Department of Education
Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

Charter School Renewal Report
Charter Schools Office
2012-2013

NYC CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL FOR ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES
RENEWAL REPORT

2012-13 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

The NYC Charter High School for Architecture, Engineering and Construction Industries (AECI) is a high school currently housed in a private facility in District 7[1] serving approximately 420 students from ninth through twelfth grade in the 2012-13 school year.[2] The school opened in 2008 with grade 9 and enrolls new students in grades 9-11. The school is under the terms of its first charter, which expires February 11, 2013. The school has no plans for further expansion.[3]

During the 2011-12 school year the average attendance rate was 89%.[4] On the NYC DOE School Survey for the 2011-2012, the school scored Average on the Safety & Respect section, Below Average on the Academic Expectations section, and Well-Below Average on the Communication and Engagement sections; 56% of the school's parents responded to the survey, 94% of the school's teachers, and 96% of the school's students.[5] The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.[6]

AECI is partnered with Victory Education Partners, an education management organization (EMO). The EMO provides academic support and evaluation, back office support, curriculum assessment and student assessment data gathering, among other financial supportive services. Working with and through the network, AECI manages student information via DOE's Automate the Schools (ATS) and collects per pupil funding through DOE. The annual budget is created by the Board of Trustees of the school. AECI is solely responsible for complying with all requirements of grants for the School, the School's governing charter, and all applicable laws.

	FRL %	SWD %	ELL %
School[7]	92	11.5	15.3
CSD 7[8]	86	20.4	18

	2011-12 PR overall grade	4-yr Graduation Rate %	College Readiness Index %
School[9]	B	67	4
Citywide rank[10]		44	9

[1] NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database
[2] Enrollment from 11/20/12 ATS data pull.
[3] NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement
[4] NYC DOE Progress Report for 2011-2012 - http://schools.nyc.gov/OA/SchoolReports/2011-12/Progress_Report_2012_HS_X395.pdf
[5] NYC DOE School Survey – http://schools.nyc.gov/survey
[6] New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov
[7] ATS data pull 11/20/12.
[8] Demographics from ATS 11/26/12 data pull.
[9] 2011-12 Progress Report
[10] 2011-12 Progress Report

Renewal Recommendation:

In order for a charter school to be renewed it must demonstrate that it has earned renewal and is worthy of continuing the privilege of educating New York City students. While the academic performance of students is the foremost determining factor of a school's success, a school's ability to demonstrate an effective educational program, a financially and operationally viable organization, and a strong learning community with support from stakeholders are important factors that inform a renewal decision.

Based on the evaluation of the renewal application, renewal visit, historical annual reports and visits, performance on Progress Reports, comparisons to the CSD, and other factors, the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Accountability & Support team (NYC DOE CSAS) recommends a **Three-Year Renewal with Conditions** of the charter for NYC AECI. The conditions are as follows:

> 1) Increase college readiness index measure, earning a minimum C grade each year of the new charter term.
> 2) Improve 4-year Graduation Rate by scoring in the 50th percentile or above of peer schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal.
> 3) Improve the percent of Students Earning Regents Diploma rate by scoring in the 50th percentile or above of peer schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal. The peer group is determined by the NYC DOE Progress Report.

Part 2: Renewal Decision and Findings

Renewal Framework:

The New York State Charter Schools Act ("the Act") states the following regarding the renewal of a school's charter:

> **§2851.4**: Charters may be renewed, upon application, for a term of up to five years in accordance with the provisions of this article for the issuance of such charters pursuant to section twenty-eight hundred fifty-two of this article; provided, however, that a renewal application shall [also] include:
> (a) A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in the charter.
> (b) A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private. Such statement shall be in a form prescribed by the Board of Regents.
> (c) Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school required by subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty-seven of this article, including the charter school report cards and the certified financial statements.

(d) Indications of parent and student satisfaction. Such renewal application shall be submitted to the charter entity no later than six months prior to the expiration of the charter; provided, however, that the charter entity may waive such deadline for good cause shown.
(e) The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the board of regents or the board of trustees of the state university of New York, as applicable, of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program which shall be considered by the charter entity prior to approving such charter school's application for renewal. When developing such targets, the board of regents and the board of trustees of the state university of New York shall ensure (1) that such enrollment targets are comparable to the enrollment figures of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the charter school is located; and (2) that such retention targets are comparable to the rate of retention of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the proposed charter school would be located.

The Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team may recommend four potential outcomes for charter schools applying for renewal: full-term renewal, renewal with conditions, short-term renewal, or non-renewal.

Full-Term Renewal
In cases where a school has demonstrated exceptional results with its students, a five-year renewal will be granted. A school must show that its program has yielded strong student performance and progress, has met the majority of its charter goals, has demonstrated financial stability, has attained sufficient board capacity, and has an educationally sound learning environment in order to gain this type of renewal.

Renewal with Conditions
In cases where a school has demonstrated mixed academic results or concerns about organizational viability, renewal is contingent upon changes to the prospective application or new charter, new performance measures, or both. These may include changes to curriculum, leadership, or board governance structure that are intended to yield improved academic outcomes during the next chartering period.

Short-Term Renewal
In cases where a school is up for renewal of its initial charter and has fewer than two years of state-assessment results, a renewal of three-years or fewer may be considered. In very limited circumstances, a school not in its initial charter or in its initial charter with more than three years of state assessment data, may be considered for a short-term renewal if the school's

most recent year results are good (for example, an A or B on the NYC DOE Progress Report) while the previous year's results may have been poor (D or F).

Non-Renewal

Schools that have not demonstrated significant progress or high levels of student achievement and/or are in violation of their charter will not be renewed.

NYC DOE CSAS Recommendation:

Based on the evaluation of the renewal application, renewal visit, historical annual reports and visits, performance on Progress Reports, comparisons to the CSD, and other factors, the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Accountability & Support team (NYC DOE CSAS) recommends a **Three-Year Renewal with Conditions** of the charter for NYC AECI. The conditions are as follows:

1) Increase college readiness index measure, earning a minimum C grade each year of the new charter term.
2) Improve 4-year Graduation Rate by scoring in the 50th percentile or above of peer schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal.
3) Improve the percent of Students Earning Regents Diploma rate by scoring in the 50th percentile or above of peer schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report within two years after renewal. The peer group is determined by the NYC DOE Progress Report.

This recommendation is made for reasons that include the following:

1. The first listed objective of charter schools, in accordance with the NY Charter Schools Act of 1998, is to improve student learning and achievement (Education Law Section 2850(2)(a)).

   NYC AECI has not yet demonstrated student progress and achievement for the following reasons:

   i. The school has had only one Progress Report to date, and one cohort of graduates, so data is limited.
   ii. The school met its charter goal that 75% of each cohort will pass the NYS Regents ELA exams. In 2010-11, 76% of the 2008 cohort passed. In 2011-12, 86% of the 2008 cohort passed, and 71% of the 2009 cohort passed (the rest of the 2009 cohort is still to take the exam, which will increase the pass rate).[11]
   iii. The school partially met its charter goal that 75% of each cohort will pass the NYS Regents Math exams, and has demonstrated progress each year. For 2010-11: 2008 cohort: 80% pass, 2009 cohort: 51% pass, 2010 cohort: 10% pass. For 2011-12: 2008 cohort: 88% pass, 2009 cohort: 73% pass, 2010 cohort: 56% pass, 2011 cohort: 33% pass.[12]

[11] NYC AECI 2012-13 Charter Renewal application (8/31/12)
[12] Self-reported in Renewal Application.

iv. On the 2011-12 Progress Report, the school's Weighted Regents pass rates in ELA and Math place it in the top quartile of peer schools (90th and 75th percentile respectively).
v. The school scored an F grade in College and Career Readiness on the 2011-12 Progress Report, indicating that students are not well prepared for life after high school.

2. In accordance with Education Law Section 2852(2)(b), a charter applicant must demonstrate the ability to operate the school in a educationally and fiscally sound manner.

   NYC AECI has proven to be an effective and viable organization:

   i. The school's facility is meeting the needs of students. Although the facility is small, the school has effectively adapted to the shared, confined space.
   ii. The school has a common approach to curriculum planning.
   iii. The school has managed its fiscal responsibilities to bring themselves into positive cash flows after having challenges in this area.
   iv. The school is organized to support student success. There are various meeting structures in place to encourage collaboration; grade teams meet weekly and departments meet monthly.

3. In accordance with Education Law Section 2853(1)(f), the board of trustees of the charter school shall have final authority for policy and operational decisions of the school.

   The board of NYC AECI has proven to be effective for the following reasons:

   i. Board has successfully navigated a solution to reduce its fiscal liabilities by subleasing its second leased spaces.
   ii. The board maintains oversight of contractual partners and has chosen to bring some of the school's operations in-house with dedicated staff.

4. In accordance with Education Law Section 2855(1)(b) and Education Law Section 2855(1)(c), a charter may be terminated or revoked in the event of serious violations of law, and/or material and substantial violations of the charter.

   NYC AECI has been in compliance with its charter and applicable laws and regulations.

5. As defined by Part 4 of the NYC DOE CSAS Accountability Framework, a school is to be assessed on its plan for its next charter term.

   NYC AECI has demonstrated viable plans for its next term for the following reasons:

   i. Reducing its enrollment cap from 500 to 400 to maximize resources access to resources for students.
   ii. Amending its original design to include a commitment to common core standards and college readiness.

Part 3: Charter School Goals

Below is the school's report on its progress toward meeting its charter goals.

Please note that information in this section is provided by the school, and may vary from data reported by the NYC DOE because, among other reasons, the NYC DOE reports on all students, while certain school goals may only apply to students falling under a given criteria. All data errors, discrepancies, or omissions in this section are not the responsibility of the NYC DOE.

New York City Charter High School for Architecture, Engineering and Construction Industries - Charter Goals

Standard	Measure	Goals	First Year 2008-2009	Second Year 2009-2010	Third Year 2010-2011	Fourth Year 2011-2012
Standard 1: High Academic Attainment and Improvement	**Measure 1: ELA Absolute Measure**	Each year, 75 percent of 9 -- 12 each cohort will pass the New York State Regents examinations in ELA.			2007 Cohort: N/A. 2008 Cohort: 76% passed. 2009 Cohort: No students tested. 2010 Cohort: N/A.	2007 Cohort: N/A. 2008 Cohort: 96% passed. 2009 Cohort: 78% passed. 2010 Cohort: N/A. 2011 Cohort: N/A.
					Met?: Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.
					Explanation: Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.
	Measure 2: Math Absolute Measure	Each year, 75 percent of 9 -- 12 each cohort will pass the New York State Regents examinations in Math.		2007 Cohort: N/A. 2008 Cohort: 53% passed.	2007 Cohort: N/A. 2008 Cohort: 80% passed. 2009 Cohort: 51% passed. 2010 Cohort: 10% passed.	2007 Cohort: N/A. 2008 Cohort: 84% passed. 2009 Cohort: 72% passed. 2010 Cohort: 50% passed. 2011 Cohort: 32% passed.

[redacted]		**Met?: Not Met**	**Met?: Partially met**	**Met?: Partially met**
		Explanation: The school's 2008 cohort was the first graduating cohort, and so is the first with a substantial number of tested students. There were few students tested at this point, and they were being tested early in their academic program at AECI. Math teachers were engaged in targeted professional development about the use of formative assessments to gauge students' progress. The school also overhauled its formal interim assessments.	**Explanation:** The school was making progress towards this goal, but realized that more resources had to be allocated for the Math program. The school used Title 1 funds to hire an academic coach to work with students who were at risk of failure. A new course was also created to address skill deficiencies. A school wide after-school tutoring program was implemented as was a preventive program to use formative and summative data to identify scholars who needed more assistance earlier in the year. In addition, Regents preparation was given more attention and time during the Saturday academy.	**Explanation:** The goal was not met for all cohorts, it was only met for the 2008 cohort. However, in each case this is due to not all students having taken a Math regents. The passing percentage of students who have taken the Math Regents exceeded the 75% threshold for all cohorts. Additional Regents academic support is being offered to students through increased after-school time and additional days for the Saturday Academy. In addition, teacher training and implementation of the Castle Learning Program has begun. This program allows students to work individually on regents course instruction both in class time and at home.

Measure 3: ELA Value Added Performance	For the 2008-09 through 2012-13 school years, each cohort of students will reduce by one-half the gap between percent passing the ELA Regents examination and the previous cohorts' passing rate on the ELA Regents examination.				The 2008 Cohort achieved a 76% pass rate in 2010, and the goal was greater than this number. This goal was met as the 2008 Cohort achieved a 96% pass rate.
					Met?: Yes.
					Explanation: Goal was met.

	Measure 4: Math Value Added Performance	For the 2008-09 through 2012-13 school years, each cohort of students will reduce by one-half the gap between percent passing the Math Regents examination and the previous cohorts' passing rate on the Math Regents examination.			The 2008 Cohort achieved a 53% pass rate in 2009-10, the goal was 64%. This goal was met as the 2008 Cohort achieved an 83% pass rate.	The 2008 Cohort achieved a 80% pass rate in 2010-11, the goal was greater than this. This goal was met as the 2008 Cohort achieved an 84% pass rate. The 2009 Cohort achieved a 51% pass rate in 2010-11, the goal was 63% passing. This goal was met as the 2009 Cohort achieved a 72% pass rate. The 2010 Cohort achieved a 10% pass rate in 2010-11, the goal was 42.5% passing. This goal was met as the 2009 Cohort achieved a 50% pass rate.
					Met?: Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.
					Explanation: Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.

Standard	Measure	Goals	First Year 2008-2009	Second Year 2009-2010	Third Year 2010-2011	Fourth Year 2011-2012
Standard 1: High Academic Attainment and Improvement	**Measure 5: ELA Comparative Measure**	Each year, the percent of each cohort of students passing the ELA Regents examination will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools.			Per the 2010-11 NYCDOE Progress Report, the school was in the 88th percentile of its peer group.	Per the 2011-12 NYCDOE Progress Report, the school was in the 90th percentile of its peer group.
					Met?: Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.
					Explanation: Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.
	Measure 6: Math Comparative Measure	Each year, the percent of each cohort of students passing the Math Regents examination will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools.		Per the 2009-10 NYCDOE Progress Report, the school was in the 57.9th percentile of its peer group.	Per the 2010-11 NYCDOE Progress Report, the school was in the 83.3th percentile of its peer group.	Per the 2011-12 NYCDOE Progress Report, the school was in the 75.5th percentile of its peer group.
				Met?: No.	**Met?:** Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.
				Explanation: Please see explanation for failure to meet the absolute measure for math in 2009-10 above.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.

Measure 7: ELA AYP Status	Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State ELA exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.			Per the 2009-10 NYS Report Card, AECI made AYP for ELA.	Per the 2010-11 NYS Report Card, AECI did not make AYP for ELA.
				Met?: Yes.	**Met?:** No.
				Explanation: Goal was met.	**Explanation:** The school made AYP for 4 out of 6 subgroups for ELA, but did not make ELA for two subgroups: 'Black or African American' and 'Students with Disabilities'. The school continues to target these two populations. To this end a second special education teacher and ELA Academic coach were added. There will also be more push-in classroom instruction time to assist these populations.

Measure 8: Math AYP Status	Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State Math exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.		Per the 2008-09 NYS Report Card, AECI made AYP for Math.	Per the 2009-10 NYS Report Card, AECI made AYP for Math.	Per the 2010-11 NYS Report Card, AECI did not make AYP for Math.
			Met?: Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.	**Met?:** No.
			Explanation: Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.	**Explanation:** The school did not make AYP for any subgroups for Math. The school continues to target all populations of students for additional support. A change to the 9th and 10th grade math curriculum has been implemented to address the low proficiency levels of incoming students. The Math Academic coach has been scheduled to dedicate more push-in time to work with these students during classroom instruction. In addition, a second special education teacher was added.

Standard	Measure	Goals	First Year 2008-2009	Second Year 2009-2010	Third Year 2010-2011	Fourth Year 2011-2012
Standard 1: High Academic Attainment and Improvement	**Measure 9: Science AYP Status**	Each year, the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State Science exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.			N/A	N/A
	Measure 10: Social Studies AYP Status	Beginning in 2008-09 and each year thereafter, the school's aggregate Performance Index on the State Social Studies exam will meet its Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system.			N/A	N/A

	Measure 11: Graduation Rate	Each year, at least 75% of each student cohort graduates after five years			N/A	N/A
	Measure 12: Science Absolute Measure	Each year, seventy-five percent of students enrolled in the school for two or more years will perform at or above 65 (passing grade) on the New York State Regents Science Exams (Living Environment and Chemistry).			55% of all students enrolled for two or more years passed a Science Regents.	74% of all students enrolled for two or more years passed a Science Regents.
					Met?: No.	**Met?:** No.
					Explanation: This is partially due to the fact that not all students attempt a Science Regents in their second year (82% of tested students passed). The school also recognized the need to offer more science courses and offer them earlier in the curriculum. Earth Science was added, Living Environment was offered to 9th graders, and a preventative program was implemented to target at risk students earlier in the year through formative and summative data.	**Explanation:** This is partially due to the fact that not all students attempt a Science Regents in their second year (82% of tested students passed). In addition, extra academic support for Regents preparation is being offered through the Saturday academy.

Measure 13: Social Studies Absolute Measure	Each year, seventy-five percent of students enrolled in the school for two or more years will perform at or above 65 (passing grade) on the New York State Regents social studies exams (*US History & Government* and *Global History & Geography*)			26% of all students enrolled for two or more years have passed both Social Studies Regents.	43% of all students enrolled for two or more years have passed both Social Studies Regents.
				Met?: No.	**Met?:** No.
				Explanation: This is partially due to the fact that not all students have attempted two Social Studies Regents (only 84, mostly from the graduating class, 46% of whom passed both exams). This was mostly due to a small number of students having taken both tests, and having had only one opportunity to take each exam.	**Explanation:** This is partially due to the fact that not all students have attempted two Social Studies Regents (only 104, mostly from the graduating class, 89% of whom passed both exams). In response, extra academic support for Regents preparation is being offered through the Saturday academy.

Standard	Measure	Goals	First Year 2008-2009	Second Year 2009-2010	Third Year 2010-2011	Fourth Year 2011-2012
Standard 2: Responsive Educational Program and Environment	**Measure 1: Daily Attendance Record**	Each year, the school will have a daily student attendance rate of at least 95 percent.	Average daily attendance was 85.5%	Average daily attendance was 87.1%	Average daily attendance was 89.2%	Average daily attendance was 90%
			Met?: No.	**Met?:** No.	**Met?:** No.	**Met?:** No.
			Due to the hard work of administrators and student support personnel at the school, attendance has been improving steadily over the charter term and is trending towards the chartered goal of 95%. This has been an area of focus for all parties at the school and will continue to improve. A new position, Director of Student Success, has been created to directly address student attendance and retention issues.			
	Measure 2: Student Stability	Each year, 95 percent of all students enrolled during the course of the year return the following September.		79% of previously enrolled students returned.	75.9% of previously enrolled students returned.	75.9% of previously enrolled students returned.
				Met?: No.	**Met?:** No.	**Met?:** No.
				Explanation: The school did not meet this goal. One reason for this was that a significant number of students transferred after realizing that AECI was not a good fit for them due to the length of the school day and the themed curriculum.	Explanation: Goal was not met. Many students who were leaving at this point were interested in a different model or theme high school than what AECI offers. The extended day and the theme are not appropriate for every child.	**Explanation:** A new position, Director of Student Success, has been created to directly address attendance and retention of students.

Measure 3: Compliance with laws, rules and regulations	Each year, the school will comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations and contract terms including, but not limited to, the New York Charter Schools Act, the New York Freedom of Information Law, and the New York Open Meetings Law, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.	The school was in compliance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.	The school was in compliance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.	The school was in compliance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.	The school was in compliance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.
		Met?: Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.
		Explanation: Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.
Measure 4: Waiting List	Each year, grades 9-12 will maintain a waiting list equal to or exceeding *10%* of the school's population.	School began with a waiting list of 295 students, and remained above 10% for the entire year.	School did not have a waiting list.	School had 20 students on the waiting list or 6%.	School did not have a waiting list.
		Met?: Yes.	**Met?:** No.	**Met?:** No.	**Met?:** No.

			Explanation: Goal was met.	**Explanation:** A change in school leadership late in the first year had a negative effect on student recruitment. There were more total applications through the lottery in this year than in the first, however this did not translate to a waiting list.	**Explanation:** Additional resources were dedicated to student recruitment and for the first time, the school recruited more students than had spots.	**Explanation:** While the school saw another year of increased interest in the school, there were more application through the lottery this year than the year before, this still did not translate into a waiting list. Greater recruitment efforts have been put in place including: more high school affairs, additional Open Houses, and the use of Vanguard direct mailing to reach out to incoming 9th and 10th graders.
Standard	**Measure**	**Goals**	**First Year**	**Second Year**	**Third Year**	**Fourth Year**
			2008-2009	**2009-2010**	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**
Standard 3: Responsible Governance and Management	**Measure 1: Student Enrollment**	Each year, student enrollment will be within 15% of full enrollment as defined in the school's contract.	Enrollment was between 92% and 99% of full enrollment.	Enrollment was between 91% and 96% of full enrollment.	Average enrollment was 313.6 students, or 84% of full enrollment.	Average enrollment was approximately 390 students, or 78%.
			Met?: Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.	**Met?:** No.	**Met?:** No.
			Explanation: Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Due to facility constraints, AECI was unable to safely accept enough students to make its full chartered enrollment.	**Explanation:** Due to facility constraints, AECI was unable to safely accept enough students to make its full chartered enrollment.

Standard 4: Solid Foundation and Infrastructure	**Measure 1: Financial Audits**	Upon completion of the school's first year of operation and every year thereafter, the school will undergo an independent financial audit that will result in an unqualified opinion and no major findings.	Auditors had no major findings.	Auditors had no major findings.	Auditors had no major findings.	Auditors had no major findings.
			Met?: Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.
			Explanation: Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.
	Measure 2: Financial Statements	Each year, the school will operate on a balanced budget and maintain a stable cash flow.	The school operated on a balanced budget.	The school operated on a balanced budget.	The school operated on a balanced budget.	The school operated on a balanced budget.
			Met?: Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.	**Met?:** Yes.
			Explanation: Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.	**Explanation:** Goal was met.

Standard 5: Strong Culture and Supportive Relationships	**Measure 1: Parent Satisfaction**	Each year, parents will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the school's Parent Survey in which at least 80% of *all* parents provide a positive response to each of the survey items.	Only 11% of parents completed the school's survey, school did not make its goal.	Only 32% of parents completed the school's survey, school did not make its goal.	Only 53% of parents completed the school's survey, school did not make its goal.	Only 56% of parents completed the school's survey, school did not make its goal.
			Met?: No.	**Met?:** No.	**Met?:** No.	**Met?:** No.
			Explanation: After seeing the depressed level of turnout, the school began more aggressively communicating with parents in hopes of increasing engagement. Parent newsletters were sent out in the second half of the year, informational workshops were offered to parents, and the principal began working with parents to set up a PTO.	**Explanation:** The school continued to work with the PTO to improve parent engagement. Of the parents who did complete the survey, the amount of positive responses increased dramatically.	**Explanation:** The school continued to work with the PTO to improve parent engagement. The school discontinued its own survey in hopes of increasing participation on the NYC DOE survey.	**Explanation:** The school continued to work with the PTO to improve parent engagement. The school has also created a position of Parent Coordinator to improve outreach to parents to better inform them regarding school programs and academic expectations among other topics.

Part 4: Charter School Performance Data

4-year Graduation Rate[13]

	AECI	Percentile Rank Citywide
2011-12	67.3%	43.7%
2010-11	N/A	N/A

College Readiness Index[14]

	AECI	Percentile Rank Citywide
2011-12	4.0%	9.2%
2010-11	N/A	N/A

AECI Weighted Regents Pass Rates[15]

	English	English - Percent of Peer Range	Math	Math - Percent of Peer Range
2011-12	1.64	90%	1.69	75.5%
2010-11	1.55	88%	1.75	83.3%
2009-10	N/A	N/A	1.27	57.9%

[13] 2011-12 NYC DOE Progress Report
[14] 2011-12 NYC DOE Progress Report
[15] 2011-12 NYC DOE Progress Report

Part 5: NYC Charter High School for Architecture, Engineering and Construction Industries Renewal Visit

Department of Education
Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

Charter School Renewal Visit Report
Charter Schools Accountability and Support
2012-2013

NYC CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL FOR ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES RENEWAL VISIT REPORT

OCTOBER 2012

Part A: Executive Summary

Renewal Visit Overview:

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team conducts renewal visits of charter schools authorized by the NYC DOE. The renewal visit is designed to address four questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization; is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations; and what are the school's plans for its next charter term? The visits are conducted by representatives of CSAS and may also include the district superintendent and other DOE staff or consultants. The visits last the duration of two to three school days. The renewal visit begins with a meeting with the school leadership team. Afterward, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. They also review academic and operational documents. Additionally, reviewers meet with one or more of the school's Board representatives and speak to a sampling of the school's parents. 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 renewal 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 October 23-24, 2012:

- Daree Lewis, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSAS
- Maria Campo, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE CSAS
- Jorge Cruz, Director of Operations, NYC DOE CSAS
- Jean-Pierre Jacquet, Associate Director of Planning, NYC DOE CSAS
- Laurie Pendleton, Consultant to NYC DOE CSAS

Part B: Renewal Visit Observations

Areas of Strength

The school's climate is warm, mutually respectful and conducive to learning.

- On the days of the visit, positive student rapport with teachers was evident. Students greeted teachers and staff members and appeared to be genuinely happy to be at the school.
- Students interviewed reported they feel connected to the school and that the small size makes it "feel like a family." They also shared they have no concerns with bullying and they feel very safe while at school.
- Students also shared they appreciate that the staff often calls home with good news as well as concerns. Students agreed that the school's practice of providing positive phone calls was new to both them and their parents and both appreciate it.

- On the days of the visit, students were generally well behaved in classes and hallways and respectfully responded to redirections as needed from their teachers.
- Students were observed to be polite, and respectful to each other, staff, and visitors both in and outside the classroom. Many students welcomed the visitors in the classrooms and hallways and the students interviewed were very expressive and polite.
- Students clearly know procedures and routines for the school and expectations in the classrooms.
- There was agreement among the visitors that the learning environment is clearly under control with appropriate adult supervision but does not feel overly oppressive.
- Teachers and students interviewed agreed that the school's expectations for behavior are clear and consistently followed and that consequences for different levels of misbehavior are clearly known and enforced. The school has a zero tolerance policy and is honest about the consequences students will face for infractions. As soon as the school notices a pattern of non-compliance, they meet with the families and provide various supports through guidance counselors, the Director of Student Success, and other staff members before the assignment of more serious consequences. As a result, the school reports a decreasing number of suspensions.
- The Advisory period allows students and teachers to get to know each other outside the classroom. The Advisors build relationships with the home making it easier for the families and the school to maintain positive lines of communication.
- The school's Dean of Students and the Assistant Director of Student Activities manage the tone and culture of the building and monitor the safety of all staff. They report that they provide classroom management tools for teachers and regularly check in with all staff while working more intentionally with teachers who are new to the school.
- The Director of Student Activities plans trips and activities to provide a positive connection between the school and students. The school also offers a variety of clubs including chess, dance, art, drama, and health.

The school is organized to support student success.

- Students interviewed shared that teachers push students to reach their full potential and that they feel comfortable seeking support and asking for help from peers and staff members.
- This year, the school added the position of Director of Student Success who focuses on attendance, college readiness, and providing for the social and emotional needs of the students. In response to student needs, the school has also added an additional Special Education teacher.
- The student support team consisting of the Special Education, ELL, and Title 1 Teachers, maintains open communication with other staff members and classroom teachers reported receiving IEP's and other information regarding their students on a consistent basis. The school restructured its Special Education program in the 2010-11 year by adding a push in/pull out model. They also provide a structured SETSS class for Regents Preparation.
- Teachers in most classes observed used a variety of grouping strategies to support student learning including heterogeneous and homogeneous groups.

- In the lessons observed, there was evidence of scaffolding to support student learning. On the days of the visit, teachers had intentionally grouped students so they could provide support to each other. One example of this type of student support took place in a 9th grade writing class where students provided meaningful feedback to their classmates during a structured peer editing session. Students are also comfortable with providing feedback to each other. Another, more informal example of this, occurred in a math class. Students were working problems on the SmartBoard when a seated student pointed out a mistake one was making. There was a nice exchange between the two as they worked out the problem together. Lastly, in a math class with heterogeneous grouping, the teacher asked groups to reflect on their weaknesses and provided differentiated exit tickets to help assess student needs.
- Most assignments given included the use of rubrics, increasing the possibility of student success on these assignments.
- This year the school reports they have added an additional "X" period during which teachers are available to assist students who need additional support. Students report they find this time helpful as it helps improve their grades and many take advantage of it.
- Once a week the grade team meetings focus on "Kid Talk" providing an opportunity for teachers across subject areas to share information, concerns, and strategies for students who are common to the team.
- The school provides Saturday school and access to the Castle Learning Online program to help students prepare for the Regents.
- Both teachers and students report that the various support systems in place at the school are focused on helping students take responsibility for their needs and to find solutions to their concerns.
- The school maintains a relationship with the Jumpstart Program at Monroe College, allowing high school seniors the opportunity to take college courses.

The school has a common approach to curriculum planning.

- Classrooms observed had common elements such as essential questions, do now's, posted aims, and exit slips. The Vice Principals reported teachers use the Understanding by Design approach to plan units and lessons. Teachers generally referred to the aim and the Do Now's were meaningful and tied to the lesson. Lesson plans reflect the Common Core. The rigor of texts chosen for the English Language Arts program appears to be appropriately challenging for the students.
- Students were observed using Cornell Note-Taking strategies in many classrooms.
- The school's approach to the math curriculum is based on an analysis of student achievement data. The school created an Introduction to Algebra class for students who were not prepared for Integrated Algebra. The school also implemented a double math block that allows for both content attainment and application of the concepts being learned.
- Teachers and students used SmartBoards in classrooms where they were present.
- Given its small size, the school has taken a scaled down approach to the school's architecture, engineering, and construction theme. Teachers are asked to address the

theme when it naturally ties in and plans include the question, “How will you infuse theme?” All students are required to take a series of four classes that focus on the theme.

The school has a system to provide instructional support and professional development to teachers.

- New teachers receive mentoring from experienced teachers.
- There are various meeting structures in place to encourage collaboration; Grade teams meet weekly and Departments meet once a month.
- The Vice Principals have clear responsibilities for the support of different departments and provide both formal and informal observations and feedback. The formal observations include both pre and post conferences.

The school’s facility is meeting the needs of students.

- Although the facility is small, the school has effectively of adapting to the shared, confined space and the schools occupying the space appear to have a mutually beneficial relationship.

The school has effective operational procedures in place.

- A spot-check of both student and personnel records show the records are in compliance and are held in locked cabinets in accordance with federal law.

Areas for Growth

The school should continue to refine their instructional practice.

- During classroom observations, the consistency of rigor in instruction and tasks varied from lesson to lesson. In some classrooms students appeared to complete the work quickly while in others students were fully engaged in challenging work. During the student interviews, some students reported some of their classes were too easy and they felt they could be challenged more.
- The instructional pacing from classroom to classroom varied; in some classrooms the lesson moved at a pace that engaged students while in others there was a large amount of down time. One classroom observed had no apparent sense of urgency and in others students were observed copying notes from the board or work from each other in a disconnected way. Much of the instruction observed was mainly teacher directed.
- During observations throughout the visit, there were few instances of students being held accountable for completing high-quality work.
- While the school appears to effectively scaffold lessons for students who need additional support, there was little evidence of providing opportunities for students to stretch their thinking beyond the lesson.
- There was evidence of feedback on student work however; the quality of the feedback would not necessarily lead to additional student development.

The school should continue to improve the quality of teaching.

- The school has consistently high turnover year after year. Teachers interviewed report that the lack of a salary increase appears to be the main cause for the turnover. The school and board are encouraged to seek solutions to this concern.
- Teachers interviewed commented on the lack of a rubric to guide teacher practice.
- The school leaders report the staff is made up of many new teachers who need significant support in both curriculum planning and instruction.
- There appears to be a lack of communication within the departments as well as a lack of department leadership to guide curriculum planning. As a result, there may be disconnects between the reading and writing portions of the English Language Arts classes. The school is encouraged to pursue plans to add a Literacy coach to help increase communication and ensure a higher level of rigor.
- Teachers reported having common planning time by grade but desired more time for department planning.
- Teachers feel comfortable with the support they receive from the Assistant Principals but it doesn't feel like there is an expectation for formal knowledge transfer. There does not appear to be a consistent body of knowledge new teachers are expected to gain.

The use of data to inform instruction is still being developed.

- Although teachers report the collection of various types of data, including exit slips and in-class assessments, the alignment between these assessments and the Regents exams is unclear.
- There is some evidence of teachers using data to group students by ability, but little evidence that data is used to assess the level of student learning and therefore the effectiveness of the lesson.
- There appears to be little consistency in the tools used to collect student achievement data by teachers and departments.
- The school uses mostly static data points such as the Regents and SAT's and does not appear to consistently use progress monitoring tools that would provide objective information on student progress towards these goals.
- Teachers in the math department report using a diagnostic exam to identify student math skills and track progress. Other departments in the school may benefit from applying this strategy.

The school should continue their efforts to increase strategies that create a "College-Bound Culture" and prepare students for a successful transition to college.

- Only a few underclassmen interviewed could share their plans for attending college. Other students interviewed felt their preparation for the SAT's was too late and will not provide them with needed skills. Some seniors expressed concern that they will not be able to compete in college classes.
- The Advisory classes observed appear to lack a focus and the lesson content could be improved.

Part 6: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

I. PROCESS BACKGROUND

A. Statutory Basis for Renewal

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

- Improve student learning and achievement;
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems by holding the schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.[16]

When granted, a charter is valid for up to five years. For a school chartered under the Act to operate beyond the initial charter term, the school must seek and obtain renewal of its charter.[17]

A school seeking renewal of its charter must submit a renewal application to the charter entity to which the original charter application was submitted. [18] As one such charter entity, the New York City Department of Education ("NYCDOE") institutes a renewal application process that adheres to the Act's renewal standards:

- A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in its charter;

[16] See § 2850 of the Charter Schools Act of 1998.
[17] See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.
[18] See generally §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4).

- A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private;

- Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school including the charter school report cards and certified financial statements;

- Indications of parent and student satisfaction.

Where the NYCDOE approves a renewal application, it is required under the Act to submit the application and a proposed charter to the Board of Regents for its review and approval.[19]

B. NYCDOE's Charter Renewal Process

The expiration of charters and their renewal based on a compelling record of success is the linchpin of charter school accountability. The NYCDOE's processes and procedures reflect this philosophy and therefore meet the objectives of the Act.[20]

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

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

1. Has your school been an academic success?
2. Has your school been a viable organization?
3. Has your school complied with applicable laws and regulations?
4. What are the school's plans for its next charter term?

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

[19] § 2852(5)

[20] The NYCDOE charter renewal application is available on the Office of Charter Schools website at http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/charters/default.htm

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

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

Part 7: The CSAS Accountability Framework

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

To help NYC DOE authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the CSAS team has developed an Accountability Framework built 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 laws and regulations?
4. What are the school's plans for its next charter term?

There is no strict, number-driven point scale for applying the framework to a school's overall performance record. Although academic performance is primary, the NYC DOE takes into account a wide variety of factors (as indicated by the framework strands and available evidence detail) when evaluating a school.

What follows is a framework that outlines strands, indicators, and potential evidence for each of the four essential questions. The framework identifies what CSAS looks at in determining whether a school is successful enough to earn a new charter term, with or without conditions. As schools use the Accountability Framework, they should remember that charter schools exist to deliver improved student achievement for the students they serve, particularly at-risk students, so they can be high-quality choices for families. This reminder should help a school apply this framework to its own performance analysis, underscoring the state and city's commitment to superior academic performance as the most important factor in a school's performance.

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 lawss 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 lawss 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 Laws 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[21] 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
- 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

[21] School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

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

Part 8: NYC DOE School Progress Reports

Please see the attached progress reports for this school.

Part 9: Annual Site Visit Report

Please see the historical annual site visit reports for this school.

Department of Education
Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

Charter School Renewal Report
Charter Schools Office
2011-2012

NYC CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL FOR ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

MARCH 2012

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

The NYC Charter High School for Architecture, Engineering and Construction Industries (AECI) is a high school serving approximately 389 students from ninth through twelfth grade in the 2011-2012 school year.[22] The school opened in 2008 with grade 9. The school is under the terms of its first charter, which expires February 11, 2013. The school has no plans for further expansion.[23] The school is currently housed in a private facility in District 7.[24]

The school enrolls new students in grades 9-11. There were 19 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2011 lottery.[25] The student body includes 95.4% Free and Reduced Lunch students, compared to 66.3% citywide; 12.4% special education students, compared to 19.8% in the district; and 12.9% English language learners, compared to 18.4% in the district.[26] The average attendance rate for the 2011-2012 school year to date was 90%.[27] The school scored Average on the Communication section of the NYC DOE School Survey in 2010-2011, Below Average on the Academic Expectations and Safety & Respect sections, and Well Below Average on the Engagement section; 53% of the school's parents responded to the survey, 90% of the school's teachers, and 88% of the school's students.[28]

The school will receive its first graded NYC DOE Progress Report in Fall 2012. In 2010-2011, 86% of tested students passed the Comprehensive English Regents exam, 57% passed the Integrated Algebra exam, 78% passed the Geometry exam, 46% passed the Global History exam, 61% passed the U.S. History exam, and 49% passed the Living Environment exam.[29] The high school has not yet had a graduating cohort. The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.[30]

AECI is partnered with Victory Education Partners, an education management organization (EMO). The EMO provides academic support and evaluation, back office support, curriculum assessment and student assessment data gathering, among other financial supportive services. Working with and through the network, AECI manages student information via DOE's Automate the Schools (ATS) and collects per pupil funding through DOE. The annual budget is created by the Board of Trustees of the school. AECI is solely responsible for complying with all requirements of grants for the School, the School's governing charter, and all applicable laws.

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;

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[22] Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 2/17/2012
[23] NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement
[24] NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database
[25] Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 2/17/2012
[26] NYC DOE ATS system as of 4/3/2012
[27] Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 2/17/2012
[28] NYC DOE School Survey – http://schools.nyc.gov/survey
[29] New York State Report Card – https://reportcards.nysed.gov/
[30] New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

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 March 20, 2012:

- Daree Lewis, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE CSO
- Gretchen Tonnesen, Analyst, NYC DOE CSO
- Simeon Stolzberg, Consultant

Part 2: Findings

Areas of Strength:

- The school has established a warm, safe and orderly environment that is conducive to learning.
    - On the day of the visit, students in observed classes were attentive and respectful. Teachers had procedures and protocols in place, and students appear to have internalized them. For instance, teachers quickly gained students' attention when they needed to provide instructions and students raised their hands and waited to be called upon.
    - Transitions between classrooms were quiet and efficient, with staff monitoring students in the hallways. Schedules were adjusted mid-year to reduce needed movement through the building.
    - The school has implemented an Advisory program that provides students with a small group setting in which to discuss issues and develop a personal connection with an adult.
    - School leaders reported that as a result of moving the school into a single facility, they have developed a more unified culture with fewer behavior incidents. A new dean of students coordinates his work with the school's social worker and counselors.
    - Staff also noted that increased opportunities for extra-curricular activities have engaged students and built a sense of community.

- The school has devoted significant resources to supporting teachers and other staff.
    - Two new assistant principals have been hired to provide more consistent supervision and support for staff. Each is devoted to specific subject areas, and teachers appreciated their availability, feedback and suggestions. There is also some evidence that this has provided opportunities for more differentiated development for teachers.
    - The principal and assistant principals visit most classes regularly and provide a combination of informal and formal feedback. "Walk Throughs" use a one-page protocol and result in written comments and suggestions. Formal observations are conducted three times per year and include face-to-face conferences to discuss teacher performance and growth.
    - Victory Education Partners provides a regional academic director who delivers support and leadership development to the school. She is on campus once per week.
    - The school has included substantial time in its schedule for staff meetings and staff development, including grade team, department and whole school meetings. Grade teams meet weekly to plan Advisory lessons, discuss individual students and examine data. Department meetings provide opportunities to vertically align curriculum and instruction from grade to grade.
    - Students are released early on Fridays for staff development, which is organized by school leaders with an annual calendar of topics. Staff also reported opportunities to provide input in the professional development program. Topics reportedly covered this year include unit and lesson planning, question and assignment rigor, and differentiated instruction. Some training is differentiated by teacher experience; for example, an session was held specifically for new teachers to orient them to PowerSchool and use of data.

- The school is developing a coherent curriculum and aligning it state standards and its mission.
    - Teachers have developed curriculum maps and unit plans for each class. Some coordination of the curriculum across subjects is occurring, though it appears to

be through informal discussions among teachers. Both school leaders and teachers noted efforts to begin aligning the curriculum to Common Core standards.
    - With direction from the school board's academic committee, the school recently revised its charter in order to develop four thematic classes, one for each grade, to address the school's focus on architecture, engineering and construction. The newly hired teachers are developing the innovative curriculum from scratch and making some efforts to coordinate it with other subjects.
    - As part of its college preparatory focus, the school has introduced two Advanced Placement courses and is increasing student participation in dual enrollment courses. School leaders are working with Monroe College to offer a dual enrollment class at the school this spring.
    - The school's social worker develops the curriculum for twice weekly advisory classes, which are facilitated by all staff. The curriculum incorporates career and college awareness.

- The school has devoted significant resources to meeting the needs of at-risk students.
    - The staff includes a social worker, guidance counselors, two Title 1 coaches in English and math, and a special education teacher.
    - Support for struggling students is provided through both push-in and pull-out services.
    - The school has implemented an "X Period" after school on Wednesday to provide targeted support to struggling students. Some students are assigned to X Period while others voluntarily attend for assistance. Additional interventions are provided on other days after school.
    - The school has implemented Castle Learning, an online program that provides students with individualized lessons in core subjects. The program provides staff with assessment data to inform instruction and interventions. Students can also access the program from home.
    - New classes have been created for students who failed their Regents exams. In addition, the school will be starting its Saturday program in April to provide Regents preparation classes.
    - The Pupil Personnel committee meets regularly to coordinate meeting the needs of students with disabilities and communication with the Committees on Special Education (CSE). A special education consultant provides support for the social worker and special education teacher.

- The school has systems in place to collect and analyze student performance data and uses to improve student achievement.
    - Teachers administer a range of formative and summative assessments to evaluate student mastery of key standards. Assessments include unit tests, mock Regents, Do Nows and Exit Tickets, writing prompts and rubrics. The Castle Learning supplemental online program also produces student performance data.
    - Based on incoming students' 8th grade scores, some students are placed into introduction to Algebra classes, and then take Integrated Algebra during 10th grade.
    - Administrators and teachers conduct item analysis to identify specific content and skills for re-teaching and remediation and identify students for interventions.
    - The school has provided staff development in the use of data and provides meeting time for teachers to examine results that inform planning.
    - Rubrics and substantive feedback were evident in student writing products displayed in classrooms.

Areas of Growth:

- The school should continue to enhance the rigor of instruction across all classes.

- Students were for the most part consistently engaged by learning activities and on task in classrooms observed by evaluators. Students frequently volunteered answers and grappled with assignments.
- Lessons were consistently purposeful and organized, but some classes demonstrated more challenging objectives than others. The level of questioning also varied across classes. In some classes, teachers asked open-ended questions and challenged students to explain their answers and demonstrate conceptual understanding. However, the quality of questioning was sometimes diminished by teachers who provided inadequate time for responses or had a tendency to start paraphrasing student responses before they had been fully articulated. In other classes, teachers focused more on recall or procedural knowledge, and it was not evident that all students had developed conceptual understanding. The school should continue to focus professional development and coaching on designing and delivering rigorous instruction.
- Given relatively short class periods, not all lessons maximized time on task. For example, in some classes instructions or set-up could have been more efficient with more clearly written directions or prepared graphic organizers rather than students waiting for assistance or copying from the board. In one class students were given a challenging writing prompt at the end of the period: "Can a poem stand on its own without background knowledge of the poet?" However, students were given very little time to write before the teacher started asking them to share their response. A number of classes felt rushed at the end and had limited conclusion activities to summarize the lesson or explain next steps. The school should continue to focus on lesson plans and classroom observation feedback to support teachers' development in this area.

- The school should continue to enhance a professional culture devoted to ongoing improvement.
  - Being located in separate buildings limited the cohesion of the staff and their ability to vertically align curriculum and instruction. Now that the school is in one space, it has the opportunity to use department and whole staff meetings to enhance vertical alignment and expose novice teachers to mentoring by more experienced teachers.
  - Teacher turnover, some during the school year, has limited the impact of staff development. With 17 new teachers this year, the school has a large number of teachers who are novices and/or new to the program. This required devoting significant time and energy to developing their basic pedagogical and classroom management skills. Going forward, higher teacher retention could allow the school to maximize its staff development efforts; thus, the school should focus on hiring practices and a professional work environment that support faculty stability.
  - The school has moved to an instructional leadership team of a principal and two assistance principals. Though most staff appreciated the consistency of their presence and support, their roles and responsibilities are not yet completely clear to staff. The school should continue to clarify those roles.

- The school is encouraged to explore ways to provide more subject-specific support to teachers.
  - Given the relative inexperience of a large proportion of the faculty, school leaders appropriately devoted much attention to basic pedagogy and classroom management, leaving less time and resources for subject-specific professional development.
  - Because of the small size of the school, there are only one or two teachers for each course, limiting opportunities for peer support found in larger schools. The school should consider opportunities for staff to meet or communicate with teachers in other schools.
  - Teachers noted the use of consultants in previous years who provided subject-specific guidance and training. Teachers noted that, though they generally appreciate the consistent level of support, the assistant principals do not have

expertise in all of the areas they supervise. Consequently, feedback is often on teaching general skills rather than content. The school should explore opportunities for teachers to develop content knowledge and subject-specific pedagogical skills.

- The school should enhance communication with stakeholders regarding school-wide accountability goals to align its improvement efforts.
    - The school has clear, measurable goals and metrics that the administration is clearly monitoring. For example, they noted an increased focus on tracking cohort performance. School leaders described their focus on college readiness and exposure to careers, as well as implementation of programs to meet their goals, such as new classes, Saturday Academy, and Castle Learning.
    - Nevertheless, while staff are generally focused on raising Regents and course pass rates, teachers did not articulate a focus on measuring progress towards quantitative benchmarks or final goals. In addition, they did not demonstrate urgency regarding the role of these goals in the school's accountability system. The school should enhance its use of school-wide data and accountability goals in professional development and coaching.

- The school should continue to work to improve its daily attendance rate.
    - The school's accountability goal is for an average daily attendance rate of 95%. However, it reported a current rate of 90%. School leaders did note their intention to hire an attendance person to focus on at-risk students.

- The school should continue to work to enroll and retain a student population that reflects the schools in its district.
    - Students with disabilities comprise 12.4% of school enrollment, compared to 19.8% in the district.
    - English language learners comprise 12.9% of school enrollment, compared to 18.4% in the district.

Part 3: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

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:

5. Is the school an academic success?
6. Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?
7. Is the school compliant with its charter and all applicable law and regulations?
8. 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 were 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 CSO's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members. • Informed NYCDOE CSO, and where required, received CSO 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

Department of Education
Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

NYC CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL FOR ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES

ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

JUNE 2011

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE
52 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

NYC Charter High School for Architecture, Engineering and Construction Industries is a high school serving 299 students from grades nine through eleven in the 2010-2011 school year.[31] It has plans to grow to serve students in grades nine through twelve.[32] At the time of the report, the school was located in two privately leased spaces at 296 East 140th Street (main campus) and an annex site at 338 Brook Avenue, both located in District 7 in the South Bronx.[33]

The school population comprises 33.3% Black, 65.0% Hispanic, 0.7% White, 0% American Indian/Alaska native and 0.7% Asian students. 89.3% of students are designated as Title I, compared to 87.9% in the district.[34] The student body includes 12.4% English language learners (ELL) and 13.1% special education students (SPED),[35] compared to district averages of 19.1% designated as ELL and 20.7% receiving SPED services.[36]

The school is in its third year and has not yet earned a Progress Report grade. Its state accountability for 2009-2010 was "in good standing".[37] The average attendance rate for the 2010-2011 school year was 89.88%.[38]

Annual Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office conducts an annual site visit of New York City Department of Education authorized charter schools in order to assess three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a viable organization; and is the school in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The visits are conducted by representatives of the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Office and last the duration of one school day.

The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the principal and school leadership team. Subsequently, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. 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 following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Sonya Hooks, Senior Director, NYC DOE Charter Schools Office
- Karen Drezner, Consultant

[31] NYC DOE ATS system
[32] NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement
[33] NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database
[34] Demographic Data drawn from NYC DOE ATS System on June 30, 2011
[35] Self-reported by school
[36] NYC DOE ATS system; data pulled on June 30, 2011
[37] New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov
[38] Self-reported by school on May 17, 2011

Part 2: Findings

Areas of Strength

- The school's environment is conducive to learning.
    - A calm, focused atmosphere was evident, at both sites.
    - Class sizes were small.
    - Students were engaged and participated in classroom activities and discussions.
    - Student work was posted in every classroom, often rubric scored and inclusive of teacher feedback.
    - Most teachers had clear procedures and routines in place and students were quick to get to tasks.

- Teaching is generally structured and consistent across classrooms.
    - Teachers' instructional approaches were relatively standardized across classrooms; for example, on the day of the visit observers found teachers assigned a "do now", agenda/essential question/objective, warm up, guided practice, independent/group work, and wrap-up.
    - The day's activities included thoughtful and appropriately challenging lessons that created the opportunity for rigorous work activities and products.
    - Teachers applied a wide range of questioning and discussion strategies to engage students.
    - Most teachers checked for understanding in a variety of ways – with individuals, small groups and the whole classroom.

- The school leadership makes instructional support and the professional growth of teachers a priority.
    - Teachers are formally evaluated four times a year. There are frequent informal observations and walk-throughs (at least once a month), recorded on a standardized form.
    - Teachers reported that they feel supported by on-site leadership and coaches.
    - Teachers remarked that the partnership with Victory was very helpful. On a weekly basis, they email lesson plans to coaches with "tremendous teaching experience" in their specific content areas. These coaches provide feedback, suggestions and resources.
    - Leadership and teachers provided several examples of collaborative work, such as:
        - Grade level meetings
        - Planning for advisory
        - "Kid talk" meetings
    - The principal noted that with a relatively new teaching staff (most have under 2 years of experience), they spend significant time focused on curriculum development. In addition, Friday afternoons are utilized for school-wide professional development, while grade level teams work together Monday-Thursday afternoons.

Areas of Growth

- The school should continue to focus on its work developing reliable, accurate systems for utilizing and interpreting data collected.
    - PowerSchool is used to track credit accumulation, record risk levels of intervention group assignments (high, medium, low) and provide reports to teachers that illustrate data about the grade distribution for each of their classes.
    - The Parent Portal will be launched in 2011-2012 for parents to access their child's information.
    - The principal described using summative data (Pass/Fail on Regents) to create Regents prep courses on Saturdays and during afternoon "X" periods and to design intervention blocks. "X" periods are also used for differentiated instruction for students.
    - Teachers reported that the school has "improved meeting students' needs"; however, this support appears to be in response to overall trends as opposed to strategically targeted on specific content or skills:
        - Based on documents provided by the school on the day of the visit, it is unclear if there are any interventions related to literacy.
        - Attendance – according to the color-coded sheet, 6 or 7 students had "excessive absences." Documents provided on the day of the visit are not clear about the definition of "excessive" or efforts to address that.
    - Teachers gather information in a variety of ways (check-ins, tickets, culminating projects, unit exams, work samples, logs) and organize it in data binders, but alignment between these tools and Regents exams was unclear to the reviewers on the day of the school visit.

    - Standardized and routine common grade level assessments, aligned to Regents (such as interims) would help the school to consistently and closely monitor growth and identify learning gaps, allow for deeper disaggregation, and increase the urgency in teacher and leader level planning to address the needs of all students.

- The school should continue to focus on ways to mitigate some of the challenges of having separate sites.
    - The school is located in two privately leased sites, which are some distance from each other. This does not lend itself to developing a fully cohesive community.

- The school should continue documented outreach to special education (SPED) students in order to match district averages.
    - The school's population includes 13.1% SPED students (39 out of 298), which is lower than the district average of 20.7%.

- The school should continue to focus on efforts to communicate with and engage parents.
    - Although the school distributes a (bi-lingual) monthly parent newsletter and the parent association holds monthly meetings, attendance at these meetings is low. The school is adding a parent coordinator next year.

Part 3: Framing Questions

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

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

Annual Site Visit Rubric:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?

- Academic Goals and Mission
  - School components and curriculum align together and holistically support the mission
  - School has high academic expectations and employs strategies for the full range of students served by the school, including those at risk and those with special needs
- Curriculum and Instruction
  - The educational plan is flexible and is adjusted to meet the performance levels and learning needs of all enrolled students
  - School implements programming to address the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs
  - Teachers demonstrate the use of differentiated instructional techniques to support the varying ways by which students learn
  - School has implemented programming for students who need remediation or acceleration
- School Culture
  - The culture is strong, intentional, supportive and sustainable and promotes student learning
  - The school motivates all students and respects the diversity of learners and cultures in the community
  - School offers programs, activities or support services beyond academics to address students' social and emotional needs
  - School calendar and day are set to provide extra supports to ensure that students are able to meet and exceed academic goals
  - Schedule for communication to parents/students is timely and allows for due process, includes strategies to prepare students for transitions and strategies for those students who are not on schedule, presents a clear and fair system that complies with students' due process rights
  - Structures that foster the development of authentic, sustained, caring, respectful relationships among all stakeholders within school
  - Behavioral expectations and social supports that reflect the school's mission and comply with all applicable laws and regulations
- Assessment
  - Establishes a culture of continuous improvement and accountability for student learning
  - Develops assessments that shape and inform instruction on an ongoing basis and develop data that's used to gauge student, teacher and school progress through formative and summative assessment
  - Student learning measured with multiple forms of assessments/metrics
  - Develops educational goals and performance metrics that are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission and Time-Specific
  - Develops assessments that are appropriately aligned with curriculum, instruction, and adopted standards
  - Provides evidence of how data will influence instruction, professional development and curricular adjustments

- Parent Engagement
    - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
    - Capacity to communicate effectively with parents and families

2. Is the School a Viable Organization

- Governance Structures and Organizational Design
    - School has articulated appropriate roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structure for school community members (including Board of Trustees and school leadership)
    - An accountability structure that provides effective oversight of the educational program and fiscal components of the school is in place and utilized
    - Board regularly reviews a data dashboard of student achievement and fiscal management that forms the basis for Board discussions and decisions
    - Board has diverse skill set that lends itself to strong educational / operational oversight
    - Board has an articulated process for ongoing policy development, Board member development and self-evaluation
    - Organizational charts are aligned with mission; roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
    - Board has developed essential strategic partnerships with organizations that support the mission of the school
- Community Support
    - School Leadership demonstrated responsiveness to the unique needs and interests of the community to be served
    - School has established a presence in the community and has buy in from community members

3. Is the School in Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations

- Special Populations
    - Well-defined plan and sufficient capacity to service the learning needs of Special Education students, English Language Learners
    - School adequately addresses the academic and non academic needs of students in need of remediation, students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and gifted students
    - There is a coherent plan for meeting the non-academic needs of students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and other populations
    - School employs a process to identify students at risk of not meeting expectations and creates intervention plans and follow up
    - School demonstrates a comprehensive recruitment, enrollment and retention approach that is sensitive to the diverse needs of students
    - School admission policy and lottery preferences serve to create a student body that reflects community demographics and give a preference to community school district residents
- Safety and Security
    - School is well maintained
    - Transitions and student gatherings are orderly and well supervised
    - Expectations for student behavior or well known and are enforced fairly
    - School is current with all safety recruitments and drills.
    - AED machines are in operation and school staff is trained in CPR

Quality Review Report

2008-2009

New York City Charter High School for Architecture, Engineering and Construction Industry

Charter School X395

296 East 140th Street
Bronx
NY 10454

Board Chair: Mr. Richard Izquierdo

Dates of review: May 19, 2009

Lead Reviewer(s): Aamir Raza, Marsha Modeste, Reina Utsunomiya, Fred Lisker
&
Jo Cheadle (Cambridge Education)

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The New York City Charter High School for Architecture, Engineering and Construction Industry ("AECI") is a high school with 119 students from grade 9 through grade 11. The school population comprises 26% Black and 74% Hispanic students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 10% special education students. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 84%.

Overall Evaluation

The original vision for the work of this school was extremely feasible. The focus on excellence in academics linked to architecture, engineering and construction works is innovative and appealing to students. The concept of motivated learning with practical applications, leading to competencies that serve students in their future lives and careers is central to the school's ambitions. In reality, the school has experienced a difficult first year and the vision for success is not yet firmly established. The Board has been forced to make crucial decisions to secure the viability of the school at very early stages. The Board must be applauded that these decisions were accurately taken and have resulted in stabilization and re-evaluation to set the school on the right track. The appointment of the new principal is the most significant of these decisions. As an experienced administrator, the principal has a clear understanding of the essential operational and organizational structures that must be in place for the school to function effectively. Moreover, he is a reflective and communicative leader, open to honest reflection about where changes must take place to ensure success. He is fully aware that the school needs carefully planned strategies to support these changes. He understands that these strategies must be supported by detailed action plans with agreed evaluation points and success criteria to measure progress. This level of strategic and action planning is however, not yet in place to support the school's development and improvement.

There has been steady progress in the use of data over past months. Data analysis does not though include full attention to student subgroups, trends and patterns in outcomes. Leaders know that many teachers do not feel secure in their abilities to gather, organize, use and report data adequately. Not all teachers are able to carry out this aspect of their work competently, so there is no reliability that planning for the next stages in learning is accurate. As a result, student goal setting is not a regular practice and there can be no assurance that intervention strategies are always suitable or have the desired impact on student learning. Because there is limited attention to what data reveals, some aspects of the school's work remain underdeveloped. For instance, even though there is slow progress made by higher achieving students, the school has not yet made the necessary changes to the curriculum to assure motivated learning. This is an essential focus area if the school is to secure high rates of attendance.

An unsettling year has taken its toll on staff morale and student attitudes. The new principal and school leaders have focused correctly on establishing a calm and supportive environment. There is open acknowledgement that some things are not yet in good order, but there is a

growing commitment to doing what needs to be done to build solid foundations for the future. With the leadership of a determined principal and Board members who are not afraid to make hard choices, the school has capacity to realize its vision.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has begun to make meaningful use of data to drive whole school decision making and to guide instruction.
- The principal and many school stakeholders are working hard, and with increasing levels of success, to build a positive and productive school culture.
- The school is reflective of its practice and outcomes, and honest in its evaluation of the current position.
- The principal has a good understanding of what constitutes high quality learning and teaching, and clearly communicates his expectations for the school's development.
- The majority of students want to learn and have high aspirations for their futures.
- Many teachers are committed to ensuring that students achieve their goals and are successful in their life beyond school.
- The Board has taken the correct steps to ensure that the school is on the right track in its first year.

Areas of improvement

- Clearly establish the vision for the school's future for all stakeholders.
- Plan strategies for achieving the vision, including measurable goals at agreed interim checkpoints.
- Plan actions to support each strategy, showing clearly identified roles and responsibilities, and criteria to measure success.
- Support staff in the extended use of data to drive teaching, curriculum development and student goal setting.
- Extend the curriculum, including the use of technology, to enhance student learning.
- Raise levels of student attendance.

Part 3: Main Findings

How well the school meets Charter School Office's (CSO) evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

Student data has been used in a meaningful way since January 2009. Leaders fully understand that delayed data analysis led to insufficient interventions, and that this has resulted in limited progress for too many students. They accurately account for disappointing progress for higher achieving students for example, as a result of assumptions made about students' abilities on entry to the school, without formal analysis of their actual test data. Since January, the school has made steady progress in establishing common practices for teachers to gather and use data in English language arts and math. Interim assessments are now in place and results are used to direct intervention and support for specific groups. There is an effort to increase teachers' use of formative and summative assessments in analyzing student progress. As a result, the school has evaluated that special education students have made notable gains. This is a good start, but leaders recognize that there remains much work to do to ensure that assessments are regularly and rigorously applied, and resulting data is carefully analyzed to guide planning for new learning in all subjects. Moreover, data is not yet used to formulate evaluative commentary across subjects, by grade levels or for individual teachers. Additionally, there is limited attention to the analysis of outcomes by student subgroups.

Leaders understand that parental access to student academic information is a necessary area for development. Unfortunately, while the school has made efforts to keep parents informed of their children's progress and achievement, there is inconsistent practice across the school. This aspect of the school's work will not be fully achieved until all teachers are confident and competent in gathering, analyzing, using and reporting academic information. Most teachers are at the beginning stages of skills and knowledge development in this respect. Leaders accept their responsibility to provide ongoing training to facilitate this vital element of the school's work.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped.

Although explicit goals for student learning are not yet a central part of teachers' collaborative work, analysis of data leading to focused intervention has supported the needs of special education students with pleasing outcomes. This signifies a starting point for making effective use of data to plan learning that meets the needs of all student subgroups. Leaders and many teachers understand their role in working together to set realistic, yet challenging goals to ensure that students make consistently good progress. The use of internal assessments to support interim goal setting is very new to the school and has only recently taken place in English language arts and math. Teachers are not yet able to make informed judgments about what they need to do after conducting analysis of assessment information. In some cases, teachers are not fully committed to making the changes necessary to support students in the best way. Consequently, not all students receive the right intervention in a timely manner. The principal recognizes his accountability in ensuring that all staff members are 'on board', leading everyone to a complete understanding of why this work is a non-negotiable aspect of each teacher's role. Currently, students cannot be involved in self-assessment and goal setting, as systems are not consistently in place to enable this. Interestingly, in conversation with students, many know what they need to do next to make better progress, but there is not yet a school wide sense of urgency to formalize this process. In some cases, this accounts for unmotivated attitudes and lethargy within the student population that is not conducive to effective learning.

The involvement of parents has taken on a new edge since the appointment of the principal. There is now a more clearly defined role for parents in engaging with the school and in supporting learning at home. The principal speaks convincingly of plans for the future that capitalize on the sound start that he has made in involving parents more closely. There is now an active group of parents assisting the school in forging stronger links between home and school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The principal's previous leadership experiences serve him well in setting expectations for what effective teaching and learning should constitute. There is now a clear message of accountability, stemming from a more accurate understanding of student needs. There has been a high level of staff turnover during the year and this has been unsettling. The principal understands the need to build the school's culture and to develop productive professional relationships as the foundation for the future. In a reflective and supportive way, he is working to strengthen staff respect and trust, while communicating the non-negotiables that are essential for successful teaching and learning. Leaders are aware of where teaching needs improvement. Teachers are supported in planning, making use of recently analyzed data. There is still some way to go to ensure that all staff have the skills and knowledge necessary to address the full range of student needs. Planning to meet the needs of higher achieving students is one area where teachers require further guidance.

The school offers useful after school activities twice per week, providing extra help in English language arts and math. There are plans to offer stand-alone courses that support the themes of architecture, engineering and the construction industries. The absence of such courses is a disappointment for some students, as these themes were the inspiration for their choice of school. There are also plans to improve technology, although finances are limited. Additionally,

despite the best efforts of specialist staff, facilities for physical education are not sufficient to provide students with the high school sporting experiences that they feel they should have. These curriculum issues are significant, particularly when considering that student attendance is lower than average.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

Interim and current leaders have worked effectively to establish systems and routines that enable the school to function smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Well-organized basic operations have been crucial in maintaining stability under the pressure of challenges in the first year of operation. Teachers now have regular opportunities to plan together. With the growing use of assessment information and support, collaborative sessions are beginning to focus on supporting the specific needs of groups and individual students. Leaders understand that teachers need further training to do this with complete confidence and accuracy. Professional dialogue and walkthroughs guide leaders in making decisions about other training needs for teachers, but there are not yet embedded processes for regular observation of student learning to measure the impact of teaching and to guide decisions about professional development. Most teachers would welcome more feedback and this is a positive basis for making improvements. Leaders are keen to involve teachers in peer observations as teaching develops. They also recognize the benefits that teachers gain through visiting other schools. Leaders have made wise decisions to change teaching staff during the year to make sure that students have quality teachers and have taken appropriately steps to ensure the least disturbance to learning.

The school's theme evokes great potential for links with community and business partners. There has been little time to establish such links, but leaders recognize that, via external placements, intern experiences and work related projects, these could secure student motivation and enthusiasm for learning. The school aims to support students towards college readiness, but there are currently limited partnerships to ensure that this is achievable on academic, social and personal levels.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The newly appointed principal is a focused, reflective leader committed to improving the progress of students, fostering transparency and developing a positive school culture. There are identified priorities for the development of curriculum, instruction, assessment and the use of data. It is evident that these key areas guide daily discussions. Teachers have a growing understanding of the need to plan from the point of analysis of student data, by setting benchmarks for measuring progress towards achievement goals. The foundation for internal assessment procedures is in place, enabling teachers and leaders to monitor student progress regularly and accurately. Leaders know that similar plans must be in place for teacher

development and that these plans must include specific goals for outcomes and measurable interim checkpoints.

It is not yet clear if all staff fully understand the vision that school leaders and the Board have for future success. Without an established vision and mission, reflecting the blueprint for the school from its establishment, it is hard to plan the work that will guide the school on a daily basis, or measure whether the school's work is successful. Leaders do not yet have a strategic overview of the how the school will meet its goals, with systematic actions within a planned timeframe or measurable success criteria for tracking progress along the way. The principal completed a thorough and useful self-evaluation of the school prior to the Quality Review. This document sets the context for the development process, but evaluative findings are not yet set in a school development and improvement plan to share with all staff, families and students.

Quality Statement 6 - Monitor Effectiveness: The Charter School Board is proactive and diligent in monitoring its effectiveness and in undertaking its administrative responsibilities. The Board is responsible for the overall direction and fiscal well-being of the school and must adopt policies and by-laws that are necessary to meet its statutory responsibilities and produce optimal academic results.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Generally, the AECI board is providing adequate oversight to the school and is developing a performance matrix (similar to the one in effect at South Bronx Charter School for International Culture and the Arts) to evaluate the school leader at the end of the school year. The school faced a leadership change during the first half of the school year. The AECI board decided to change the school leadership due to poor implementation of the school's educational program by the former principal. According to the board, the school staff, mostly hired by the former principal, also faced close to 80% turnover rate. The school board provided wide latitude to the former principal during the planning and staffing phase. However, the departure of the former principal along with several staff has led the board to develop a formalized hiring process where the board is involved in interviewing and watching a demo lesson, where possible. The school board analyzed the problems facing the school, debated the issues as a board, formulated a course of action, and made the needed changes that were necessary to move the school's mission forward.

While difficult, it was a courageous decision on the AECI board's part. The board members demonstrated leadership and stepped up to their responsibilities as a collective governing body representing the interests of the families and students at their school. Since the former principal's departure, the school board conducted a wide search for a new school leader and appointed a new principal two-three weeks before the scheduled site visit. The effectiveness of the leadership change on student learning will be assessed during future site visits as the new school leader assumed his duties close to the visit conducted by the CSO. The new principal is getting support in classroom observations, operations, and curriculum planning from the school's partner organization, Victory Schools.

The board receives regular updates from the school leader and by requesting financial (YTD Expenses, Cash Flow, Budget, Variance Analysis) and other data driven (dashboard, internal assessments) information that relates to the educational programs offered by the school. The board also receives periodic reports at the board meetings by the school principal, academic

committee, Victory Schools, and school board's personnel committee. The school's six member board represents academic (2), financial, construction, transportation, operations, and engineering expertise. The board experienced some turnover due to poor attendance at the board meetings. Additional board member recruitment remains high priority for the current school board. The board identified acquiring permanent space, integration into community, school and program recognition, leadership in construction industry, and ability to graduate its first class to college as its primary three year goals. The board remains focused on the school's facilities and financial needs and is working with financial institutions to secure funds for further development of the school facility. The budget preparation process is holistic and involves board members, administrators, teacher inputs, school business manager, and the school leader.

Quality Statement 7 - Maintain Financial Viability: The Charter School and its Board maintain financial viability and control over the course of the academic year. However, it is the ongoing financial information (cash flow, balance sheet, statement of activities, board approved budget), that determines the fiscal health of a school and keeps it solvent in the near future and beyond.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The AECI board in collaboration with Victory Schools, has contracted an audit firm to produce the school's financial statements. The school maintains necessary financial documents to facilitate decision making at all levels. The unaudited balance sheet as of April '09 casts a satisfactory financial position with liquid assets totaling $296,668 and current liabilities of $524,141, of which $374,420 reflects unearned income. The school is facing minor cash flow problems but may be able to sustain its operations in the long-term. The statement of activities as of April '09 does not pose any particular concerns. The school provided the annual site visit team with a cash flow analysis projecting a negative balance of $80,413 for fiscal year ending June '09 period. Please note that the schools' partner organization, Victory Schools, has assisted school in the past and may aid the school with its cash flow needs, where possible.

During the visit, officials from Victory Schools and school based staff were interviewed regarding the procurement process, check signing, randomly selected paid invoices, and fingerprinting documents were inspected. The school is following its adopted financial policies in collaboration with Victory Schools who is responsible for providing fiscal services support. The school has developed sound internal controls and an appropriate balance in segregation of duties among fiscal and operational staff. Paid invoices demonstrate that staff is following the process of purchase order approvals, ordering and receiving of goods, presence of packing slips and invoices along with proof of payment. The school has tagged its assets for inventory purposes.

Charter School Office Quality Criteria 2008-2009

NYC Charter High School for Architecture, Engineering and Construction Industries				
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student's progress over time.				
To what extent do school leaders and faculty have…	Δ	➢	✓	+
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?		X		
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?		X		
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?	X			
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?	X			
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?		X		
1.6 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X		
Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.				
To what extent do school leaders and faculty…	Δ	➢	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?	X			
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school's Strategic Development Plan?	X			
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?		X		
2.4 involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?	X			
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/carers?		X		
2.6 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2	X			

DEFINITIONS

"Analyze" or "analysis" includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

2 the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
3 the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
4 the school's Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

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52 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007

"Assessment results" include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school's curriculum (including Periodic, DYO, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

"Data-informed processes" include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

"Organizational decisions or strategies" refer to a school's use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school's structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

"**Sub-groups of students**" include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.				
To what extent do school leaders…	Δ	➢	✓	+
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data and hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge?		X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum to enhance learning both within and outside the school day and hold teachers for making instruction interesting and compelling?	X			
3.3 hold teachers accountable for creating a positive, safe and inclusive learning environment?			X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, classroom and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?		X		
3.5 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?			X	
3.6 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness and report actual attendance data?	X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.				
To what extent do school leaders…	Δ	➢	✓	+
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?		X		
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?		X		
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?		X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?		X		
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising, other student support services and partnerships with outside entities around stated academic and personal development goals?		X		
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly, encourage effective learning and effectively address discipline-related incidents?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X		

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.				
To what extent do…	Δ	➢	✓	+
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?		X		
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?	X			

5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?		X		
5.4 teachers and school leaders use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures to revise plans immediately and make strategic decisions to modify practices in order to reach stated goals?		X		
5.5 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?	X			
5.6 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X		

Quality Statement 6 – Monitor Effectiveness: The Charter School Board is proactive and diligent in monitoring its effectiveness and in undertaking its administrative responsibilities.				
To what extent does the Board…….	Δ	➢	✓	+
6.1 ensure effective, broad outreach to create a student body that is representative of the school's Community School District?			X	
6.2 manage any conflict of interest within the governing body and throughout the school?			X	
6.3 hold EMOs, CMOs and school leadership accountable in their positions?			X	
6.4 ensure that teachers are provided with high quality professional development opportunities to further build on their professional expertise?			X	
6.5 respond to parent, staff and student concerns/complaints?			X	
6.6 provide ongoing training for board members so that they are able to fulfill the duties of their positions?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 6			X	

Quality Statement 7 – Maintain Financial Viability: The Charter School and its Board maintain financial viability and control over the course of the academic year.				
To what extent do the school and its Board……	Δ	➢	✓	+
7.1 ensure that an independent auditor is appointed to undertake an annual financial audit, which is submitted to the OCS along with any other relevant documentation?			X	
7.2 comply with the adoption of an annual budget for the upcoming school year, which is submitted to the OCS for review?			X	
7.3 maintain an accurate balance sheet, statement of activities, year-to-date expense report and statement of cash flow?			X	
7.4 implement procedures that provide adequate internal control measures to detect and prevent financial fraud, such as bank reconciliation, revenue recognition and travel reimbursement?			X	
7.5 align financial decision making to analysis and evaluation of student achievement data?			X	
7.6 focus budget decisions on the priorities for school development and improvement?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 7			X	

Quality Review Scoring Key

Δ	**Underdeveloped**	➢	**Underdeveloped with Proficient Features**	✓	**Proficient**	+	**Well Developed**

Charter School Compliance Checklist

Does the Board and the school . . .	YES	NO	In process
1. have a documented policy for suspensions and expulsions?	X		
2. maintain up to date and compliant with IDEA Regulations for IEPs?	X		
3. send newsletters and other parent communications home in the predominant languages of the school community?	X		
4. implement a comprehensive special education program that complies with applicable governing laws?	X		
5. implement a comprehensive program for English Language Learners that complies with federal law?	X		
6. publish a schedule of regular board meetings that is easily accessible to the general public?	X		
7. ensure that accurate minutes from Board meetings are maintained and published?	X		
8. ensure that proposed contracts with EMOs and CMOs are submitted punctually to the OCS for review?	X		
9. maintain a functioning parent organization?	X		
10. ensure that parents are informed of the time and location of Board meetings that are open to the public?	X		

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