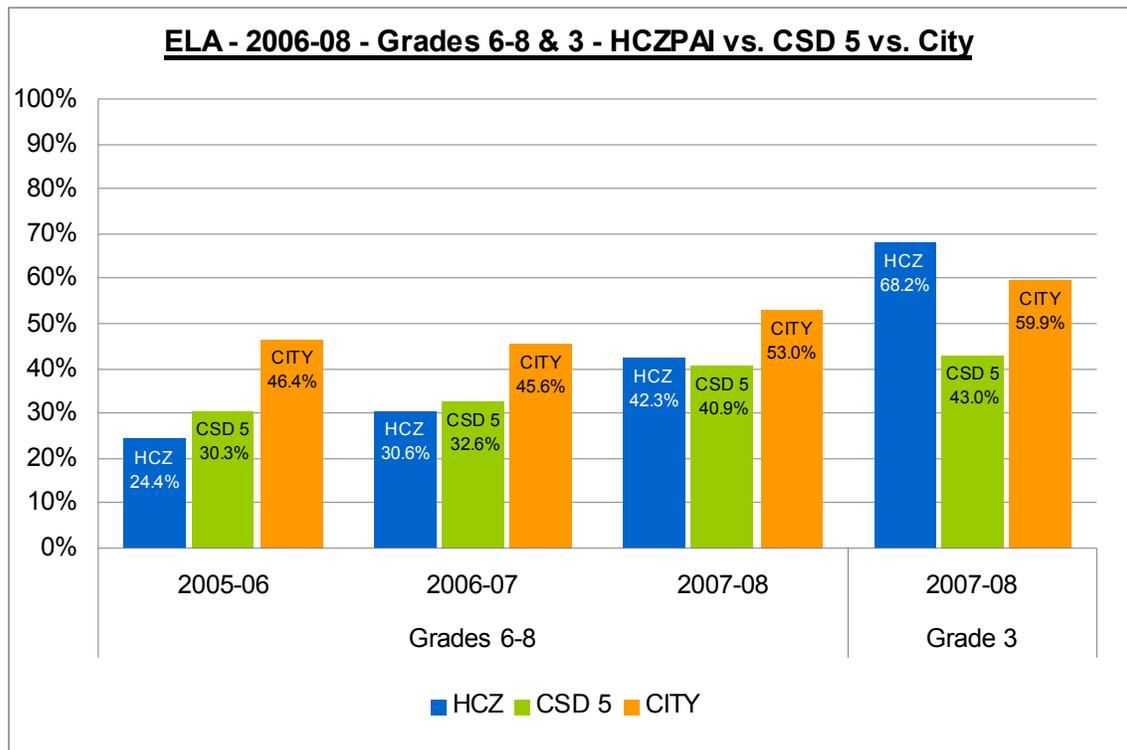
<sup>11</sup> Results of the NY State ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies assessments (2005-08).

1A.2 - Comparative:

% Proficient (L3+L4) - NY State ELA Assessment - HCZPAI vs. CSD 5 vs. City									
Grade Level	2005-06			2006-07			2007-08		
	HCZPAI	CSD 5	CITY	HCZPAI	CSD 5	CITY	HCZPAI	CSD 5	CITY
Grade 3							68.2%	43.0%	59.9%
Grade 6	24.7%	34.9%	48.6%	35.3%	38.4%	49.8%			
Grade 7	24.1%	26.2%	44.2%	32.4%	34.4%	45.4%	52.1%	51.5%	59.5%
Grade 8				23.7%	26.2%	41.8%	33.3%	29.6%	43.0%
Grades 6-8	24.4%	30.3%	46.4%	30.6%	32.6%	45.6%	42.3%	40.9%	53.0%
All Grades	24.4%	30.3%	46.4%	30.6%	32.6%	45.6%	51.7%	41.2%	54.1%

**Table 20**

Table 20 compares the percent of HCZPAI, host CSD 5 and NY City students attaining proficiency (L3+L4) on the NY State ELA assessment over the past three years.



**Figure 5**

Figure 5 visually depicts the percent of HCZPAI (blue), host CSD 5 (green), and NY City (orange) students attaining proficiency (L3+L4) on the NY State ELA assessment over the past three years. Since 2005-06, HCZPAI has steadily improved its performance on the NY State ELA assessment. In grade 6-8, HCZPAI only slightly outperformed the host CSD 5 by their fourth year of operation on the NY State ELA assessment. However, students in the third grade of HCZPAI have significantly surpassed the performance of both their host CSD 5 and the city on the NY State ELA assessment.

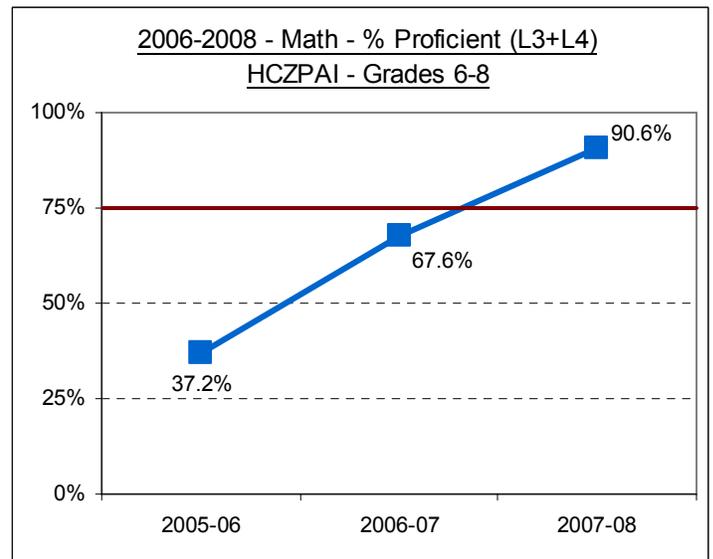
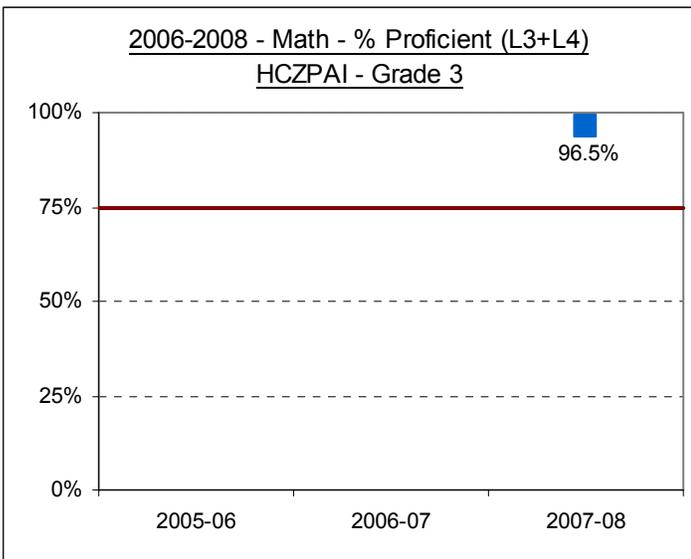
NY State Math Assessment

1A.1 – Absolute:

Math	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Grade 3	-	-	96.5%
Grade 6	40.4%	65.2%	-
Grade 7	33.7%	67.7%	83.1%
Grade 8	-	70.4%	97.4%
Grades 6-8	37.2%	67.6%	90.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37.2%</b>	<b>67.6%</b>	<b>92.7%</b>

**Table 21**

Tables 21 and 22 show the performance of all students in grades 3 & 6-8 at Promise Academy Charter School on the NY State Math assessment over the past three years. The school shows a trend of continued and consistent school wide progress and has far surpassed the 75 percent threshold of proficiency standard for high performing charter schools.



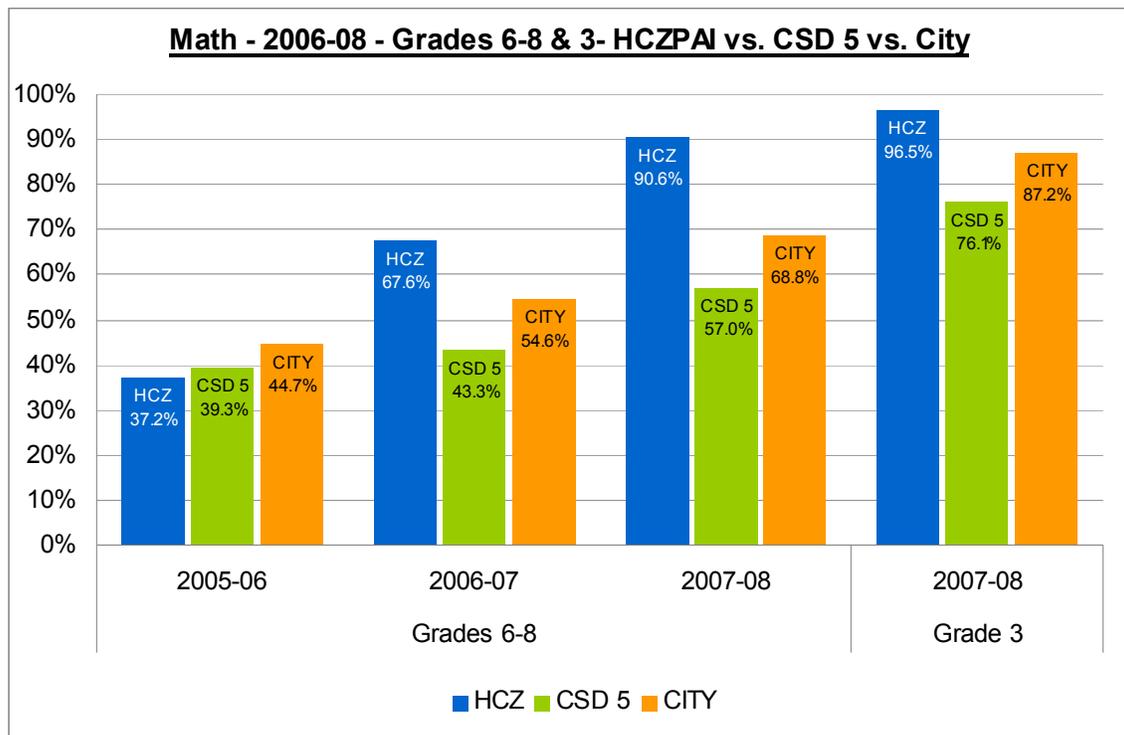
**Table 22**

1A.2 - Comparative:

% Proficient (L3+L4) - NY State Math Assessment - HCZPAI vs. CSD 5 vs. City									
Grade Level	2005-06			2006-07			2007-08		
	HCZPAI	CSD 5	CITY	HCZPAI	CSD 5	CITY	HCZPAI	CSD 5	CITY
Grade 3							96.5%	76.1%	87.2%
Grade 6	40.4%	45.1%	45.5%	65.2%	55.3%	63.2%			
Grade 7	33.7%	33.9%	43.9%	67.7%	44.9%	55.5%	83.1%	59.5%	69.0%
Grade 8				70.4%	31.7%	45.6%	97.4%	46.4%	59.6%
Grades 6-8	37.2%	39.3%	44.7%	67.6%	43.3%	54.6%	90.6%	57.0%	68.8%
All Grades	37.2%	39.3%	44.7%	67.6%	43.3%	54.6%	92.7%	60.0%	71.8%

**Table 23**

Table 23 compares the percent of HCZPAI, host CSD 5 and NY City students attaining proficiency (L3+L4) on the NY State ELA assessment over the past three years.



**Figure 6**

Figure 6 visually depicts the percent of HCZPAI (blue), host CSD 5 (green), and NY City (orange) students attaining proficiency (L3+L4) on the NY State math assessment over the past three years. Since 2005-06, HCZPAI has steadily improved its performance on the NY State ELA assessment. Over the past two years, HCZPAI has significantly outperformed both their host CSD 05 and the city, and the school has surpassed the 75% threshold considered high performing.

**Additional Data & Analysis**<sup>12</sup>

2007 NYCDOE Progress Report: Student Progress Section:

	<u>Your School's Score:</u> This Year	Your School Relative to Peer Horizon	<u>Peer Horizon:</u> Minimum    Maximum		Your School Relative to City Horizon	<u>City Horizon:</u> Minimum    Maximum	
<b>3 Student Progress (55%)</b>							
<b>English Language Arts</b>							
Percent of Students Making at least 1 Year of Progress	54.9%	<b>54.4%</b>	39.3%	68.0%	<b>61.4%</b>	37.7%	65.7%
Average Change in Student Proficiency	0.06	<b>51.4%</b>	-0.11	0.21	<b>57.5%</b>	-0.11	0.18
Average Change in Proficiency in School's Lowest 1/3 of Students	0.31	<b>62.9%</b>	0.12	0.43	<b>70.6%</b>	0.09	0.40
<b>Mathematics</b>							
Percent of Students Making at least 1 Year of Progress	69.1%	<b>98.7%</b>	38.2%	69.5%	<b>90.7%</b>	30.3%	73.1%
Average Change in Student Proficiency	0.23	<b>89.6%</b>	-0.06	0.27	<b>87.3%</b>	-0.15	0.29
Average Change in Proficiency in School's Lowest 1/3 of Students	0.46	<b>100.8%</b>	0.10	0.46	<b>97.0%</b>	0.00	0.47
<i>Student Progress Score:</i>	<b>42.2</b>						

**Figure 7**

The 2007 NYCDOE Progress Report for HCZPAI (Figure 7) reveals that from 2006 to 2007, 54.9% of students at the school made one year’s progress in ELA and 69.1% of students made one year’s progress in math. On the ELA portion, HCZPAI performed slightly above the average of its comparable schools on the Peer Horizon and City Horizon. In math, the school greatly outperformed its relative Peer Horizon and to a lesser extent the New York City Horizon.

<sup>12</sup> Results of the 2006-07 NYCDOE Progress Report.

2008 NYCDOE Progress Report: Student Progress Section:

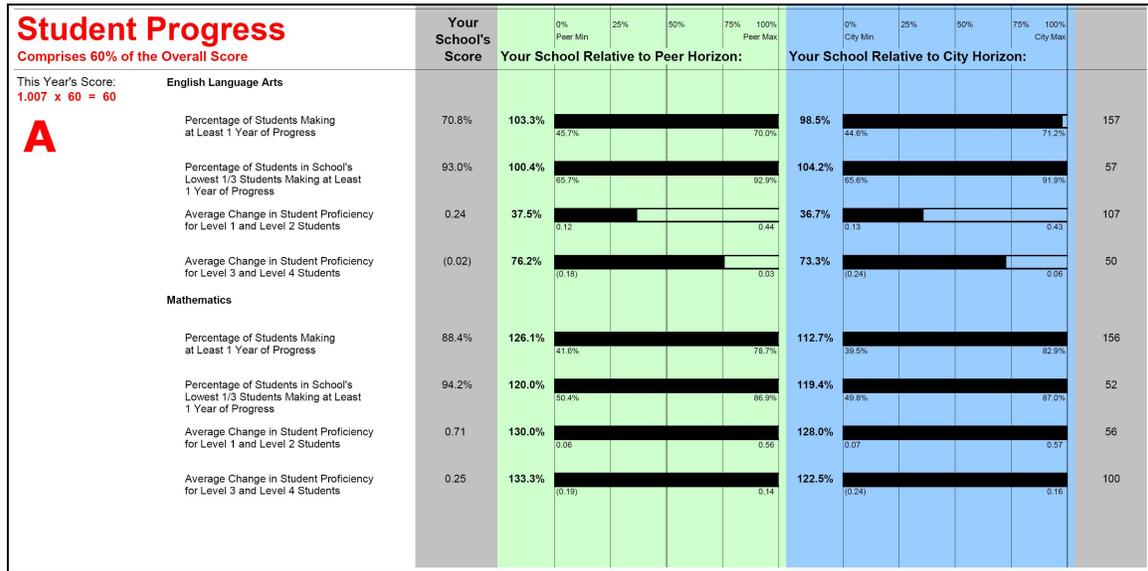


Figure 8

The 2008 NYCDOE Progress Report (Figure 8) shows that the school significantly increased the percentage of students making one year of progress in ELA from 54.9% to 70.8% (+15.9% pts.) In math, HCZPAI made significant progress as well by increasing the percentage of students making one year of progress from 69.1% to 88.4% (+19.3% pts.). In both categories, the school is strongly outperforming schools in both its peer horizon and citywide.

1 Year of Progress in ELA	
Top 2/3	57.7%
Bottom 1/3	93.0%
General Ed.	67.1%
Special Ed.	91.3%
All	70.8%

Table 24

1 Year of Progress in Math	
Top 2/3	85.4%
Bottom 1/3	94.2%
General Ed.	87.1%
Special Ed.	95.7%
All	88.4%

Table 25

Tables 24 and 25 show the percent of students making one year of progress on the NY State ELA and Math assessments from 2007 to 2008. It is clear from Table 24 that between the 2007 and 2008 NY State ELA assessments, HCZPAI served special education students and those students in the bottom third of its population better than general education students and those students in the top two-thirds of its population. It is also evident that on Table 25 that between the 2007 and 2008 NY State Math assessments, HCZPAI served special education students and those students in the bottom third of its population marginally better than general education students and those students in the top two-thirds of its population.

**Benchmark 1B:**

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

1: A 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

Discussion of Benchmark 1B<sup>13</sup>:

**Clearly-defined essential knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn, and that are aligned with state standards**

HCZPA has a set year-end performance assessments that are targeted at assessing whether or not students have mastered standards in their grade level. However, data from these assessments show that not all students have mastered the essential skills that the school hopes they will by the end of each school year. In the first few years of the charter, the school was implementing a series of curricular programs that were not all necessarily aligned with the NYS ELA and math exams and the order in which those exams tested certain skills. To change this, the school contracted with an organization called Modern Red Schoolhouse to help conduct an alignment study to ensure that skills were taught on a testing calendar rather than a school year calendar. Now, the school is very conscious of pre-March skills and post-March skills for math, since March is the month in which students are tested in math. For example, in fourth grade, students begin working on fifth grade math standards at the end of March.

**Curriculum that is organized coherently across subjects and grades, and reflects the school's mission and goals**

According to school leadership, implementing curriculum from the charter has been a challenge, since almost none of the staff at the school now were part of the creation of the charter document. HCZPA uses a number of curricular programs to support students in ELA and math. In the elementary school, teachers use Harcourt Reading and Math programs. The curriculum has changed over time, after teachers initially used Everyday Mathematics and Scott Foresman Reading. Teachers at the elementary school spent a significant amount of time this summer developing their ELA curriculum, but this had to be scrapped at the last minute because leadership thought that more time needed to be spent implementing the Harcourt program. Students in the elementary school also receive very good art and music classes and have

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<sup>13</sup> Discussion is based on evidence gathered during the Renewal Site Visit, 11/5/08 – 11/7/08.

opportunities to learn chess, as well as other interesting subjects. There are regular opportunities for students to practice reading and math skills through the use of technology.

Math at both sites has been one of the school's biggest strengths. Effective teachers plan together and constantly modify their curricula to meet students' needs as indicated by data. However, in the past year, an emphasis on helping more students become proficient in ELA has resulted in fewer resources for teachers of mathematics.

In the middle school, the curriculum has evolved into a Readers and Writers Workshop model, with supports from *READ 180* for students who perform below grade level. Since the elementary school does not implement this model, transition for students from third grade to fourth grade has been a challenge. Teachers at both sites expressed that they had limited contact with staff in the other building, and that data on the performance of students moving between the sites had not been communicated in a systematic way for middle school teachers to be able to plan effectively. With the wealth of knowledge the school has about the current fourth graders, many opportunities are missed for maximizing impact on student achievement in the absence of clear systems for communicating this data. Teachers at both sites had hoped the other site would take the initiative to ask for or share that data, but at the time of the visit, only student cumulative records had been shared.

Communication between the middle school and high school is somewhat easier, since several teachers moved up to ninth grade, and both grades are in the same building. However, as the high school grows to scale and the middle school adds more grades, a more formalized system for communicating essential student information will be necessary.

Science and social studies curricula continue to evolve, and are stronger in the eighth and ninth grades. The school's middle school science teacher is on a fellowship in Antarctica, and students often receive instruction from this teacher via videoconferencing. Board members provide some students with exciting opportunities that allow them to deepen their understanding of science, such as a trip to the Galapagos Islands that a group of middle school students attended last spring.

#### **Academic expectations that adults in the school clearly and consistently communicate to students**

The school clearly communicates urgency around assessment to students. Goals from the charter were posted in some classrooms during the visit, and some of the younger students expressed that they need to get a 4 on the NYS assessments and be "winners, not losers." Students clearly understand that the HCZPA staff wants them to be prepared for college and they are happy with the high levels of support their teachers provide. A school-wide creed is recited daily and students remind themselves that, "I will go to college, I will succeed." On an annual basis, the board, leaders, and teachers are all clear that at least 80% of students must be proficient in reading and mathematics, and that everyone in the organization must be working towards supporting students to reach this goal.

#### **Classroom lessons with clear goals aligned with the curriculum**

In most classes that reviewers observed, learning objectives were clear and articulated what students would learn, rather than simply tasks they would complete. This was helpful to students who clearly understood why they were engaged in reading a story or completing a test-prep activity.

**Classroom practices that reflect competent instructional strategies**

Most objectives in the classroom were learning-based and teachers kept engagement high through small group activities and learning games, particularly in the elementary school. Most classes observed were paced well and teachers made use of strategies to keep classes moving while at the same time, maintaining strong management. Reviewers observed teachers ensuring equal participation by selecting students to participate randomly by pulling their names out of a jar of popsicle sticks. Some teachers use 'Promise Points' as positive reinforcement for students who are meeting expectations. Classroom management in the middle school varied. However, management in the ninth grade was particularly strong in the classes that reviewers observed. Newer teachers that have been hired in the middle school were struggling with classroom management, and the transition of students from third to fourth grade has not been as smooth as school leaders had anticipated. However, at the time of the visit, a number of strategies were being devised to address these concerns. For example, teachers in the fourth grade and ninth grade had collaborated to initiate a buddy reading program which meets weekly. During these sessions, ninth grade students serve as mentors to fourth graders and support them by reinforcing skills being taught in their ELA classes. Reviewers observed one of these sessions and saw effective questioning from ninth grade students which reinforced skills they had been learning in an earlier class. The consistency of instructional and classroom management strategies varies across the school. While almost all teachers at both sites utilize the Lorraine Monroe blackboard configuration, classroom management systems appeared to vary from class to class.

**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**

The school has begun using data very well in the past two years. There are a number of assessments used to collect data on how students are performing and progressing. The school administers the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) twice each year to measure student performance against a national norm, however the board and school leaders are beginning to question the utility of this test for their school, as the results on the test have not been consistent with performance on state exams. The school also contracts with Kaplan for interim assessments and uses the Measuring Up tests to predict student performance on state exams and help remediate skills based on clear data from these tests. In the high school, Kaplan assessments are used in each Regents level course so that teachers can plan curricula towards the concepts that students may need the most help to master. Teachers receive data in a useful format that allows them to view performance by student and by skill. In addition, the high school principal, Hayden Lyons, was planning to hold a session for all parents of high school students soon to clearly communicate the expectations students must meet in order to pass Regents and earn a Regents diploma. We were informed after the visit that this meeting was indeed held in conjunction with the school's After School Program.

In the elementary school, students are given assessments on a bi-weekly basis in preparation for the upcoming ELA assessment. Teachers and support staff then use the data from those assessments to work with groups of students on specific skill work. Staff has named these push-in groups "SWARM" groups, because all instructional staff are 'swarming' kids with extra support to help them quickly develop proficiency on skills that may have been lacking in the past. The school hopes that this technique will help them demonstrate more significant gains in ELA than there had been in the past.

Assessment of student writing and internally created assessments have been less structured and effective. A good deal of student writing was posted in the school, but reviewers observed that

some of the work was not clearly measured with a rubric and therefore, there was little clarity as to why the work had been displayed. In addition, artifacts that were chosen for display were not always aligned closely with what the teachers were defining as high quality student work. Internal year end assessments have not aligned well with teaching at the school. Data provided by the school shows that many students have not been passing the internal assessments at rates that the school had hoped they would.

Assessment data is communicated to the board regularly through the Department of Evaluation at HCZ. The board receives detailed analyses of student performance and attendance, and board minutes reveal that very comprehensive discussion takes place at these board meetings on student performance outcomes.

**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**

Good use of regularly collected student assessment data has helped the school address student needs. In the elementary school, this support is provided through push-in and pull-out groups where students receive basic skill reinforcement (and sometimes enrichment for higher performing students) based on regular data analysis that reveals what skills might need further development. These groupings are flexible and can change as students become more proficient in certain skill areas. For students that are not making good progress despite supports provided, referrals may be made through the school's special education coordinator.

In the middle school and high school, extra support is provided to struggling readers through the *READ 180* program. Students who scored a 2 or lower on the NYS ELA assessment receive 90 minutes of daily instruction through this program, which is designed to help older struggling readers gain confidence and independence in their reading and writing. According to Mr. Pinder, the materials for this program were in boxes when he arrived, so he made it a priority to implement the program with the high number of students in the middle school who lack basic reading and writing skills. At the time of the visit, full implementation of the program had just begun and parents were being notified about the program.

**Benchmark 1B (continued):**

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

**2: 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

*Discussion of Benchmark 1B2<sup>14</sup>:*

**An environment where students and staff feel safe and secure**

The school has worked hard over the past few years to establish a stronger school culture and a good sense of order in the middle school. It appears now that they have made progress in this area, as the middle school is a safe and positive environment where mentoring between ninth grade students and fourth grade students takes place through a weekly buddy reading program. This creates opportunities for trust and collaboration among students of varying ages and teachers in different grade levels. In the elementary school, the feeling is similar. Students and staff interviewed at the visit expressed a strong appreciation for the work and learning environment that the principal has created. A positive, family environment where parents are frequently present creates a palpable sense of energy and warmth. This is established at the start and end of each day during Creed, a time where students and teachers, as well as parents who might happen to be in the school at the time, recite the Promise Academy Creed and spend time dancing and singing to get their days started and finished in a positive way.

**Behavioral and cultural expectations that adults in the school clearly and consistently communicate to students**

The school has clear expectations for students documented in the Family Handbook and in other policy documents, however these expectations are not always enforced consistently. For example, reviewers noted that the Family Handbook prohibits students from wearing black sneakers, however, many students at the school were wearing these and there appeared to be no consequence for violating this uniform policy. Chris Finn, the Middle School Dean, works to make these policies more consistent and ensure that students follow rules. He has put positive behavior incentives in place, but acknowledged that the school culture still needs further development. Reviewers received copies of two family handbooks during the visit; however the documents had some incomplete and vaguely worded sections.

**Clear policies and strategies to address student behaviors to promote learning—those behaviors that are both appropriate and inappropriate**

The Dean of Students for the middle and high schools supports teachers in addressing student behaviors, and is one of the people that helps with tracking of the Promise Points incentive program. He is working now to help begin the shift from a more extrinsic behavior management system to encouraging a philosophy of intrinsic rewards. However, at the moment, structures outside of the school counter that goal. In the after-school program, students receive stipends for attending the program. This frustrates teachers who often hear from students that the after-school program does not provide them sufficient time to complete their homework. Thus, students receive cash rewards for attending the after-school program, yet many fail to complete homework regularly. Both the middle school and high school principals shared that homework completion rates are low at the school and they are struggling with how best to address this. For the time being, the high school principal has begun to work with staff from the after-school program (which is run by the HCZ organization) to help get them on the same page as the school with regards to the importance of homework completion.

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<sup>14</sup> Discussion is based on evidence gathered during the Renewal Site Visit, 11/5/08-11/7/08.

**Documented discipline policies and procedures for general and special education students that the school enforces fairly and consistently with appropriate due process**

During the visit the school provided a copy of its 2008-09 Family Handbook which documents discipline policies and policies for suspension as they apply to both general education and special education students. The Family Handbook received from the elementary school was incomplete and both Family Handbooks had vague sections. Additionally, reviewers on the school visit witnessed multiple instances of loose enforcement of the stated discipline policy. During the interview, some students expressed a feeling of uncertainty in the school wide standards of behavior.

**A professional culture focused on teaching and learning, with a qualified and competent teaching staff**

Expectations for teachers are high at HCZPA, and as teachers noted, the school does not allow for a culture in which teachers can learn bad habits. The environment is one that teachers characterize as "very competitive" and a place where you must give 110% all the time. Accountability is extremely high, and leaders consistently remind teachers that they must move their students ahead in order to earn annual bonuses and retain their positions at the school. Most teachers at the school are effective and work collaboratively to support one another. In the elementary school, reviewers noted more example of effective practice than they did in the middle school. There are several brand new teachers at the school this year, some of whom appear to struggle with management and pacing in their lessons. The size of the middle school has doubled this year, which invariably has posed additional challenges to leadership and teachers in trying to maintain culture and develop coherent instructional practices across two grades that the school had never served before this year (fourth and fifth grade).

**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**

In the middle school, the focus of professional development this year has turned to helping teachers become proficient in the Teacher's College Readers and Writers Workshop model of literacy instruction. Lucy Caulkins has committed to working with the school, and literacy coaches attend regular trainings to support teachers in their delivery of this model. In the elementary school, Harcourt Reading is used for literacy instead of the workshop model because school leaders identified the need to build stronger foundational skills for students in these grades, and they thought that the structure of Harcourt would better provide this. The Director of Instruction in the elementary school, Tonya White, used to be a trainer for Lucy Caulkins, and feels that eventually all of the teachers will reach the level of confidence and proficiency in their teaching to implement this model, but at the moment, the current structure is best serving their students' needs in literacy while matching with the skill levels of teachers.

Teachers at both sites all receive a great deal of in-house coaching and development from the Directors of Instruction, coaches, and assessment and data coordinators who help teachers more effectively use the data generated by the school to plan lessons and provide extra support. Dr. Lorraine Monroe serves as an adviser to the principals, helping them implement consistent routines and procedures in classrooms, and giving them feedback on how to better improve the quality of teaching at both sites.

**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**

Teacher evaluation happens annually at HCZPA and this evaluation, in addition to student performance on NYS ELA and math tests, is very closely tied to job security and bonuses for teachers. The policy for these bonuses, however, does not appear to be documented, and so teachers are somewhat unclear, what, if anything, impacts their ability to receive a bonus, aside from student test scores. Teachers in social studies, science, and other courses without annual tests appear even less clear on the policy for these performance-based incentives.

At the time of the visit, most teachers in the middle school had been observed by the literacy coaches, but not the principal. Mr. Pinder has said that all of his other responsibilities have prevented him from doing observations this year, but that he has been able to rely on the other support structures in the school to ensure learning is going well. He also expressed that while peer observations have not happened yet, he would like for teachers to begin doing these soon. Some teachers in the middle school expressed that the current evaluation structure is not supportive enough for their development. Teachers who have helped students attain high levels of proficiency in certain subject areas feel that because they have demonstrated the ability to move students ahead, they are no longer being provided any real support or development to continue to get better at their practice. Instead, all resources and staff support have been focused on the subject areas in which the majority of students have yet to attain proficiency. This resource allocation decision makes sense in order to provide maximum support in the areas where students are struggling, however this can be frustrating to teachers who may have relied on a higher level support in the past.

In the high school, the principal and Director of Instruction observe teachers regularly, and both were present in many of the classrooms that reviewers observed during the visit.

## **B. Renewal Question #2: Has the School Been a Viable Organization?**

### **Benchmark 2A:**

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

- Absolute
- Comparative
- Value-Added

### *Discussion of Benchmark 2A:*

#### Non-Academic Goals:

1. Students exhibit the school's principles of sound mind, body, and character.
2. Students and families are able to access a wide array of support services and resources from Harlem Children's Zone, Inc.
3. Parents are actively involved with the school and are satisfied with the school program.
4. HCZ Promise Academy will provide a safe and structured environment and ensure high attendance rates.
5. The school is a strong, viable organization, which implements sound financial practices.

## **Non-Academic Goal 1:**

*Students exhibit the school's principles of sound mind, body, and character.*

**Measure A:** By the end of their eighth grade year, 80% of students will have participated in activities that demonstrate the school's principles of sound mind, body, and character.

**HCZPAI has met Measure A of Non-Academic Goal 1.**

The school has provided this narrative regarding the above objective:

*This measure was broadly defined in the original charter application. Consequently, HCZ Promise Academy has had to further define the ways that it measures "principles of sound mind, body and character" during the course of the initial charter term. Regarding "sound mind," the school measures progress toward achieving the objective via student performance on NY State Tests, standardized assessments and Year-End assessments. Regarding "sound body," the school measures progress toward achieving the objective via: a) student participation in school breakfast and lunch programs, which guarantee that students enjoy daily nutritious and balanced meals that contribute to their well-being and provide their bodies with the nutrients and vitamins necessary to promote healthy living; b) student participation in the school's physical education programs, which engage students in activities that promote cardio-vascular fitness and promote knowledge about the value of lifelong fitness; and c) student participation in school-based health clinic activities, which provides health classes and services tailored to address student needs, dental and eye care services and classes ranging from conflict resolution, asthma to sex education. Regarding "sound character," the school measures progress toward this objective via student participation in mandated and un-mandated counseling sessions (i.e. individual and group counseling sessions), peer resolution sessions, problem-solving techniques, mentoring provided by school personnel, and intervention sessions provided through the School-based Health Center and other HCZ programs.*

*During 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, HCZ Promise Academy enrolled no 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and, therefore, the school did not address this measure. In 2006-2007, the school enrolled its first cohort of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and, in 2007-2008, it enrolled another set of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. In each year, the school met its objective regarding "sound mind," as determined via performance on the school's battery of assessments, which was detailed earlier in this narrative. It also met its objective regarding "sound body," with 77% and 100%, respectively, of students participating in school breakfast and lunch programs and 100% of students participating in the school's physical education and fitness programs. In addition, students accessed a variety of services provided by the School-based Health Clinic. In 2006-2007, the first year that the Health Clinic operated, 76 HCZ Promise Academy students received dental screenings. In addition, 82 students and parents received vision screening, and glasses were distributed to 14 students. One hundred thirty-four 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students were screened for scoliosis, and 65 7<sup>th</sup> grade students were tested for hearing. Two hundred twenty four students participated in health education programs. Also, 64 middle school students participated in the HCZ Obesity Initiative. In 2007-2008, the number of students served by these programs increased dramatically—i.e. 302 elementary students and 128 middle grade students received vision screening; 302 elementary students received dental screening; 169 elementary students received hearing screening; and 102 middle grade students received screening for scoliosis. In addition, 102 middle grade students received physical examinations and immunizations at the clinic in 2007-2008.*

*Regarding "sound character," the school sought to meet this objective through analysis of student participation in counseling, workshops and related activities provided by the School-based Health Clinic. For instance, in 2006-2007, all 6<sup>th</sup> grade students attended a 2-session workshop aimed at reducing stigma related to mental health issues and care. All 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in a 6-session NYSED mandated course on HIV and reproductive health. In 2007-2008, 25 elementary students and 75 middle grade students participated in educational programs at the Health Clinic related to character and social development.*

Measure B: In the annual spring survey of parents, at least 75% of parents surveyed will give HCZ Promise Academy a satisfactory or better rating (on a scale of excellent, good, satisfactory, or poor) when asked how well the school promotes sound mind, body, and character.

HCZPAI has failed to adequately report on Measure B of Non-Academic Goal 1.

	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>
Promotion of sound mind	100% (95/95)	98.7% (150/152)	100% (45/45)	99.2% (246/248)
Promotion of sound body	98% (93/95)	99.3% (150/151)	100% (45/45)	100% (249/249)
Promotion of sound character	100% (95/95)	98.7% (150/152)	98% (44/45)	99.6% (246/247)
How well Promise and HCZ, Inc. provide information and access to support services	94% (92/98)	99.3% (149/150)	100% (49/49)	99.1% (217/219)
School’s academic program	99% (97/98)	87.9% (138/157)	98% (47/48)	99.6% (258/259)
Child’s growth	93% (89/96)	96.8% (150/155)	94% (44/47)	99.6% (256/257)
The relationship between school and family	98% (87/89)	98.3% (119/121)	100% (38/38)	98.5% (199/202)
School’s safety and climate	98% (81/83)	98% (145/148)	97% (40/41)	98.3% (233/237)

**Table 26**

The school has submitted Table 26 as results from their parent surveys over the past four years.

**Non-Academic Goal 2:**

*Students and families are able to access a wide array of support services and resources from Harlem Children's Zone, Inc.*

Measure A: In the annual survey of parents, at least 75% of parents surveyed will give HCZ Promise Academy a satisfactory or better rating (on a scale of excellent, good, satisfactory, or poor) when asked how well the school and HCZ, Inc. provided information and access to support services.

HCZPAI has failed to adequately report on Measure A of Non-Academic Goal 2.

As stated regarding Measure B of Non-Academic Goal 1, the school has submitted Table 26 as results from their parent surveys over the past four years.

### **Non-Academic Goal 3:**

*Parents are actively involved with the school and are satisfied with the school program.*

**Measure A:** At least 50% of parents volunteer at the school, attend student performances and/or presentations, attend school trainings, and/or participate in Parent Advisory Board Meetings on an annual basis.

HCZPAI has met Measure A of Non-Academic Goal 3.

The school submitted the following evidence in their retrospective report:

*This goal was met or exceeded during the 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years, as evidenced by parent participation in Title I Parents' Literacy Workshops; Student Performance Assemblies; Bi-Monthly PAPA Meetings; Farmer's Market; Dinners with Dads and Moments with Moms programs; a Parent Advisory Group; "Back to School Night" programs; Parent Teacher conferences; Parents and Staff "Meet & Greet" programs; school-wide community meetings; School Planning Sessions; and Book Clubs.*

*Parents were typically asked to sign in at every school event. These sign-in sheets were then used to tabulate which parents had ever attended a school event. In 2006-2007, 73% of students at HCZ Promise Academy elementary school have had at least one parent attend at least one school event, and 98% of students at HCZ Promise Academy middle school have had at least one parent attend at least one school event.*

**Measure B:** In the annual school survey of parents, at least 75% of parents surveyed will give HCZ Promise Academy a satisfactory or better rating (on a scale of excellent, good, satisfactory, or poor) when asked to rate the school's academic program, their children's growth, and the relationship between school and family.

HCZPAI has failed to adequately report on Measure B of Non-Academic Goal 3.

As stated regarding Measure B of Non-Academic Goal 1, the school has submitted Table 26 as results from their parent surveys over the past four years.

**Non-Academic Goal 4:**

*HCZ Promise Academy will provide a safe and structured environment and ensure high attendance rates.*

Measure A: In the annual spring survey of parents, at least 75% of parents surveyed will give HCZ Promise Academy a satisfactory or better rating (on a scale of excellent, good, satisfactory, or poor) when asked to rate the school's safety and climate.

HCZPAI has failed to adequately report on Measure A of Non-Academic Goal 4.

As stated regarding Measure B of Non-Academic Goal 1, the school has submitted Table 26 as results from their parent surveys over the past four years.

**Measure B:** HCZ Promise Academy average daily attendance rate will exceed NYC’s average daily attendance rate by 2% and/or be at least 92%.

HCZPAI has met Measure B of Non-Academic Goal 4.

2004-2008 - Attendance Rates HCZPAI vs. NYC		
Year	HCZPAI	CITY
2004-2005	92.0%	87.8%
2005-2006	90.0%	87.7%
2006-2007	94.4%	88.8%
2007-2008	94.7%	89.6%

Table 27

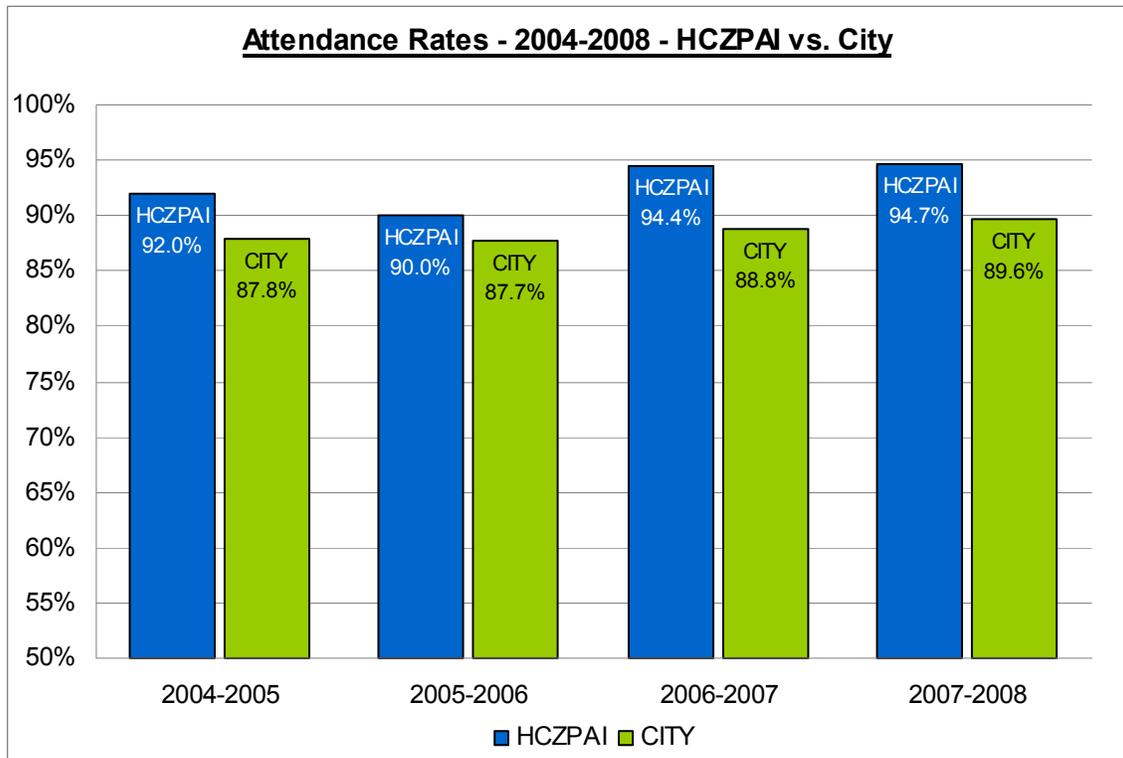


Figure 9

Table 27 and Figure 9 document the past four years of attendance rates at HCZPAI compared to the city average. The school has surpassed the attendance rates of NYC schools and has attained a consistent, relatively high level of attendance in both of its locations.

**Non-Academic Goal 5:**

*The school is a strong, viable organization, which implements sound financial practices.*

Measure A: Monthly financial reports, year-end balance sheets and profit and loss statements, annual audits, and actual and proposed budgets that are reviewed by the Board of Trustees, the school's auditors, and any other external reviewers will demonstrate sound financial practices, effective allocation of resources, and financial stability.

An analysis of the school's performance against this goal can be found under Benchmark 2C on page 53.

**Benchmark 2B:**

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

Discussion of Benchmark 2B<sup>15</sup>:

**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**

The Promise Academy board of trustees is focused on the mission and several priorities (partnership with Civic Builders, search for a superintendent, implementation of performance incentive program, etc.) that may benefit the school, raise academic achievement and sustain it in the long run. The school's mission is brief and clear that all students will attend and succeed in college. This translates to yearly goals based on performance on New York State assessments. The school's ability to achieve its mission is highly dependent upon the school-wide performance on these state assessments. Board members take pride in the school's success where necessary, but also pause to recognize the challenges faced during the start-up period and lessons learned.

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<sup>15</sup> Discussion is based on evidence gathered during the Renewal Site Visit, 11/5/08-11/7/08

**An evidenced commitment to serving a student population that reflects the full range of students throughout the city.**

The school targets its recruitment towards the many families served by the Harlem Children's Zone or those living in the Zone and within Community School District 5, but does not exclude anyone by gender, race or socioeconomic level. Recruitment in the school begins at infancy through HCZ's Baby College and it is part of the organization's larger mission to create a pipeline for the schools through its many other programs. The school serves a large number of students with special needs and makes accommodations for those students whose needs might be greater than the programming provides for. The school's peer index on the 2007 NYCDOE Progress Report was 2.97, a somewhat lower peer index than many of the other charter schools in the city to which HCZPAI is compared. This means that on average, middle school students enrolled in 2006-07 entered the school below proficiency in ELA and math.

**Meaningful opportunities for staff and parents to become involved in school governance**

Some parents attend board meeting but the general sense from staff and parents is that they would not necessarily attend a board meeting unless invited. However, a few teachers who had been with the school since its founding told reviewers that they had attended several board meetings over the course of the charter. Although HCZPAI's elementary and middle schools are located at two different facilities, board meetings are conducted only at the HCZ private facility.

**Avenues of communication from the board of trustees to other members of the school community and vice-versa**

Members of the board of trustees meet with each teacher at the end of each school year for their performance evaluations. The three principals currently report directly to the board, and while teachers report to the principals, these evaluations are presented by board members. Occasionally, board members send notes of appreciation to school staff for their continued dedication. Most members of the school community can access the board president, Geoffrey Canada by requesting a meeting.

**Communication between the school leadership and school staff that facilitates coordinated actions and messages toward other members of the school community**

The board president meets directly with teachers to finalize their annual evaluation and determine the bonus compensation. Some staff expressed that the board president drives many of the decisions made at the school level. Teachers and other staff members have gone to board meetings to inform them of their achievement at the school. Some teachers also expressed that they don't feel comfortable expressing their concerns.

The elementary school leadership communicates regularly with staff to make sure that the staff is doing the work towards meetings those goals. These meetings are clear measures of interim progress towards yearly goals. As one teacher put it, "People will always follow up to make sure that you've done what you said you were going to do." However, the same is not true for the middle and high school leadership. The high school principal is new to his role this year, and these protocols for communicating goals and messages to the teachers and staff are still being developed.

**Processes to address parent, staff, community, and student concerns appropriately and in a timely manner**

The president of the board has opened his door to anyone in the school who wishes to speak to him; however, he works to create a policy in which those with grievances will first speak with the school leadership, then the superintendent and then the president of the board. Some of this

informal protocol has to do with Harlem Children's Zone's work in the neighborhood and the familiarity with its President and CEO, Mr. Canada, who is also a HCZPA board member and the school's founder.

**Annual evaluations of the school leadership, based on clearly-defined goals and measurements**

The school leaders are evaluated annually by the school's board of trustees. It is not clear if this is evidenced in writing, but the annual goals have much to do with student performance on NYS assessments. The board's goal for school leadership is for them to be successful and the board is supportive in giving advice to school leaders about how the goals set by the board may be achieved.

**A board of trustees with a diversity of opinions and perspectives that promotes a healthy and vigorous dialogue of ideas**

The school's board of trustees consists of educational, financial, management, and legal expertise. Accountability is not lip service but rather a total quality control tool practiced by this school's board. The school leaders' relationships with the board are relatively strong; however, leadership team members have expressed that they feel some nervousness at board meetings because the stakes for performance are so high. The board has a strong vision of how they see effecting change in the school with some having stronger influence over the other members. There is little evidence of dissent or dissonance among board members.

**A process for board development to build its capacity to oversee the school's operations and to ensure the school's continued progress**

The school's board chair understands and values board development but there has been no attendance from any board member at several workshops conducted by the NYCDOE or events held by charter advocacy and support organizations. However, board members have cited that since many of them serve on the boards of other organizations, they receive board development through those roles.

**A conflict of interest policy and code of ethics that are followed consistently and activities that are in substantial compliance with the Open Meetings Law and Public Officers Law**

The school is in full compliance with its conflict of interest and code of ethics policy. Reviewers checked the school's website, hallways in the school, calendars and newsletters but failed to find any evidence of board meeting dates posted publicly. The school needs to do more to be in full compliance with the Open Meeting 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**

The school has an active relationship with independent legal counsel to get documents and relevant policies reviewed prior to them going into effect at the school.

**Benchmark 2C:**

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

Discussion of Benchmark 2C<sup>16</sup>:

HCZPAI has not developed an independent cohesive plan to address its fiscal needs. The school is very much dependent upon Harlem Children's Zone, its partner organization and has a signed agreement guaranteeing assistance with revenue shortfall.

According to the school's independent audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, accounting policies and procedures practiced by management are not consistent with the accounting policies and procedure manual presented by management. The audit also stated the following notable findings:

- a) expenses are not recorded in the general ledger on a functional basis;
- b) the basis used to allocate these expenses was not documented in the accounting policy and procedures manual;
- c) the accounting policies and procedures manual does not include a description of the process to record pupil enrollment revenue in the general ledger;
- d) the fiscal personnel did not perform procedures to determine whether the bi-monthly Charter School invoices submitted to the Department of Education were complete and accurate;
- e) we noted that cash receipts in the amounts of \$64,734 and \$22,760 were transferred by the Department of Education to Promise Academy Charter School's bank account on behalf of Promise Academy Charter School II during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2007. However, these amounts were not transferred to Promise Academy Charter School II's bank account until after the fiscal year ended June 30, 2008;
- f) the general ledger balances for the bank accounts are maintained on a quarterly basis, whereas the bank reconciliation is performed on a monthly basis. This is not an acceptable accounting practice;
- g) the outstanding checks on the bank reconciliations did not have dates indicating when the checks were made; and

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<sup>16</sup> Discussion is based on evidence gathered during the Renewal Site Visit, 11/5/08-11/7/08 and the findings from the Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy Financial Audit.

- h) the payroll reconciliation as of June 30, 2008 includes an adjusting journal entry that was made for seven (7) void checks, two (2) manual checks and one direct deposit totaling \$11,732.65. These transactions occurred in the months of December 2007 and June 2008.

During the renewal visit, most processes were found intact and the school is following most, but not all, of its adopted financial policies. Paid invoices had the right purchase order approvals, ordering and receiving of goods, presence of packing slips and invoices along with proof of payment with proper signatories. The school has tagged its assets for inventory purposes. Teacher and staff files (except two teachers files; one has applied for certification and the other is enrolled at Columbia University's Teacher's College) contained proper fingerprint clearance, W-4, I-9, and proper identification. Overall, the school board has mixed record of taking corrective actions on deficiencies identified in the school's audit and site visit report. However, some improvements have been made in the past two years.

The school has a memorandum of understanding with Harlem Children's Zone that guarantees covering revenue shortfall. However, HCZPAI's financial statements for fiscal year ended June 30, 2008 do not represent the school in strong financial standing. The financial statements of Promise Academy 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 most recent audited financial statements for year ended June 30, 2008, the school possessed assets totaling \$681,349 and total liabilities of \$655,026. All the total net assets totaling \$26,323 is unrestricted for use purposes. Promise Academy had \$444,806 in liquid assets that may be converted to cash generally within 90 day period. The school spent a total of \$9,197,733 of which 93.1% was spent on educational activities and 6.9% on management and general expenses. The school has a memorandum of understanding with Harlem Children's Zone to provide after school programming, fund raising, teacher assistants services, as well as operational, human resources, and fiscal assistance. The school has received contributions totaling \$2,907,690 from private sources and in-kind support and does not rely solely upon governmental revenues. However, it is unclear what constitutes the \$2,731,170 in-kind contributions that the school received from the HCZ organization. The school has made notable improvements from last year to this year in net assets section. The school had a negative net asset balance of \$636,854 for fiscal year 2007 and a positive balance of \$154,932 for fiscal year 2008. It is unclear how HCZPAI plans to cope with the economic downturn without a fiscal contingency plan, reserve fund, or a line of credit in place.

The school's budgeting process is collaborative and involves the principals, HCZ's Chief Financial Officer, Acting Superintendent, and board members. The board receives timely financial oversight documents and updates that help fulfill the duties outlined in the charter. The school continues to maintain the tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

**Benchmark 2D:**

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.

Discussion of Benchmark 2D<sup>17</sup>:

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<sup>17</sup> Discussion is based on evidence gathered during the Renewal Site Visit, 11/5/08-11/7/08

The figure below shows parent satisfaction results from the 2008 NYCDOE Learning Environment Survey. According to this survey, parents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the learning environment at the school. Thirty seven percent of parents responded to this survey, a rate which is below the city average.

What do PARENTS at your school think?							
Each question is assigned to a category that represents an important part of a strong school learning environment. Below, you can see how parents at your school answered some of the survey questions. See page 1 for a description of each category.							
Survey Category	How satisfied are you with the following:	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	Score	
Academic Expectations	The education your child has received this year.	56%	40%	3%	1%	8.4	
Communication	How well your child’s school communicated with you.	47%	45%	7%	1%	7.9	
Engagement	Your opportunities to be involved in your child’s education.	58%	38%	4%	0%	8.5	
Survey Category	How much do you agree or disagree:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don’t Know	Score
Safety and Respect	My child is safe at school.	56%	37%	3%	0%	3%	8.7

Parent answers on the survey determine the survey category scores from 0 to 10. These scores are used to compare schools on a scale from 0% (the lowest-rated school in the City) to 100% (the highest-rated school in the City). How do the answers of parents at your school compare to those of parents at other Elementary / Middle Schools?					
	Survey Score (0 – 10)	Progress Report City Horizon Score (0 – 100%)	Your School’s Parent Scores Compared to Other Elementary / Middle Schools		Change in Score from Last Year
			0%	100%	
<b>Academic Expectations</b>	8.4	83.3%			N/A
<b>Communication</b>	8.1	86.4%			N/A
<b>Engagement</b>	8.3	112.5%			N/A
<b>Safety and Respect</b>	8.8	80.8%			N/A

**Benchmark 2E:**

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

Sufficient Facilities and Physical Conditions conducive to the school implementing its program and meeting its goals.

*Discussion of Benchmark 2E:*<sup>18</sup>

Promise Academy’s elementary school is located in a NYCDOE facility and the middle school is located at a site donated by Harlem Children’s Zone, the partner organization. The annual fee for the NYCDOE space is \$1. As mentioned earlier, Promise Academy is housed at two different sites, which creates additional challenges in managing the facility. The building possesses adequate space for classrooms, office space, a gymnasium, and cafeteria. Having its own space has helped the school create a strong school culture conducive to implementing the vision outlined in the charter application. The elementary school also has adequate classroom space and other amenities but shares space with another public school that resides at the same location.

<sup>18</sup> Discussion is based on evidence gathered during the Renewal Site Visit, 11/5/08-11/7/08

### **C. Renewal Question #3: Has the School Been in Compliance with All Applicable Laws and Regulations?**

#### **Benchmark 3A:**

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

##### **Discussion of Benchmark 3A<sup>19</sup>:**

Promise Academy has submitted its Annual Reports on time; however, they have been delinquent in submitting high school plans, clarifications on renewal applications (over a month late), and teacher certification data to NYSED. The school's financial statements were submitted to NYCDOE-OCS over one month late in 2007 but they were on time for 2008. The school is inconsistent when responding to NYCDOE's requests for information.

#### **Benchmark 3B:**

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

##### **Discussion of Benchmark 3B<sup>20</sup>:**

HCZPA revised its lottery after the initial charter was approved to conduct a 3-year old lottery for students who would enter the school at kindergarten. Each year in August, a lottery is conducted for three-year olds in the community. Those students can then enter the 'Three Year Old Journey' and then as four-year-olds can enter the Harlem Gems Pre-kindergarten program through HCZ, Inc. When these students turn 5, they can enter kindergarten at the school. For students entering in the middle school grades, a blind lottery is conducted which gives preference to siblings of currently enrolled students, and then students residing in CSD 5. While the 3-year-old lottery allows the school to bring to bear the extensive resources of the HCZ pre-k programs, it makes it difficult for parents of kindergarten aged children who only find out about the school as their child is turning five to gain admission to the school.

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<sup>19</sup> Discussion is based on review of historical documentation

<sup>20</sup> Discussion is based on evidence gathered during the Renewal Site Visit, 11/5/08 – 11/7/08 and historical documentation.

**Benchmark 3C:**

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

Discussion of Benchmark 3C<sup>21</sup>:

HCZPA has exhibited consistently high levels of compliance with IDEA. The school has a very organized special education coordinator who ensures that all IEPs are reviewed annually, and that all students are receiving the services mandated by their IEPs. The school is committed to serving all students who gain admission through the lottery, and will not move students out of the school unless data shows that a child truly needs a more restrictive environment.

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<sup>21</sup> Discussion is based on review of historical documentation