



Charter Schools Accountability and Support  
2012-2013

**COMMUNITY ROOTS CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

**2012 – 2013 SCHOOL YEAR**

## Part 1: School Overview & History

### School Overview and History

Community Roots Charter School is an elementary and middle school serving approximately 351 students<sup>1</sup> in grades K-6 during the 2012-13 school year. It opened in 2006-2007, and is under the terms of its second charter. The school's projected full grade span is K-8, which it's expected to reach in 2014-2015.<sup>2</sup> The school is located in public<sup>3</sup> facilities in Brooklyn within CSD 13.<sup>4</sup>

The table below details the school's performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report.<sup>5</sup>

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall		F	C	C
Progress		F	F	D
Performance		D	C	B
Environment		A	A	A
Closing the Achievement Gap		0.8	1.5	1.8

Community Roots Charter School enrolls new students in grades K through 6. There were 708 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2012 lottery.<sup>6</sup> The average attendance rate for the 2012-2013 school year to date is 96.4%.<sup>7</sup>

On the 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey, the school scored Above Average on the Safety & Respect section, Above Average on the Communication section, Above Average on the Engagement section, and Above Average on the Academic Expectations section. Seventy-three percent of the school's parents and 100.0% of the school's teachers responded to the survey.<sup>8</sup>

Community Roots Charter School was renewed for a full five year term in 2010-2011 academic year, with the following conditions:

- The school must demonstrate improved student achievement by scoring in the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal, in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal, and in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report in each of the 3rd, 4th and 5th years after renewal.

The elementary school is led by Co-Directors, Allison Keil and Sara Stone, who have both been at the school for 7 years, since the school's inception. A Middle School Director, Sarah Weeks, and an Assistant Middle School Director, Adam Weinstock, joined the staff this school year, as the school expanded to include the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

<sup>1</sup> Enrollment based on ATS data from 3/8/13.

<sup>2</sup> NYC DOE internal data.

<sup>3</sup> NYC DOE internal data.

<sup>4</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

<sup>5</sup> NYC DOE Progress Report – <http://schools.nyc.gov/progressreport>

<sup>6</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 1/2013.

<sup>7</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 1/2013.

<sup>8</sup> NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

## Part 2: Annual Review Process Overview

### Rating Framework

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability & Support Team (CSAS) performs a comprehensive review of each NYC DOE-authorized charter school to investigate three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization; and is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations? To ascertain matters of sustainability and strategic planning, CSAS inquires about the school's plans for its next charter term.

This review is conducted by analyzing student performance data and collecting and evaluating school-submitted documents during the 2012-2013 school year. The report outlines evidence found during this review.

As per the school's monitoring plan, CSAS may also conduct a visit to a school. Visits may focus on academic outcomes, governance, organizational structure, operational compliance, fiscal sustainability or any combination of these as necessary.

In addition, a school's charter goals are reviewed. The progress that a school has made towards achieving its goals at this particular point during its charter period is noted. However, as this is an interim review before the end of the charter term, progress towards goals is not used as part of this evaluation.

### Essential Questions

#### *Is the school an academic success?*

To assess whether a school is an academic success, CSAS considers performance measures, including, but not limited to the following:

- Overall NYC DOE Progress Report score,
- New York State ELA and Math results and/or New York State Regents exams,
- ELA and Math proficiency compared to the district for elementary and middle schools, and graduation rates compared to the city for high schools,
- New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) or other approved alternate assessments, and
- Performance data pertaining to college and career readiness.

Academic success is rated as **Demonstrated, Partially Demonstrated, or Not Yet Demonstrated**. If a school does not yet have a NYC DOE Progress Report, it is rated as Not Yet Demonstrated.

#### *Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?*

To assess whether a school is a fiscally sound, viable organization, CSAS focuses on three areas: Governance Structure & Organizational Design, School Climate & Community Engagement, and Financial Health. This includes an analysis of the school's audited financial statements, based on the NACSA (National Association of Charter School Authorizers) Financial Framework<sup>9</sup>.

CSAS also considers a variety of supporting materials and data, including but not limited to the following:

- Board of Trustee bylaws,
- Board of Trustee meeting minutes,
- Annual Reports submitted by schools to New York State Education Department (NYSED),
- NYC DOE School Survey,
- Data collection sheets provided by schools,
- Student, staff, and Board turnover,
- Authorized enrollment numbers, and

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance\\_Framework\\_Fall\\_2012\\_Draft.pdf](http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance_Framework_Fall_2012_Draft.pdf), page 38-59

- Annual financial audits.

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

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

As it pertains to compliance, CSAS identifies areas of compliance and noncompliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

**Staff Representatives**

The following staff representatives participated in the review of this school's documents as detailed above and conducted an academics-based monitoring visit to the school on April 30, 2013:

- Daree Lewis, DOE
- Maria Campo, DOE
- Jorge Cruz, DOE

## Part 3: Findings

### Summary of Findings

Based on CSAS review, the following findings are made. To date, the school:

- has partially demonstrated academic achievement and academic progress (pp. 5-8),
- has a developed governance structure and organizational design (p. 9),
- has developed a stable school culture (p. 9),
- is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices (p. 10),
- is in compliance with its charter and applicable laws and regulations (p. 11),
- has plans to continue its expansion of middle school grades, reaching full capacity as a K-8 school, during the current charter term (p. 12).

This review included a desk audit, a self-evaluation completed by the school, a visit to the school by the CSAS staff, and follow up communication via phone and email. CSAS conducted an academics-based monitoring visit to the school on April 30, 2013.

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

To date, Community Roots Charter School has partially demonstrated academic achievement and academic progress.

- The school has four years of New York State (NYS) assessment data at the time of this report.
- The school received an Overall grade of C on its 2011-2012 NYC DOE Progress Report, with a D in Student Progress and a B in Student Performance.
- In 2011-2012, the percentage of students in its tested grades (3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup>) scoring greater than a level 3 was:
  - 73.6% on the NYS ELA assessment
  - 73.0% on the NYS Math assessment.
- As in past years, during the academic year 2011-2012 the school's overall proficiency scores were above its district of location, CSD 13, by 23.7 percentage points in ELA and 15.3 percentage points in Math.
- The overall percentage of students proficient in Math has remained flat since 2009-2010. Although the percent proficient in Math remained flat over the last two years, the school's overall proficiency scores are higher than the citywide levels of proficiency in both Math and ELA.
- Its overall percentage of students proficient in ELA has increased from 66.7% in 2010-2011 to 73.6% in 2011-2012.
- In 2011-2012, the school earned 1.75 points for the Closing the Achievement Gap section on its NYC DOE Progress Report.
- The school's Overall percentile ranking was 33 on the 2011-2012 NYC DOE Progress Report, meeting the 2010-2011 renewal condition of scoring in the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile or above of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within one year after renewal.

### Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals<sup>10</sup>

- According to its 2011-2012 Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), of its 7 academic goals in its charter, Community Roots met 4, partially met 2, and did not meet 1.

Representatives of the CSAS team visited the school on April 30, 2013. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- School leadership reported that professional development has been focused on Common Core alignment. Over the last two years, the school has been working to revise the curriculum to better align with the Common Core.
  - One representative from each grade team has been working in a math collaborative with representatives from other public schools in the area using the Investigations curriculum.
  - Staff reviewed the Common Core sample questions testing material from the state with the literacy staff developer and identified the changes that needed to be made within the curriculum.
- The school has four learning specialists that focus on specific grade levels, as well as content. The school has dedicated learning specialists for ELA, Reading, and Writing, and plan to add two new learning specialists focused on Math for the elementary grades. They currently have a Math staff developer who has assisted teachers in redesigning lessons to further refine alignment to the Common Core by unit, as well as meet with grade level teams to help analyze student test data and identify trends.
- School leadership reported that their six models of co-teaching give the teachers the flexibility to meet their students' diverse needs, including challenging and extending, as well as providing intervention and support.
  - Teachers receive summer professional development where they gain exposure to the six models by watching video clips of teachers employing the various models.
  - Teachers receive on-going support in the co-teaching models. A new teacher is always paired with an experienced teacher as their co-teacher.

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<sup>10</sup> Goal analysis is considered a neutral point and is not used as part of the evaluation.

- On the day of the visit, twelve classrooms, grades K-5, were observed with the school's two Co-Directors, and the following was noted:
  - In all observed classes, teachers were following one of the school's six models of Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT), including team teaching, parallel teaching, one teach and one assist, and alternative teaching.
  - Class-sizes ranged from 21 to 26 students in size, with two teachers in all classrooms.
  - Forms of questioning during the twelve classroom observations included some basic fact recall, but mostly challenged students to demonstrate understanding or to analyze and apply.
  - In most rooms, checks for understanding that included questioning, polling, classwork, teacher observation, and frequent use of student turn and talk, were observed.
  - In all rooms, differentiation of materials, tasks, and products, through small group instruction or independent practice, was observed. These were consistent with the school model.
  - In all observed classes, students were responsive to teacher directions and instruction.
  - In all observed classes, students were either fully on task or mostly on task. Off-task students were off task for a short duration.
  - Based on debriefs with the school's Co-Directors after classroom visits, all classrooms had instruction that aligned with the instructional model and current academic goals of the school.
- CSAS representatives conducted one-on-one interviews with eleven teachers and two learning specialists. Those interviewed were selected by CSAS.
  - All interviewed teachers reported that they received school-based professional development both in the summer and weekly during the school year, with the administration providing resources. They also reported being encouraged by administration to get further professional development outside of the school.
  - Some of the interviewed teachers mentioned the use of the Teacher Evaluation Rubric by Kim Marshall for formal teacher evaluations conducted by the school's Co-Directors, while most of the interviewed teachers discussed the use of informal observations for receiving feedback from the Co-Director who oversees the respective grade level.
  - All interviewed teachers reported that they use data in the classrooms through both formal (i.e. Common Core standards-based tests, Developmental Reading Assessment [DRA]) and informal assessments (i.e. observational notes, exit slips assessments. for groupings and lesson planning).

**Community Roots Charter School**

**Percent of Students Scoring Level 3/4 - Whole School**

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Community Roots Charter School	84.3	59.0	66.7	73.6
CSD 13*	66.4	43.5	47.4	49.9
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Community Roots Charter School	96.1	71.0	71.3	73.0
CSD 13*	89.1	49.7	53.4	57.7

\*CSD data represents common testing grades only for all years presented

**Percent of Students Scoring Level 3/4 - By Grade**

Grade 3

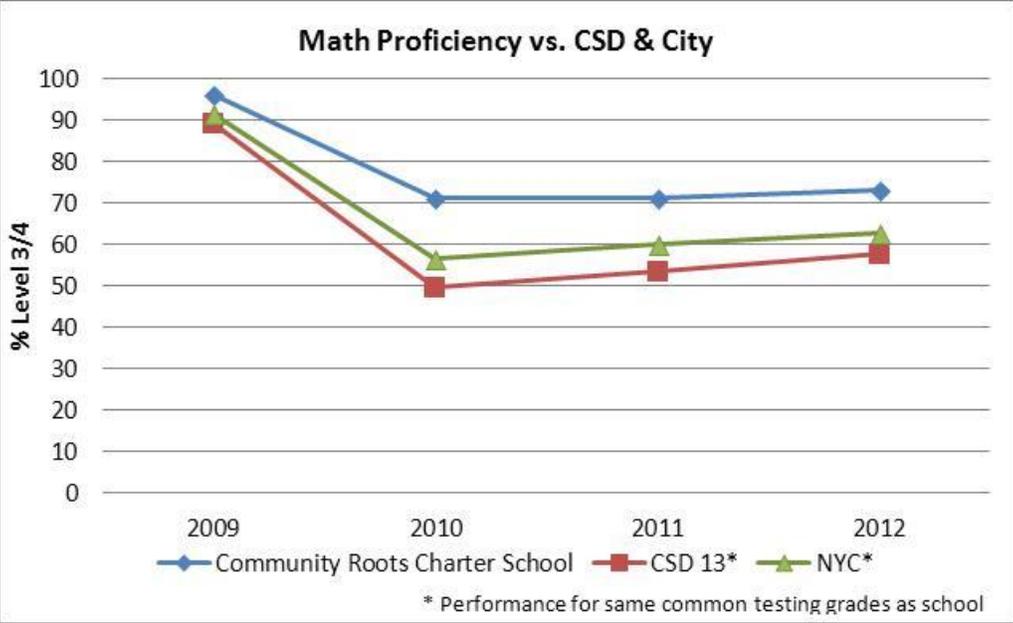
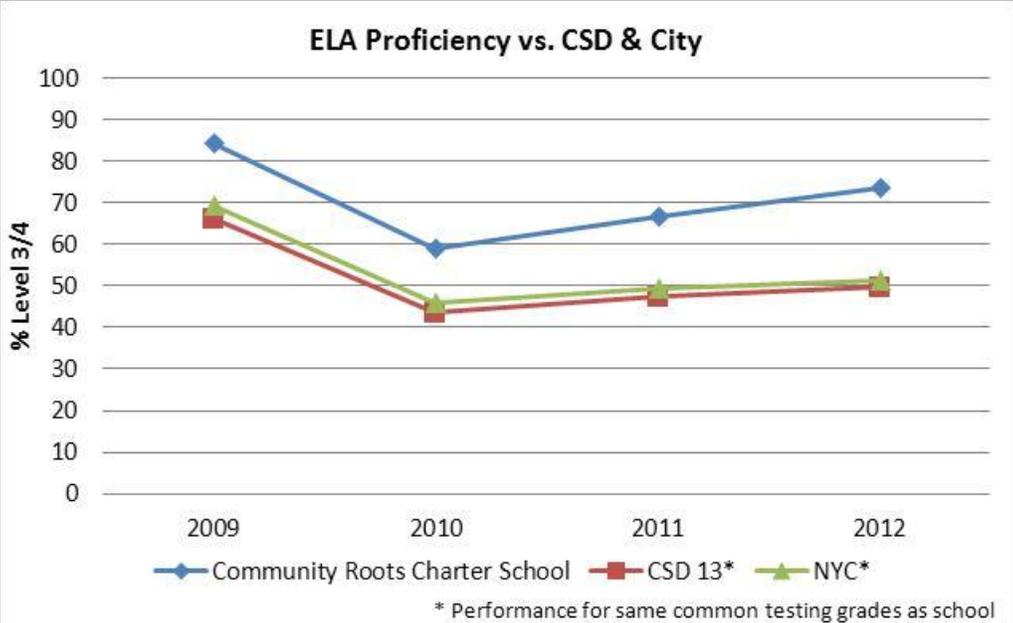
<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Community Roots Charter School	84.3	58.0	66.0	74.0
CSD 13*	66.4	44.8	45.3	47.5
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Community Roots Charter School	96.1	70.0	74.0	80.0
CSD 13*	89.1	46.9	48.7	54.4

Grade 4

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Community Roots Charter School		60.0	66.0	74.0
CSD 13*		42.2	50.9	50.4
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Community Roots Charter School		72.0	68.0	72.0
CSD 13*		52.4	54.0	58.1

Grade 5

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Community Roots Charter School			68.0	72.9
CSD 13*			45.9	51.9
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Community Roots Charter School			72.0	66.7
CSD 13*			57.6	60.5



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

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

To date, the school's Board of Trustees has a developed governance structure and organizational design.

- The Board has been stable in membership and leadership since the school's founding. The Board has sixteen active members and experienced no turnover since the 2011-2012 school year.
- The Board has clear lines of accountability from school leadership to the Board, with the Co-Directors evaluated annually based on goals co-created with the Education Committee, as reported in the school's Annual Report and recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Board votes consistently demonstrate a quorum, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The school's Co-Directors update the Board on academic progress at every board meeting, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Board has active and functioning committees, including a Finance Committee that is an integral part to the budgeting process and the Development Committee that has met fundraising targets for the year, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Board has held five meetings this school year, not meeting the minimum requirement of six, as outlined in the Board's bylaws. The sixth one was cancelled due to Hurricane Sandy.
- The Board has provided CSAS with timely submission of accountability reporting documents, including its annual report and financial audits, as well as Board minutes.

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

To date, the school has developed a stable school culture.

- The school leadership has been stable with the founding Co-Directors still leading the school. This year the school has added an additional director and an assistant director, who lead the middle school grades.
- Staff turnover was 27% of instructional staff not returning, by choice or request at the start of the 2012-2013<sup>11</sup> school year.
- Student turnover included five students not returning at the start of the 2012-2013 school year, and no attrition between the start of the school year and January 2013<sup>12</sup>.
- Student enrollment is maintained and student attrition is below projections.
- Community Roots Charter School's 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey Results were Above Average for Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement, and Safety & Respect. The school's scores were higher than the citywide average for all elementary schools in each category. Participation in this school's NYC DOE School Survey was above the citywide averages for Parents (73% versus 53%) and Teachers (100% versus 82%).<sup>13</sup>

Progress Towards Attainment of Accountability Goals<sup>14</sup>

- To date, the school has met its charter goal of having an annual average student attendance rate of at least 95%. Current average daily attendance for students is at 96.4%.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 1/2013

<sup>12</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 1/2013

<sup>13</sup> NYC DOE School Survey, <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

<sup>14</sup> Goal analysis is considered a neutral point and is not used as part of the evaluation.

<sup>15</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 1/2013

## **Financial Health**

Overall, to date, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices.

Based on the school's 2011-2012 Audited Financial Statements:

- The school is in a strong position to meet all of its liabilities in the next 12 months.
- The school is in a position to cover all of its future expenses for the foreseeable future without an infusion of cash.
- The school is meeting its enrollment target, indicating a stable budget.
- The school is meeting its debt obligations.
- The school is operating at a surplus, indicating an ability to create a strong reserve to support ongoing growth.
- The school's debt-to-asset ratio indicates that the school has more assets than it has liabilities.
- The school's cash on hand trended downward from FY2011 to FY 2012, but this is because the school directed its cash into reserves.
- An independent audit performed showed no material findings.

### **Essential Question 3: Compliance with Charter and All Applicable Laws and Regulations**

To date, the school is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

The Board is in compliance with:

- Board membership size falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws.
- The Board minutes and agenda items have been posted for inspection by the public.
- All Board members have submitted financial disclosure forms, included in the school's 2011-2012 Annual Report, and do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.

The school is in compliance with:

- The school has submitted required documentation for safety plan, compliance with AED/ CPR certification, fingerprint clearance, teacher certification, and appropriate insurance documents.
- To date, the school's immunization completion rate of 99.3% is above the threshold established by the NYC Department of Health of 98.8%.

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

As reported by school leadership, the following is noted about the school's plans for its next charter term:

- The school continues to plan to expand its middle school grades, an expansion that began this year with the addition of 6<sup>th</sup> grade and will continue with one grade per year, until the school reaches full grade span of K-8.
- The school is split-sited with the elementary school (grades K-5) located at 51 Saint Edwards Street, and the middle school (grades 6-8, once school is at full grade span) located at 50 Navy Street.
- In the 2013-2014 school year the school will be K-7, and in 2014-2015 the school will be K-8, reaching full capacity.

## Part 4: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

### The CSAS Accountability Framework

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

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

#### 1. Is the School an Academic Success?

##### 1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

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

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

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

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

##### 1b. Mission and Academic Goals

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

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

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

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

### **1c. Responsive Education Program**

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

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

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

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

### **1d. Learning Environment**

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

- Have a strong culture that connects high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to give their best effort academically and socially
- Use a comprehensive approach to student management, including positive behavioral expectations and a clear discipline policy to build and sustain a safe, orderly, and supportive classroom environment
- Provide for safe, respectful, efficient transitions, hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.
- Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and supported
- Provide opportunities for students to actively engage in their own learning and in the life of the school

- Have a formal or informal character education, social development, or citizenship program that provides opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens

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

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

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

### 2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

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

- Operate with a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate blend of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter
- Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly but not limited to open-meeting laws and conflict of interest regulations
- Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time and despite circumstance
- Implements a school leadership structure that is aligned with charter and that is sufficient to fulfill school's mission and achieve its accountability goals; it also has clear lines of accountability for leadership roles, accountability to Board, and, if applicable, relationship with a charter management organization
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implemented a process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's organization and leadership structure
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers

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

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar, professional development plan

### 2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

- A healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered, and open to parents and community support
- An effective process for recruiting, hiring, supporting, and evaluating leadership and staff
- A flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- An effective way of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including the DOE School Survey
- Effective home-school communication practices to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Strong community-based partnerships and advocacy for the school

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

- DOE School Survey satisfaction parent, teacher, and, if appropriate student results
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs

## **2c. Financial and Operational Health**

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

- Consistently meet its student enrollment and retention targets
- Annual budgets that meets all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- School leadership and Board that oversee financial and operational responsibilities in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to decision-making
- Boards and school leadership that maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of chartered school design and academic program
- A safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations

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

- School budget, P&Ls, and monthly/quarterly cash-flow reports
- Appropriate insurance documents
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- Financial audits
- Financial leader(s) resume and accountability documents
- Operational policies and procedures
- Operational org chart
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- School safety plan

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

#### 3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

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

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

- Authorized charter and signed agreement
- Charter revision request approval and documentation
- School mission
- School policies and procedures
- Site visits
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership/board interviews

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

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have:

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

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

- School reporting documents
- School's Annual Report
- Student recruitment plan and resources
- Student management policies and promotion and retention policies
- Student discipline records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Staff roster, fingerprint clearance for all staff, certification status of all instructional staff

#### 3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

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

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

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

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

##### **4a. School Expansion or Model Replication**

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

Successful schools generally have processes for:

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

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

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and Board interviews

##### **4b. Organizational Sustainability**

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

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

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

- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organization chart
- Staff rosters
- Staff handbook
- Leadership and staff interviews
- Budget

#### **4c. School or Model Improvements**

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

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

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

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- MOUs or contracts with partners