



Charter School Annual Site Visit Report  
Charter Schools Office  
2011-2012

**RIVERTON STREET CHARTER SCHOOL**  
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

FEBRUARY 2012

# Part 1: Executive Summary

## **School Overview and History:**

Riverton Street Charter School (RSCS) is an elementary school currently serving approximately 248 students in grades Kindergarten to fourth grade in the 2011-2012 school year.<sup>1</sup> It has plans to grow to serve students kindergarten through grade 5.<sup>2</sup> It is currently housed in privately leased space at 118-34 Riverton Street in St. Albans, Queens.

The school is in its second year and thus has not yet earned a Progress Report grade or state/federal accountability designation.<sup>3</sup> The student body includes 0% English language learners (ELL), 7.4% students with disabilities (SWD), and 77% Free and Reduced Lunch students (FRL).<sup>4</sup> The school has experienced low student attrition with of 3.2% turnover as of February 2012.<sup>5</sup> There were 889 students on the waitlist and the current daily attendance rate was reported to be 97.22%.<sup>6</sup>

RSCS is part of the National Heritage Academies (NHA) network, an education management organization. NHA is responsible and accountable to the Board of Trustees for the administration, operation, and management of BSCS. This includes the school's instructional program, professional development training for staff, instructional materials and supplies, and all business and accounting administration. The fee structure is based on NHA retaining all excess revenues after all expenses and services for the school have been paid.

## **Annual Review Process Overview:**

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

The following experts participated in the review of this school on February 28, 2012:

- Sonia Park, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSO
- Bert Wyman, Analyst, NYC DOE CSO
- Paul O'Neill, Consultant to NYC DOE CSO

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<sup>1</sup> Riverton Street Charter School self reported School Evaluation Visit Data Collection Form, (2/14/12)

<sup>2</sup> NYC DOE ATS system, April 2012 and charter agreement

<sup>3</sup> New York State Education Department - [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Riverton Street Charter School self reported School Evaluation Visit Data Collection Form (2/14/12)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

## Part 2: Findings

### Areas of strength

- RSCS has enacted measures in order to be in full compliance with the 2010 amended Charter School Act. Targeted populations for enrollment and retention, specifically for students receiving Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) are higher than the school's community school district, CSD 29.
  - RSCS has a population of 77% FRL<sup>7</sup>, higher than CSD 29's FRL rate of 66.15%<sup>8</sup>.
- There was evidence that RSCS has established a culture that promotes academic success.
  - The school utilizes common behavioral management practices across classrooms and grades and these appeared to be effective. All observed classrooms featured a chart tracking student status, posting visual references for appropriate student behavior.
  - During classroom visits, student behavior was observed to be consistently calm, safe, and focused on instruction.
  - The school starts each day with a "Moral Meeting," which highlights positive student behaviors and reflects the school's focus on moral "virtues" and Habits of Mind.
  - Special education services and needs appeared to be handled appropriately and in compliance with applicable requirements. Interviews with special education staff reflected full familiarity with applicable requirements. The school recently implemented push in/ pull out intervention/support services using special education teachers, designated paraprofessionals and specials teachers.
- RSCS leadership has implemented a performance driven culture and a supportive, cohesive professional environment.
  - School leadership sets specific progress and proficiency goals for individual students (at all level of achievement) and for the school as a whole.
  - Teachers indicated that they receive informal observations once or twice per week and formal observations three to four times per year. Teachers reported that written feedback received after observations are consistently clear and meaningful.
  - Teachers interviewed stated that leadership has set clear, specific instructional goals for all staff members. The NHA system for teacher observation and feedback calls for regular (at least weekly) observations; teachers advance through a comprehensive, differentiated rubric of performance expectations. Beginning in this school year, teacher incentives (bonuses, leadership development) were increased in order to further motivate and energize the faculty.
  - Teachers indicated that they submit lesson plans to academic deans weekly and receive detailed responses.
  - Teachers interviewed reported feeling supported to grow their skills through the professional development being offered and through coaching.
- RSCS utilizes academic performance data to inform instructional practices.
  - School staff indicated that the school administers the Northwest Evaluation Association exam three times per year, mock ELA and Math exams three times per year, as well as summative and formative unit assessments.
  - Varied teaching strategies, higher order questioning and accountable talk between students were observed in the most of classrooms.

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<sup>7</sup> NYC DOE ATS system, April 2012

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

- Students are consistently made aware of their specific performance and progress goals. Student performance data and goals are displayed in classrooms on pocket charts and on student's desks.
- Teachers reported referencing data for both small group instruction and generating lesson plans. They use data from NYS assessments, NWEA assessments and interim assessments to sequence the curriculum within each content area and differentiate instruction.
- There was clear evidence that the staff is cohesive and collaborative.
  - There was strong buy-in from teachers, who collectively expressed a high level of confidence in the school. They noted significant respect for school leaders and appreciated the healthy receptivity of parents.
  - Teachers reported that their lessons are developed with clear goals in mind, that collaboration occurs across grade levels, and they have daily planning time.
- There was strong evidence of sound operational management.
  - The school is housed in a facility that meets current and projected enrollment needs.
  - The school reports a strong partnership with its CMO, National Heritage Academies.
  - National Heritage Academies-guided systems for teacher observation and feedback were shared with reviewers.
  - School staff indicated that the school has received over 1,200 applications for its upcoming kindergarten class.
  - Professional development, other staff training (e.g. electronic lottery training for registrar), back office support, teacher evaluation metrics, among other supports are provided by NHA.
  - RSCS self evaluation and interviews with leadership indicate that the school is fiscally strong and solvent and any unexpected shortfalls would be covered by NHA.
- Facilities appeared well maintained; classrooms are clean and bright with print rich materials on all available wall space.
- Despite a limited amount of board turnover (2 trustees), governance and leadership appeared stable and consistent.

### Areas for growth

- RCCS should enact corrective measures in order to be in full compliance with the 2010 amended Charter School Act.
  - The school should continue to refine and document its outreach strategies for recruitment and retention of targeted populations in order to be comparable to the district, CSD 29. The school reported using a variety of recruitment strategies, including advertising in local foreign language newspapers. Areas of concern regard meeting target rates for enrollment and retention for English Language Learners (ELL) and Students with Disabilities (SWD).
    - RCCS has a population of 0% ELLs<sup>9</sup>, which is considerably lower than CSD 29's ELL rate of 7.16%<sup>10</sup>.
    - RSCS has a SWD population of 7.4%<sup>11</sup>, which is lower than CDS 29's rate 12.90%.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> NYC DOE ATS system, April 2012

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

- While the school provides several avenues for parent engagement, a formal parent association must be established, in accordance with the New York Charter Schools Act.
- The school should continue to focus on consistency of high-quality, rigorous instruction across classrooms.
  - During classroom observations, there were a few instances of a lack higher-order questioning of students; efforts should be taken to cultivate more consistent rigor.
  - Academic urgency was not always consistently observed; some instructional pacing was slow, leading to decreased levels of student engagement.
  - Several students questioned were unclear of instructional objectives or directives.
  - Use of teaching interns should be made more consistently efficient. In some classrooms interns were observed to engage with students, facilitate group work and aid in instruction; in others they appeared passive and disengaged. The school is encouraged to consider how its professional development and observation/feedback cycles can help prepare teaching interns to increase effectiveness in the classroom.
- RSCS should continue to expand and deepen data-driven instruction.
  - Differentiation was observed in some classes but it was not apparent how all students, including those at the top range, were being met academically. The school is encouraged to focus on building teacher ownership of data so that it is used effectively to plan differentiation and targeted instruction.
- School leadership is encouraged to further their understanding of key financial and operational metrics.
  - School leaders were unclear about facilities budgeting or online invoicing, both of which are currently managed by NHA.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

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

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

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

#### 1b. Mission and Academic Goals

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Professional development plans and resources
- School calendar and daily schedules
- DOE School Surveys and internal school satisfaction surveys
- Instructional leader and staff interviews

## 1d. Learning Environment

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

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

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

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

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

### 2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

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

- Have a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations, with clear lines of accountability for the Board, school leadership and all staff
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate officers, committees, and a purposeful blend of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter
- Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly but not

- limited to open-meeting laws and conflict of interest regulations, and is fully compliant with its Board approved by-laws (number of meetings, quorum, posting of calendar, agenda and minutes)
- Have a defined process for Board reflection on effectiveness, assessing developing needs, and plan for professional growth
- Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time and despite circumstance
- Implements a school leadership structure that is aligned with charter and that is sufficient to fulfill school's mission and achieve its accountability goals and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization is identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implements a process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's staff that is clearly defined in staff handbook
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers, including both formal and informal observations

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

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

**2b. School Climate and Community Engagement**

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

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

Board, as appropriate, including a clearly articulated escalation path to authorizer

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

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

## 2c. Financial and Operational Health

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

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

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

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

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

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

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

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

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

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

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

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location<sup>13</sup> or are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages for enrollment and retention
- Implement school policies related to student discipline and promotion and retention that are fully compliant with laws and regulations related to students with disabilities and due process regulations

<sup>13</sup> School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

- Conduct an independently verified fair and open lottery and manage with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employ instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and certification requirements

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

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

### 3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

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

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

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

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

### 4a. School Expansion or Model Replication

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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