

**HYDE LEADERSHIP CHARTER SCHOOL - BROOKLYN
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT**

APRIL 2012

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Hyde Leadership Charter School-Brooklyn is an elementary school serving approximately 200 students from kindergarten through second grade in the 2011-2012 school year.¹ The school opened in 2010-11 with grades K-1. The school is under the terms of its first charter and is projected to expand to grades K-5 during its current term, which will expire January 11, 2015. If approved for renewal, the school is projected to reach its full grade span, K-12, during the 2021-22 school year.² The school is currently housed in a Department of Education (DOE) facility in District 19, and is co-located with P.S. 328 Phyllis Wheatley.³

The school currently enrolls new students in grades K-2. There were 284 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2011 lottery.⁴ The student body includes 90% Free and Reduced Lunch students, compared to 78.8% in the district; 5% special education students, compared to 14.8% in the district; and 1% English language learners (ELL), compared to 11.8% in the district.⁵ The average attendance rate for the school year 2011-2012 to date was 92.6%.⁶ The school scored Below Average on the Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety & Respect sections of the NYC DOE School Survey in 2010-2011; 52% of the school's parents responded to the survey, and 82% of the school's teachers.⁷

The school did not receive a NYC DOE Progress Report in 2011-12.⁸ The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.⁹

Annual Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter School Accountability and Support (CSAS) 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 the representatives of the New York City Department of Education Charters Schools Accountability and Support and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the principal and the 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 on April 17, 2012:

- Bertram Wyman, NYC DOE CSAS
- Laurie Pendleton, NYC DOE CSAS Consultant

¹ Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 3/23/12

² NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement.

³ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

⁴ Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 3/23/12

⁵ NYC DOE ATS system as of 4/3/2012

⁶ Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 3/23/12

⁷ NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

⁸ NYC DOE Progress Report – <http://schools.nyc.gov/progressreport>

⁹ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

Part 2: Findings

Areas of Strength:

- The school has begun to implement routines and strategies that will advance the use of data.
 - The school is using the following assessments to track student academic progress:
 - Fountas & Pinnell
 - Gates McGinitie Reading Assessment
 - Internal Writing Assessments
 - Saxon Math Unit Assessments
 - Terra Nova
 - Teachers interviewed reported that they have received Professional Development on how to analyze and utilize data from these assessments.
 - Teachers also reported reviewing data collaboratively in weekly meetings and using the information to inform grouping and instruction.

- The school is utilizing resources to promote academic success in literacy.
 - The school employed a full-time Literacy Specialist who meets regularly with teachers and provides data collection and analysis, professional development, and models lessons.
 - Prior to the start of the school year, teachers received training in Guided Reading and the reading curriculum chosen by the school.
 - Specialties teachers (art, music, and Physical Education) have been deployed to provide support to classroom teachers during the English Language Arts instructional block.
 - School leadership reports that these initiatives allow for more differentiation during reading instruction.

- The school's Leadership Team and staff are working collaboratively to build a common school culture.
 - Teachers interviewed reported a positive relationship with school leaders, reporting that the Executive Director is a "real leader" who has clearly defined the mission and vision for the school.
 - Teachers stated avenues of communication within the school are clear.
 - Teachers reported professional expectations were clear and feedback was meaningful.

- The school has built a positive school culture that is reflective of their mission.
 - The teachers interviewed on the day of the visit report expressed support for the school's character education program.
 - Hyde words and principles were posted in observed classrooms.
 - Each classroom observed had a common behavior management system.
 - Students were consistently in uniform on the day of the visit.
 - On the day of the visit, most students were well-behaved and teachers exhibited warm and friendly relationships with students.
 - The school has implemented a "Prompt and Present" reward to increase student punctuality and attendance and implements strategies such as wake-up calls and a van service to help students get to school regularly.
 - The school has implemented multiple strategies to support the behavior of struggling students. On the day of the visit, the Dean of Students was seen checking in on students periodically throughout the day and differentiated behavior management charts were seen on the desks of some students.

- The school provides a variety of opportunities for meaningful parent engagement.

- School hosts monthly “Discovery” nights where parents are informed of school events, curriculum updates, are provided with information on various topics.
- The school has implemented various incentives and strategies such as phone calls to encourage more participation.
- The school’s Director of Family Education reaches out to the families of students who are academically at risk to encourage parental participation and to provide additional support.
- The school has established a professional environment that includes ongoing professional development.
 - Teachers receive three weeks of professional development prior to the start of the school year and monthly days during the school year.
 - Teachers interviewed reported that the professional development they have received is useful and responsible to their needs.
 - Teachers report they regularly receive helpful and constructive feedback from the Executive Director both formally and informally.

Areas of Growth:

- The school is encouraged to continue focusing on increasing academic rigor and providing more engaging Instruction.
 - During classroom observations, rigorous instruction was inconsistent and in some classrooms pacing was slow which appeared to lead to disengagement and some behavioral interruptions.
 - Students interviewed on the day of the visit were not consistently able to identify the objective or point of the lesson.
 - Some classrooms had minimal student work posted and in some cases it was outdated and had minimal teacher feedback.
 - On the day of the visit, differentiation of instruction was inconsistent. In some classrooms, students were observed working independently, with other students, and in teacher-led small-groups. While in other classrooms, instruction was mostly teacher directed.
 - The school is encouraged to continue to provide professional development and support for teachers in these areas.
- The school is encouraged to continue building on their use of data to inform instruction and to meet the needs of students.
 - Teachers reported a lack of clarity of the utility of some assessments as well as a lack of understanding on how to best use the results. Teachers also reported the desire for additional professional development on how to use data effectively.
 - Currently, the only assessments available for math are bi-weekly unit assessments. Teachers interviewed reported the need for additional interim assessments in math that are consistent with the collection of data for reading.
- The school is encouraged to continue focusing on building the “Hyde” culture to support its mission.
 - Although the teachers consistently mentioned the strength of the culture in their interviews, there was minimal evidence that the students have internalized the behaviors and principles.
 - The school leadership explained the increase in suspensions and expulsions for the 2012 school year to date is attributed to an increased focus on higher expectations for student behavior and a closer adherence to the school’s behavior code. The school is encouraged to continue identifying strategies to support improvement in student behavior.

- The school is encouraged to provide support for teachers in integrating the Hyde Words and Principles into the instructional day and to use these principles when addressing behavioral concerns.
- The school is encouraged to continue refining its outreach strategies for recruitment of ELL and special education students and document the effectiveness of these efforts.
 - The school's student population currently includes 17 students with IEP's or 504 plans which is slightly less than 10% of their school population. This percentage is much lower than the district average of 14.8%
 - The school has two students (slightly over 1%) who are English Language Learners. Again, this number is much lower than the district average of 11.8%.

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:

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

1. Is the School an Academic Success?

1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

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

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

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

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

1b. Mission and Academic Goals

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

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

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

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

1c. Responsive Education Program

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

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

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

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

- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation
- Professional development plans and resources
- School calendar and daily schedules
- DOE School Surveys and internal school satisfaction surveys
- Instructional leader and staff interviews

1d. Learning Environment

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

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

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

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

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

2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

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

- Have a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations, with clear lines of accountability for the Board, school leadership and all staff
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate officers, committees, and a purposeful blend

of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter

- Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly but not limited to open-meeting laws and conflict of interest regulations, and is fully compliant with its Board approved by-laws (number of meetings, quorum, posting of calendar, agenda and minutes)
- Have a defined process for Board reflection on effectiveness, assessing developing needs, and plan for professional growth
- Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time and despite circumstance
- Implements a school leadership structure that is aligned with charter and that is sufficient to fulfill school's mission and achieve its accountability goals and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization is identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implements a process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's staff that is clearly defined in staff handbook
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers, including both formal and informal observations

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

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

2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

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

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

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

2c. Financial and Operational Health

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

- Consistently meet student enrollment and retention targets
- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, as school leadership and Board levels, in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to short- and

long-term decision-making

- Have clearly established policies and procedures for overall fiscal and operational health of the school (onboarding of all new staff, record-keeping, processing requests of HR services, application and enrollment calls, visitors, volunteers, etc.)
- Maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Receive consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, have strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school design and academic program
- Ensure a safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage

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

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

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

3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

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

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

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

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location¹⁰ 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

¹⁰ School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

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

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

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

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

4a. School Expansion or Model Replication

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

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

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

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

4b. Organizational Sustainability

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

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

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

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

4c. School or Model Improvements

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

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

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

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