



Charter Schools Accountability and Support
2012-2013

**IMAGINE ME LEADERSHIP CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

2012 – 2013 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: School Overview & History

School Overview and History

Imagine Me Leadership Charter School is an elementary school serving approximately 190 students¹ in grades K-3 during the 2012-2013 school year. It opened in 2010-2011, and is under the terms of its first charter. The school's projected full grade span is K-5, which it's expected to reach in 2014-2015.² The school is located in private³ facilities in Brooklyn within CSD 19.⁴

The school has not yet earned a grade on the NYC DOE Progress Report.⁵

Imagine Me Leadership Charter School enrolls new students in grades K through 3. There were 80 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2012 lottery.⁶ The average attendance rate for the 2012-2013 school year to date is 92.5%.⁷

On the 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey, the school scored Average on the Safety & Respect section, Below Average on the Communication section, Below Average on the Engagement section, and Well Below Average on the Academic Expectations section. Sixty-four percent of the school's parents and 32.0% of the school's teachers responded to the survey.⁸

The current school leadership team consists of the Interim Executive Director, Dr. Katherine Corbett, Interim Principal, Mr. Bevon Thompson, Director of Finance, Ms. Tonia Cupid, and Interim Director of Curriculum, Dr. George Leonard.

The school was issued a Notice of Deficiency by the Charter Schools Accountability and Support team (CSAS) on January 9, 2013. After a review of the school's accountability documents during the 2012-2013 school year, the school was found to be deficient in the following areas: Compliance with Charter School Agreement, Financial Sustainability, and Organizational Capacity. The Board of Trustees for the school was given a deadline of February 28, 2013 to provide a comprehensive plan to address the concerns described in the Notice. The Board complied with the CSAS directive, issuing a Deficiency Response on February 28, 2013, outlining plans to address the deficiencies. Under the Notice of Deficiency, CSAS continues to monitor the school's identified areas of deficiency and compliance with the Deficiency Response Plan for the duration of the 2012-2013 school year.

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

² NYC DOE internal data.

³ NYC DOE internal data.

⁴ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

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

⁶ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/15/13.

⁷ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/15/13.

⁸ NYC 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 Framework⁹.

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,

⁹http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance_Framework_Fall_2012_Draft.pdf, page 38-59

- Authorized enrollment numbers, and
- Annual financial audits.

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

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 a full visit to the school on May 8, 2013:

- Daree Lewis, DOE
- Jorge Cruz, DOE
- Maria Campo, DOE
- Laurie Pendleton, Consultant

Part 3: Findings

Summary of Findings

Based on CSAS review, to date, the following findings have been made about the school:

- has not yet demonstrated academic achievement or progress, because it has not yet generated accountability data (i.e. no state assessment results and no graded NYC DOE Progress Report) (pp. 6-7),
- has a developed governance structure and organizational design (p. 8),
- has not yet developed a stable school culture (p. 8),
- is in a weak position to meet near-term financial obligations and there are concerns about the financial sustainability of the school (p. 9),
- is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations but not others (p. 10),
- has plans to renovate and expand the school facilities, and are considering an expansion into middle school grades (p. 11).

This review included a desk audit, a self-evaluation completed by the school, a school visit by CSAS staff, and follow up communication via phone and email. CSAS visited the school on May 8, 2013.

Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?

To date, Imagine Me Leadership Charter School has not yet demonstrated academic achievement or progress, because it has not yet generated accountability data (i.e. no state assessment results and no graded NYC DOE Progress Report).

- The school currently serves grades K-3, with the 2012-2013 school year being the first year they are serving 3rd grade. This will be the first year students take the New York State ELA or Math tests.

Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals¹⁰

- According to its 2011-2012 Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), the school has two academic-specific charter goals that pertain to their students' performance on the New York State Math and ELA assessments. As a school that had not yet generated state assessment results, these goals were not yet applicable.

Representatives of the CSAS team visited the school on May 8, 2013. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- Eleven classroom observations were made by CSAS reviewers with the school's Interim Principal and Interim Director of Curriculum and the following was noted:
 - In all but three classrooms direct instruction was the method of delivery. In two of the remaining rooms, students were engaged in small group or independent practice while in the final room, both a guided reading group and independent practice were happening simultaneously.
 - The third-grade classrooms observed were all providing instruction on Text Features, indicating an alignment of curriculum within the grade levels.
 - While the majority of questioning was focused on basic recall, in some rooms questioning that contained evidence of application and evaluation was observed. In one room, the teacher was leading a discussion of the purpose of text features from both the author and reader's points of view. During this discussion, teacher questions were a combination of both low-level recall and higher-level application:
 - "What is a table of contents?"
 - "How do we use a table of contents?"
 - "How is an index organized?"
 - "How might you use an index?"
 - "Can you use the index to find where a reader would turn to find information about...?"
 - In the majority of classrooms, there was limited evidence of the teacher checking for understanding; however, in one classroom, students were practicing their sign language skills and the teacher moved from partnership to partnership observing and providing modeling and feedback to students.
 - In some classrooms, there was evidence of differentiation. In one classroom students were using different worksheets to cover similar content. The teacher in one classroom was working with a small group to provide more intensive support. In several classrooms where two teachers were present, the typical approach was to have one teacher lead instruction while the other monitored student behavior.
 - Across the classrooms visited, there was no evidence of a common approach to either positive or negative behavior. There was no observed evidence of a consistent, effective approach to dealing with low-level behaviors that could easily escalate. There were no common rules or expectations posted other than the school's pledge.
 - Engagement was mixed in most of the observed classrooms. In one observed class, although at the beginning of a class discussion of characters in a story, engagement and enthusiasm were high, they decreased significantly as the discussion continued.

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

- The teacher in one classroom reminded her students of the “Friday Activity” which seemed to have a positive impact on redirecting student misbehavior. There was no evidence of this reward system in other rooms.
- In one classroom, the teacher’s redirection, “Class, I need you to pay attention,” led to about half of the students adjusting their behavior. Signals, such as rhythmic clapping were used to effectively redirect student behavior in several classrooms.
- In one classroom, the teacher explained the need for students to be respectful of each other by saying, “We value what our classmate has to say so we must listen.”
- Based on debriefs after classroom visits, most classrooms had instruction that was aligned to the Common Core, although there does not appear to be an expectation that teachers follow a particular approach to instruction.
- On the day of the visit, nine teachers and staff members were interviewed.
 - All teachers interviewed reported that although the school has provided professional development opportunities, these opportunities have not met their specific needs. Several teachers suggested the need for professional development that is more aligned to the mission of the school.
 - Teachers most often requested professional development on classroom management, curriculum, and meeting the needs of Special Education among other topics.
 - Most teachers reported they receive limited feedback and no one could describe the method of evaluation.
 - Teachers interviewed suggested the school should add additional socio-emotional support for students.
- School leadership reported that they “use the results from interim assessments to inform planning, teaching, learning, and professional development.” The CSAS team did not see or hear evidence of this wide-spread use of data. The third grade team reported the use of instructional data to re-teach items and to determine areas of instructional focus. No other teachers could describe a coherent approach to the use of data.
- School leadership reported that they have made changes to accountability; how teachers are held accountable for instruction, the use of data, and also reported that this may result in some teachers being uncomfortable with increased expectations. Although teachers expressed concerned over the requirement to reapply for their jobs, they did not indicate these increased expectations were not welcome.
- School leadership reported that Parent Association meetings were held every month from February through the end of school year that focused on the common core learning standards.
- School leadership reported that teachers received professional development on the structure and methodology of teacher evaluation via a memo. This memo was submitted to CSAS as evidence via email after the site visit. In addition, leadership reported that teachers received training during January 2013 on the Charlotte Danielson’s Framework as a part of the school’s participation in PICCS (Partnership for Innovation for Compensation in Charter School) grant. Starting in February the teachers received professional development during their Prep time on Domain 1, Domain 3 and Common Core Learning Standards in ELA and Math.

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

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

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

- The Board has six active members. Although the Board lost four members since last school year, they added two new members, and have kept membership within the minimum of 5 members and maximum of 13 members established in the Board's bylaws.
- The Board's Co-Chairperson and Secretary positions are currently vacant.
- The Board votes consistently demonstrate a quorum, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Board has held monthly meetings, as indicated by the Board Yearly Meeting Schedule and the posted meeting minutes, in keeping with the school's bylaws, which indicates that the Board hold 10 meetings a year.
- The Interim Executive Director and Interim Principal update the Board on academic progress and operations at the school, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership as evidenced by the school's organization chart and school leadership's monthly updates on academic, financial and operational performance to the Board and its committees, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.
- The Board has active and functioning committees, including a Personnel Committee, Education Committee, and Fundraising Committee, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Board has provided CSAS with accountability reporting documents, including its annual report and financial audits, as well as Board minutes.

School Climate & Community Engagement

To date, the school has not yet developed a stable school culture.

- The turnover of school leadership is above 25%. The school is currently on its fourth school leader in three years of operations with a new instructional leadership team. The current principal and executive director have agreed to see the school through the charter renewal.
- The school leadership is requiring all staff to re-apply for the 2013-2014 school year. Although the leadership team gave a thoughtful explanation of why they have put this requirement into place (inequity of pay, different working arrangements for different staff, etc.), teachers could not articulate why they are being asked to re-apply and expressed angst over the decision.
- On the 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey, compared to K-5 schools citywide, the school scored Well Below Average on the Academic Expectations section, Below Average on the Communication section, Below Average on the Engagement section, and Average on the Safety & Respect section.
- The school's survey participation results were above citywide averages for Parents (64% to 53%), but below citywide averages for Teachers (32% to 82%).

Progress Towards Attainment of Accountability Goals¹¹

- School attendance is 92.5%¹², as of February 2013, which is below the school's charter goal of 95% daily attendance.

¹¹ Goal analysis is considered a neutral point and is not used as part of the evaluation.

¹² Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/15/13.

Financial Health

Overall, the school is in a weak position to meet near-term financial obligations and there are concerns about the financial sustainability of the school.

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

- The school is not in a position to meet its financial obligations over the next 12 months.
- The school can cover less than a week of operating expenses without an infusion of cash.
- The school has a cash flow that has trended downward. As indicated in the Notice of Deficiency, the school requested two cash flow loans totaling \$500,000, which is an amount greater than the total dollar amount of bridge loans made to all charter schools over the previous school year.
- On the FY2012 audit, the auditors noted concern over internal controls with regard to access to school funds. Only one signature is currently required on checks. Separation of duties must exist between the approver and initiator/treasurer which would require two signatures on checks. The Board explained this inconsistency was the result of changing bank accounts and should be rectified in the short term.
- The school is meeting its debt obligations.
- The school's debt-to-asset ratio indicates that it has more assets than it has liabilities.
- The school has met its enrollment target.
- The school is operating at a surplus.
- An independent audit performed showed no material findings.

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

The school is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

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 has held the required number of board meetings, as outlined in the Board's bylaws.
- Board minutes and agenda items have been posted for inspection by the public, for this school year up until February 2013.
- 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 Board is out of compliance with:

- As described in the Notice of Deficiency, the school has submitted required accountability documents to the NYC DOE well past the deadlines.

The school is in compliance with:

- The school has submitted required documentation for the safety plan, AEC/CPR certification compliance, fingerprint clearance, teacher certification, immunization completion rate, and appropriate insurance documents.

The school is out of compliance with:

- As described in the Notice of Deficiency, Imagine Me was the last school in the state to submit the mandated New York State Education Department Violent and Disruptive Incident Report. The school did not submit the report until December 2012, three months after it was due.

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

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

- Imagine Me Leadership and St. Paul Community Baptist Church Economic Development Corporation has reached an agreement that will enable the school to grow to full capacity.
- Funding will facilitate renovation and expansion by July 2013 to accommodate the 4th and 5th grades.
- The Board of Trustees and the School Leadership Team are strongly considering adding grades 6-8, and building a gymnasium with middle school classrooms above.
- The school's Leadership team reported they plan to discontinue the use of the Terra Nova Assessment. The school will need to request a charter revision if they do move forward with this plan.

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