



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**RIVERTON STREET CHARTER SCHOOL
RENEWAL REPORT**

**2014 – 2015 SCHOOL YEAR
JANUARY 2015**

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Part 1: Summary of Renewal Recommendation

I. Charter School Overview:

Background Information

Riverton Street Charter School	
Board Chair(s)	Rochelle Noel
School Leader(s)	Andrea Whitehurst
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	Educational Management Organization: National Heritage Academies
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 29
Physical Address(es)	118-34 Riverton Street, Queens
Facility Owner(s)	Private
School Opened For Instruction	2010-2011
Current Charter Term Expiration Date	1/11/2015
Current Authorized Grade Span	K-8
Current Authorized Enrollment	990
Proposed New Charter Term	4.5 years [January 12, 2015 – June 30, 2019]
Proposed Authorized Grade Span for New Charter Term	K-8
Proposed Authorized Enrollment for New Charter Term	990
Proposed Sections per Grade for New Charter Term	Grades K-6: 4 sections per grade; Grades 7-8: 3 sections per grade

Overview of School-Specific Data

School Evaluation of Academic Goals as stated in Annual Report to NYSED and Renewal Application to NYC DOE

Academic Goal Analysis					
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Cumulative Charter Term Total
Total Achievable Goals	11	11	11	11	44
# Met	2	7	8	9	26
# Partially Met	0	2	1	0	3
# Not Met	0	0	0	2	2
# Not Applicable *	9	2	2	0	13
% Met	18%	64%	73%	82%	59%
% Partially Met	0%	18%	9%	0%	7%
% Not Met	0%	0%	0%	18%	5%
% Not Applicable *	82%	18%	18%	0%	30%
% Met of All Applicable Goals	100%	78%	89%	82%	84%

* Some goals may not be applicable in all years. For example, goals related to the NYC Progress Report are not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year as Progress Reports were not issued that year.

ES/MS students scoring at or above Level 3 on NYS assessments, compared to CSD, NYC and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Riverton Street Charter School	50.0%	58.7%	36.6%	34.8%
CSD 29	48.0%	51.0%	26.7%	25.4%
Difference from CSD 29 *	2.0	7.7	9.9	9.4
NYC	48.1%	50.6%	28.0%	28.7%
Difference from NYC *	1.9	8.1	8.6	6.1
New York State **	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-2.8	3.6	5.5	4.2

% Proficient in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Riverton Street Charter School	80.8%	77.9%	44.3%	50.2%
CSD 29	49.4%	53.6%	25.4%	30.0%
Difference from CSD 29 *	31.4	24.3	18.9	20.2
NYC	54.8%	61.3%	32.7%	37.8%
Difference from NYC *	26.0	16.6	11.6	12.4
New York State **	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	17.5	13.1	13.2	14.0

* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself served. CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

** New York State proficiency rates were taken from data.nysed.gov.

Student improvement on the state tests compared to other students

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile - English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Riverton Street Charter School – All Students	-	74.0%	66.0%	62.0%
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	-	93.0%	70.1%	51.9%
City Percent of Range- All Students	-	81.5%	55.7%	44.7%
Riverton Street Charter School – School's Lowest Third	-	78.0%	77.0%	69.0%
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	81.1%	73.5%	48.7%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	74.0%	54.5%	35.1%

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile - Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Riverton Street Charter School – All Students	-	67.0%	66.0%	64.0%
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	-	65.8%	64.5%	55.0%
City Percent of Range- All Students	-	64.0%	57.5%	55.1%
Riverton Street Charter School – School's Lowest Third	-	69.0%	68.0%	76.5%
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	62.4%	48.8%	64.9%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	59.1%	34.1%	62.5%

A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A peer/city percent of range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of their peer group/city.

Closing the Achievement Gap

Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities *	-	33.3%	60.0%	37.9%
English Language Learner Students	-	-	-	-
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	-	61.5%	58.3%	45.7%
Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities *	-	33.3%	40.0%	62.1%
English Language Learner Students	-	-	-	-
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	-	60.0%	56.3%	64.9%

* Defined as students with a placement in Self-Contained, ICT, or SETSS.

II. Renewal Recommendation and Rationale

Based on the evidence presented herein and detailed below in Part II, the NYC DOE recommends a 4.5 year full-term renewal.

A. Academic Performance

At the time of this school's renewal, Riverton Street Charter School has demonstrated academic success.

New York Charter Schools Act

The New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 establishes a system of charter schools throughout New York State, with objectives that include:

§ 2850 (2)

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

Data available for Riverton Street Charter School indicates that the school has made progress towards meeting most of these objectives.

Mission and Vision

Riverton Street Charter School's mission is to instill in each student a passion for learning and hard work that will result in significant contributions to the school, its families, and its community. Parents and educators join together in creating a strong academic base in which students will be expected to achieve high academic levels in an environment that values compassion and respect. The school's efforts are embraced by staff, students, and the community it serves. The school's mission serves as a rallying cry for all stakeholders and guides its school-improvement efforts.

School Specific Academic Performance

The school entered its fifth year of operation with the 2014-2015 academic year. The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) has four years of New York State (NYS) assessment data and four years of other academic data, such as data obtained through internal assessments and attendance information, to evaluate the academic achievement and progress of the students at Riverton Street Charter School.

Annual aggregate ELA and math proficiency rates for Riverton Street Charter School have consistently exceeded those of both Community School District (CSD) 29 and New York City during the current charter term. Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, NYS assessments were aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). As such, proficiency rates for school years prior to the 2012-2013 are not directly comparable.

In 2012-2013, 44.3% of Riverton Street Charter School's students were proficient in math. Riverton Street Charter School's math proficiency was greater than or equal to that of 75% of elementary schools citywide. When compared to elementary schools with student populations most like its own (i.e. peer schools), Riverton Street Charter School outperformed 77% of similar schools. In addition, the school outperformed 95% of CSD 29 elementary schools. In 2012-2013, 36.6% of Riverton Street Charter School's students demonstrated proficiency in NYS assessments in English Language Arts (ELA). With this level of proficiency, Riverton Street Charter School outperformed 74% of elementary schools citywide. Additionally, Riverton Street Charter School outperformed 67% of its peer schools and 89% of CSD 29 elementary schools.

The following year, in 2013-2014, the percent of students at Riverton Street Charter School who were proficient in math increased to 50.2%. For 2013-2014, Riverton Street Charter School's math proficiency was higher than 71% of elementary schools citywide. When compared to peer schools, Riverton Street Charter School outperformed 68% of similar schools, and the school outperformed 95% of CSD 29 elementary schools. In 2013-2014, the percent of students at Riverton Street Charter School who demonstrated proficiency on NYS assessments in ELA fell, to 34.8%. With this level of proficiency, Riverton Street Charter School outperformed 68% of elementary schools citywide, 60% of its peer schools and 84% of elementary schools in CSD 29.

Over the four years that data is available for the retrospective charter term, Riverton Street Charter School has met 84% of its applicable academic charter goals.^{1,2} Riverton Street Charter School met nine of 11 applicable academic performance goals in its most recent year. Because of the move to Common Core Learning Standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not evaluate goals that measure a school's academic performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on

¹ This calculation does not include goals which have not been evaluated (not applicable) either as a result of the goal no longer being measurable (e.g. NYC DOE Progress Report grades for 2013-2014 school year and beyond) or the goal not yet measurable for the school at the time of the annual reporting (e.g. high school graduation rate for an academic year in which the school was not serving grade 12 students).

² It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and math exams or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals for the 2012-2013 school year. Goals that compared the school to the Community School District performance were included in the analysis. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE will not include goals that are related to NYC DOE Progress Report Grades or, due to a change in state regulation, goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two in its analysis of progress towards goals.

the NYS ELA and math exams for the 2012-2013 school year. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, due to a change in state regulation, the NYC DOE will not evaluate goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two; further, due to the elimination of the accountability instrument, the DOE will not evaluate goals related to NYC DOE Progress Report grades beginning with the 2013-2014 school year. The school has demonstrated sustained high achievement of its stated charter goals during the retrospective charter term.

In 2012-2013, Riverton Street Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was 66.0% with a City Percent of Range of 55.7%, placing the school in the 56th percentile of elementary schools citywide.³ Similarly, the school's peer and CSD percentiles were 77% and 84%, respectively. This means that more than 75% of other elementary schools in Riverton Street Charter School's peer group and CSD had ELA median adjusted growth percentiles lower than Riverton Street Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile in 2012-2013.

In 2012-2013, Riverton Street Charter School's math median adjusted growth percentile was 66.0% with a City Percent of Range of 57.5%, which placed it in the 58th percentile of elementary schools citywide. Similarly, the school's peer and CSD percentiles were 65% and 74%, respectively. This means that 65% of other elementary schools in Riverton Street Charter School's peer group, and 74% of elementary schools in CSD 29, had math median adjusted growth percentiles lower than Riverton Street Charter School's math median adjusted growth percentile in 2012-2013.

The following year, in 2013-2014, Riverton Street Charter School's median adjusted growth percentile decreased in both ELA and math. In 2013-2014, Riverton Street Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile fell to 62.0% with a City Percent of Range of 44.7%, placing the school in the 37th percentile of elementary schools citywide.⁴ Similarly, the school's peer and CSD percentiles fell to 50% and 42%, respectively.

In 2013-2014, Riverton Street Charter School's math median adjusted growth percentile fell to 64.0% with a City Percent of Range of 55.1%, placing the school in the 56th percentile of elementary schools citywide. The school's peer and CSD percentiles were 50% and 63%, respectively.

On its 2012-2013 NYC DOE Progress Report, Riverton Street Charter School received an A grade in all sections, including as its Overall grade. This ranked Riverton Street Charter School in the 88th percentile of all elementary schools citywide. For the 2011-2012 NYC DOE Progress Report, the school also earned an overall grade of A and ranked in the 89th percentile of all elementary schools citywide. (Schools receive an ungraded progress report in their first year serving students.)

NYC DOE Progress Reports graded each school with an A, B, C, D, or F and were based on student progress, student performance, and school environment. Scores were based on comparing results from one school to a peer group of 40 schools with similar student populations and to all schools citywide. The Student Progress section of the NYC DOE Progress Report was the most heavily weighted of all sections; it constituted 60% of a school's grade. The grade in this

³ A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A percentile rank provides the percentage of schools that score the same or lower than the school under consideration. A City Percent of Range of 55.7% indicates that the school's median adjusted growth percentile was above the citywide elementary school average but less than one standard deviation above the average (that 55.7% of the range around the average represented scores lower than that of Riverton Street Charter School), while a citywide percentile of 56% indicates that Riverton Street Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was higher than 56% of all elementary schools citywide.

⁴ A City Percent of Range of 44.7% indicates that the school's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was below the average, but less than one standard deviation below the average. A percentile rank provides the percentage of schools that score the same or lower than the school under consideration. A citywide percentile of 37% indicates that Riverton Street Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was higher than only 37% of all elementary schools citywide.

section was primarily based on median adjusted growth percentiles,⁵ which measure students' growth on state tests relative to other students with the same prior-year score. Although the NYC DOE Progress Report was discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, individual academic performance metrics from the former NYC DOE Progress Report are included in this renewal report for all years for which data was available in the current charter term.

Closing the Achievement Gap

NYC DOE-authorized charter schools are also assessed based on their ability to close the achievement gap for specific student populations. In school years prior to the 2013-2014 school year, schools received additional credit on the NYC DOE Progress Report for progress and performance of students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELLs), and students who start in the lowest third of proficiency citywide. Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, charter schools will be assessed on the actual performance as well as the academic growth of students in these populations compared with public school students in the CSD and throughout New York City.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 64.9% of Riverton Street Charter School's students in the lowest third citywide experienced growth in math that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting math scores. This level places Riverton Street Charter School in the 92nd percentile of elementary schools citywide. In the same year, only 45.7% of students in the lowest third citywide experienced growth in ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting English scores; this places Riverton Street Charter School in the 32nd percentile of all elementary schools citywide.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 62.1% of Riverton Street Charter School's students with disabilities experienced growth in math that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting math scores. This level places Riverton Street Charter School above 89% of elementary schools citywide. In the same year, only 37.9% of students with disabilities citywide experienced growth in ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting English scores; this places Riverton Street Charter School in the bottom 17% of all elementary schools citywide.

In 2013-2014 Riverton Street Charter School did not serve the minimum number⁶ of students designated as English Language Learners to receive data on the percent of English Language Learner students who experienced growth in math or ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting scores.

B. Governance, Operations & Finances

Riverton Street Charter School is a partially operationally sound and fiscally viable organization. This assessment was made based on a review of the following indicators of operational and fiscal viability:

- Riverton Street Charter School's FY11, FY12, FY13 and FY14 independent financial audits;
- Riverton Street Charter School's 2014-2015 staff handbook;

⁵ A student's growth percentile compares his or her growth to the growth of all students in the City who started at the same level of proficiency the year before. To evaluate a school on its students' growth percentile, the NYC DOE uses an adjusted growth percentile. Growth percentile adjustments are based on students' demographic characteristics and reflect average differences in growth compared to students with the same starting proficiency level. The NYC DOE evaluates a school based on its median adjusted growth percentile, the adjusted growth percentile of the middle student when all students adjusted growth percentiles are listed from lowest to highest.

⁶ The minimum number of students for each metric in the Closing the Achievement Gap section is five. Metrics are excluded for a school when student-sample-size criteria are not met because of confidentiality considerations and the unreliability of measurements based on small numbers.

- Riverton Street Charter School's 2014-2015 student/family handbook;
- On-site review of Riverton Street Charter School's financial and operational records;
- Riverton Street Charter School's FY15 budget and five-year projected budget;
- Riverton Street Charter School's Board of Trustees financial disclosure forms;
- Riverton Street Charter School's Board of Trustees minutes;
- Riverton Street Charter School's Board of Trustees bylaws; and
- Riverton Street Charter School's Board self-reported staffing data.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has maintained a developed governance structure and organizational design. The founding Board President has been with the Board since the school's inception. In addition, the board has experienced minimal turnover over the course of the charter term; two members resigned and one member joined the board. The founding Board Officers have served on the Board since the school's inception in 2010-2011.

The Board's bylaws reference the following committees: Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Development Committee, and Grievance and Family Life Committee. However, meeting minutes do not indicate that the Finance, Development and Grievance and Family Life committees are active. The Board is amending its bylaws to eliminate the need for the Finance, Development, and Grievance and Family Life committees as the Board believes it can successfully manage these focus areas as an aggregate body.

There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership as evidenced by the school's organization chart and Board minutes. School leadership and National Heritage Academies, the education management organization that Riverton Street Charter School is contracted with for certain services and facilities management, provide monthly updates on academic, financial and operational performance to the Board, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has developed a stable school culture. School leadership, as defined by the school, experienced turnover since the school's inception in 2010-2011. The founding principal, Verone Kennedy, who served as principal since the school's inception, resigned at the end of the 2013-2014 school year and Andrea Whitehurst was named Principal beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. Former principal Verone Kennedy will continue to work closely with Riverton Street Charter School leadership and staff in his new role at National Heritage Academies (NHA).

Over the past year, instructional staff turnover declined below previous levels and this past year's instructional staff turnover rate was the lowest since the school's opening in 2010-2011. In year one, year two, and year three of the charter term (2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013), the percentage of instructional staff that did not return, either by choice or request, at the start of the following school year was 38% (5 instructional staff members), 14% (2 instructional staff members), and 8% (2 instructional staff members). For the most recent school year, only 5% of instructional staff members left the school (2 instructional staff members).

In every year of the charter term, the school has met its goal of having an annual average attendance rate of at least 90%, and at least 94% by 2013-2014. Average daily attendance for students over the course of the charter term is 96.6%, which is also above the citywide average in each year. Based on the NYC DOE's evaluation and not in comparison to any other school, the CSD, or NYC averages, the school has not had challenges with retaining students.

Overall, the school is in a neutral position to meet near-term financial obligations. The school has only eight days of unrestricted cash on hand to meet obligations totaling \$320,637.

Overall, the school is financially sustainable based on its current practices.

There was no material weakness noted in the four independent financial audits for FY11 through FY14.

C. Compliance with Charter, Applicable Law and Regulations

Over the retrospective charter term, Riverton Street Charter School has been compliant with most applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

The Board currently has six members, which is consistent with the required number of Board members per the bylaws, a minimum of five and maximum of 13 members.

Conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms are available for all current Board members.

The Board has consistently submitted board resignation notices or new Board member credentials and forms within the required five days of change to the NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) for review and if necessary, approval. During the charter term, documents were submitted per the required timeframe for two Board member resignations and one Board member addition. The Board has consistently made all minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to or at Board meetings by posting them on the school's website.

The Board has not held the required number of board meetings per the bylaws. In year two and year four of the charter term (2011-2012 and 2013-2014), the Board held nine and seven board meetings, respectively, which is below the required number of annual meetings, as evidenced by school reported data. Quorum was reached at all 24 meetings reviewed.

The Board did consistently submit the Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) by the deadline of August 1 (or by the NYSED granted extension date) for each year of the current charter term.

For the 2014-2015 school year, the school had an application deadline of April 1, 2014 and lottery date of April 9, 2014, adhering to the charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1, 2014. Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently adhere to this requirement.

The school has submitted a current and complete copy of its Student Discipline Policy for the 2014-2015 school year. The policy was determined to be compliant with federal law regarding disciplinary measures for students with disabilities and due process policies.

All staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.

The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is compliant with state requirements for teacher certification. The Charter Schools Act prohibits more than five staff members or more than 30% of the teaching staff from not being certified in accordance with requirements applicable to other public schools.

Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently submit complete invoicing and reconciliation documents by the associated deadlines.

D. Plans for Next Charter Term

Riverton Street Charter School will add eighth grade in the next charter term and will serve grades kindergarten through eight at scale. Riverton Street Charter has no plans for further expansion beyond serving grades kindergarten through eight.⁷

⁷ In a previously approved material revision to its original charter application in March 2013, the school was granted approval to increase its student enrollment and go from two sections per grade to four sections per grade at scale for a total enrollment of 990 students in grades kindergarten through eight.

Part 2: School Overview and History

Riverton Street Charter School is an elementary/middle school serving 749 students⁸ in grades kindergarten through seven during the 2014-2015 school year. It opened in the 2010-2011 school-year with grades kindergarten through three and is under the terms of its first charter. The school's authorized full grade span and enrollment as per a previously approved revision to the original charter application in March 2013 is for a maximum of 990 students in grades kindergarten through eight. The school is authorized to serve grades kindergarten through seven in the current school year, 2014-2015. The school's current charter term expires on January 11, 2015.⁹ The school does not currently offer a public universal Pre-Kindergarten program in New York City. The school is located in a privately-operated facility in Community School District 29 in Queens.

Riverton Street Charter School is co-ed elementary/middle school located in the St. Alban's community of Queens. The school's mission is to instill in each student a passion for learning and hard work that will result in significant contributions to the school, its families, and its community. Riverton Street Charter School families are interwoven into all aspects of the school – families volunteer in classrooms, raise funds, and help beautify Riverton Street Charter School facilities. The school fosters strong cultural and community relationships in CSD 29 by inviting community members to help Riverton Street Charter School students with reading and math. Riverton Street Charter School has a strong focus on academic achievement, but also strives to enrich each student's social, emotional, ethical, cognitive, linguistic, and physical well-being. Every student receives weekly chess classes and students have the opportunity to join a chess club.

Riverton Street Charter School is part of the National Heritage Academies (NHA) network, an education management organization (EMO). NHA is responsible and accountable to the Board of Trustees of Riverton Street Charter School for the administration, operation, and management of Riverton Street Charter School. This includes the school's instructional program, professional development training for staff, instructional materials and supplies, and all business and accounting administration. The annual budget is created by NHA. The Board holds NHA accountable for the deliverables necessary to operate a successful school and continuously monitors and evaluates NHA's performance by comparing results against the goals and commitments outlined in the management agreement and charter. The fee structure for NHA's services, which include facilities management for which Riverton Street Charter School pays an annual lease fee, is such that there is no flat fee or percentage of school revenues; instead, NHA retains all excess revenues after all expenses and services for the school have been paid.

Riverton Street Charter School's Board of Trustees is led by Board President Rochelle Noel. The school's founder, Verone Kennedy, is no longer principal; he served as founding principal from the school's opening in 2010-2011 through the 2013-2014 school year. The school is currently led by Principal Andrea Whitehurst, who has been at the school since the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year. Former principal Verone Kennedy continues to work closely with Riverton Street Charter School leadership and staff in his new role at National Heritage Academies, Riverton Street Charter School's EMO.

Due to Hurricane Sandy, the school was not in session for three days during October 2012. The school was not temporarily relocated due to Hurricane Sandy.

The school typically enrolls new students in all grades, though kindergarten is considered the primary entry grade. The school does backfill students from the waitlist during the school year.¹⁰ There were 2,547 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2014 lottery.¹¹

Over the charter term, the school enrolled and served students as follows with average class size and section count noted for the most recently completed school year, 2013-2014.

⁸ ATS data as of October 31, 2014

⁹ NYC DOE internal data

¹⁰ Self-reported information collected through the 2014-2015 DOE Annual Charter School Survey

¹¹ Self-reported information as part of the Renewal application in December 2014

Enrollment

Grade-Level Annual Enrollment *	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Kindergarten	40	42	82	112
Grade 1	53	54	80	115
Grade 2	52	54	80	118
Grade 3	52	53	81	86
Grade 4	-	53	53	89
Grade 5	-	-	52	61
Grade 6	-	-	-	54
Grade 7	-	-	-	-
Total Enrollment	197	256	428	635

* Enrollment figures reflect ATS data as of October 31 for each school year with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.

Additional Enrollment Data

School Year 2013-2014 Information	Section Count	Average Class Size
Kindergarten	4	28
Grade 1	4	29
Grade 2	4	30
Grade 3	3	29
Grade 4	3	30
Grade 5	2	31
Grade 6	2	27
Grade 7	-	-
Students Admitted Through The Lottery	258	

* Lottery and section count information are based on self-reported data from the 2013-2014 DOE Annual Charter School Survey. Average Class Sizes were determined by dividing ATS enrollment as of October 31, 2013 by the appropriate grade-level section count.

Please see additional demographic data in Section 4 of this report for information regarding the enrollment of special populations at Riverton Street Charter School. This information includes enrollment data for the percentage of students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, English Language Learners and students with disabilities as compared to the CSD and citywide averages, as well as targets proposed by the NYSED.¹²

¹² Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, Board of Regents authorized charter schools, including those authorized by NYC DOE, will be held accountable to enrollment targets once established by NYSED for students with disabilities, English Language Learner students, and students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch.

Part 3: Renewal Report Overview

Renewal Report

This report contains the findings and recommendations of the NYC DOE regarding the charter school's application for charter renewal. This report is based on a cumulative record of the school's progress during the current charter term, including but not limited to oversight visits, annual reports, and formal correspondence between the school and its authorizer, the NYC DOE, all of which are conducted in order to evaluate and monitor the charter school's academic, fiscal, and operational performance. Additionally, the NYC DOE incorporates into this report its findings from the renewal application process, which includes a written application, a report on student achievement data and a school visit by the Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships and other staff from the NYC DOE.

Upon review of all the relevant materials, a recommendation is made to the NYC DOE Chancellor. The Chancellor's determination, and the findings on which that decision is based, is then submitted to the New York State Board of Regents.

Is the school an academic success?

To assess whether a school is an academic success, the NYC DOE considers performance measures, including, but not limited to the following (as appropriate for grades served):

- New York State ELA and math assessment absolute results;
- New York State Regents exams passage rates;
- Comparative proficiency for elementary and middle schools, including growth rates for ELA and math proficiency;
- Comparative graduation rates and Regents completion rates for high schools;
- Closing the achievement gap performance relative to CSD or New York City public schools;
- New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) or other approved alternate assessments; and
- Performance data pertaining to college and career readiness.

Academic success is rated as **Demonstrated, Partially Demonstrated, or Not Yet Demonstrated.**

Is the school a fiscally and operationally sound, viable organization?

To assess whether a school is a fiscally and operationally sound, viable organization, OSDCP focuses on three areas: Governance Structure & Organizational Design, School Climate & Community Engagement, and Financial Health. This includes an analysis of the school's audited financial statements, based on the National Association of Charter School Authorizer's Core Performance Framework.¹³

The NYC DOE considers a variety of supporting materials and data, including but not limited to the following:

- Board of Trustee bylaws;
- Board of Trustee meeting minutes;
- Annual Reports submitted by schools to New York State Education Department (NYSED);
- NYC DOE School Surveys;
- Data collection sheets provided by schools;
- Student, staff, and Board turnover rates;
- Audits of authorized enrollment numbers; and
- Annual financial audits.

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

¹³ Please refer to the following website for more information:
http://nacsa.mycrowdwisdom.com/diweb/catalog/item/id/126547/q/%20q=performance*20framework&c=82

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

As it pertains to compliance, the NYC DOE identifies areas of compliance and noncompliance with relevant laws and regulations as identified in the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework.

Staff Representatives

The following experts participated in the review of this school, including the renewal visit to the school conducted on September 30–October 1, 2014.

- DawnLynne Kacer, Senior Executive Director, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Sonya Hooks, Senior Director, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Meera Jain, Director of Evaluation and Policy, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Kim Wong, Director of Operations, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Caitlin Robisch, Director of Analytics, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Paul Yen, Data Analyst, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships

Part 4: Findings

Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?

At the time of this school's renewal Riverton Street Charter School has demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

High Academic Attainment and Improvement

- The school has four years of academic performance data and four years of New York State (NYS) assessment data at the time of this report. For detailed information on grade-level data on NYS assessments, please see Appendix A.

NOTE: The 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 ELA and math proficiency percentages should not be compared directly with prior-year results. Unlike prior years, proficiency on the NYS assessments for ELA and math in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 were based on the Common Core Learning Standards – a more demanding set of knowledge and skills necessary for 21st century college and career readiness.

ES/MS students scoring at or above Level 3 on NYS assessments, compared to CSD, NYC and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Riverton Street Charter School	50.0%	58.7%	36.6%	34.8%
CSD 29	48.0%	51.0%	26.7%	25.4%
Difference from CSD 29 *	2.0	7.7	9.9	9.4
NYC	48.1%	50.6%	28.0%	28.7%
Difference from NYC *	1.9	8.1	8.6	6.1
New York State **	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-2.8	3.6	5.5	4.2

% Proficient in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Riverton Street Charter School	80.8%	77.9%	44.3%	50.2%
CSD 29	49.4%	53.6%	25.4%	30.0%
Difference from CSD 29 *	31.4	24.3	18.9	20.2
NYC	54.8%	61.3%	32.7%	37.8%
Difference from NYC *	26.0	16.6	11.6	12.4
New York State **	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	17.5	13.1	13.2	14.0

* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself served. CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

** New York State proficiency rates were taken from data.nysed.gov.

Performance on the NYC Progress Report¹⁴

Elementary School Progress Report Grades	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Overall Grade	-	A	A	Progress Reports were discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.
Student Progress	-	B	A	
Student Performance	-	A	A	
School Environment	-	A	A	

Mission and Academic Goals

According to the Renewal Application submitted to the NYC DOE by Riverton Street Charter School, as well as annual reports submitted to the NYSED, over each of the four years in the charter term during which the school was open, the school achieved/met academic goals as follows:

- 2 of 2 applicable charter goals in the first year of the charter,
- 7 of 9 in the second year,
- 8 of 9 in the third year,¹⁵
- 9 of 11 in the fourth year.

Progress Towards Academic Charter Goals *

Academic Goals	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
1. 75% of Riverton's third through eighth grade students who have been enrolled at Riverton on the Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA and math examinations.	N/A	Partially Met	N/A	Not Met
2. 75% of fourth and eighth grade students who have been enrolled at Riverton on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Science examination.	N/A	Met	Met	Met
3. More than 50% of students in grades kindergarten through eight who have been enrolled at Riverton on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above the 50th percentile nationally on the spring administration of the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and Primary Grades Assessment (PGA) in reading and mathematics.	N/A	Met	Met	Met

¹⁴ For purposes of the NYC DOE Progress Report, Riverton Street Charter School was classified as an elementary school for the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years.

¹⁵ It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and math exams or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals for the 2012-2013 school year. Goals that refer to comparative academic performance of the school (e.g. to the Community School District) were included in the analysis. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE will not include goals that are related to NYC DOE Progress Report Grades or, due to a change in state regulation, goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two in its analysis of progress towards goals.

Academic Goals		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
4.	Grade-level cohorts of the same students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State ELA and math exams and 75% at or above Level 3 on the current year's State ELA and math exams. If the number of students scoring above proficiency in a grade level cohort exceeded 75% on the previous year's ELA and math exams, Riverton will demonstrate growth (above 75%) in the current year.	N/A	Partially Met	N/A	Not Met
5.	The percent of students who are enrolled in Riverton on the date of the test administration who were also enrolled in Riverton on BEDS day of the prior school year and performing at or above Level 3 on the ELA and math exams in each tested grade will be greater than that of CSD 29.	N/A	Met	Met	Met
6.	The percent of students who are enrolled in Riverton on the date of the test administration who were also enrolled in Riverton on BEDS day of the prior school year and performing at or above Level 3 on the science exam in each tested grade will be greater than that of CSD 29.	N/A	Met	Met	Met
7.	The school will administer the NWEA Primary Grades Assessment (PGA) to all kindergarten and first grade students and NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Tests to second through eighth grade students. The school will be above average (>50%) for students making growth (combination of reading, math, and language usage).	Met	Met	Met	Met
8.	The school will administer the NWEA Primary Grades Assessment (PGA) to all kindergarten and first grade students and NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Tests to second through eighth grade students. The median percentile for students in the spring of their third year will be ≥ 50 (combination of NWEA reading, math, and language usage) by the spring of their third year.	N/A	N/A	Met	Met
9.	The school will meet or exceed the growth of comparable students (using NWEA GRD) for 17 of 24 comparison categories by the third year, e.g. grade two reading is one category, grade three reading is another category, etc. Typical numbers of categories by the third year would be 24.	N/A	N/A	Partially Met	Met
10.	Under the State's No Child Left Behind accountability system, Riverton's Accountability Status will be in "Good Standing" each year.	N/A	Met	Met	Met
11.	For the 2010-2011 year, Riverton will have an average daily student attendance rate of at least 90%. Each subsequent year, attendance rates will steadily increase; by 2013-2014, Riverton will have an average daily student attendance rate of at least 94%.	Met	Met	Met	Met

* Goals were self-reported by the school in the school's Renewal Application submitted to NYC DOE and 2013-2014 Annual Report documentation submitted to NYSED.

Responsive Education Program¹⁶

The school administers Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) in the fall and in the spring. Data from the fall administration of the NWEA MAP is used to help teachers plan for instruction. In addition, classroom assessments are administered before instruction and allow teachers to discover the needs, interests, previous experience, and background knowledge of their students in terms of the identified curricular objectives. Teachers use data from these assessments to shed light on what students already know and can do. This information also helps teachers determine a particular instructional approach or strategy for new learning. The following data was found:

- Over the past four years, fall-to-spring growth for the entire student body, as measured by the NWEA MAP, has been above the national school average (100% = average growth). In the 2012-2013 school year, Riverton Street Charter School students demonstrated:
 - 150% rate of growth in math;
 - 127% rate of growth in reading; and
 - 150% rate of growth in general science.

As part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE visited the school from September 30 to October 1, 2014. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- **Alignment with Common Core:**
 - School leadership reported the curriculum had been carefully aligned with the CCLS for ELA and mathematics and the New York State Learning Standards (NYSLs) for science and the co-curricular content areas. This approach ensures that students are learning content appropriate for each grade level.
 - All curriculum resources were carefully selected to align to the school's curriculum framework. School leadership, in partnership with National Heritage Academies, evaluates the alignment to Riverton Street Charter School's mission and goals, and the effectiveness of the curricular program by monitoring the fidelity of implementation, soliciting teacher feedback, and analyzing student learning results.
 - Following this process, leadership recently decided that different curricular resources were needed in the middle school to provide staff with tools that were better aligned to the CCLS. As a result, Big Ideas Math and Holt Literature were implemented in grade six in fall 2013. These new curricular tools will be used for all middle school grades served by the school as the school continues its phase-in to serve eighth grade.
- **Addressing the Needs of All Learners:**
 - The school provides educational supports for students from special populations including English Language Learners and students with disabilities. These supports include:
 - Students with disabilities receive instruction tailored to meet their individual educational needs. Students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment as determined by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
 - Students are provided Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) both directly and indirectly by a certified special education teacher in small group, pull-out or push-in models.

¹⁶ Information was self-reported by the school to the NYC DOE as part of its Renewal Application, as well as through meetings with school leadership.

- Additionally, related services are provided in accordance with a student's IEP. These services include speech and language services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and social work.
 - Riverton Street Charter School employs and/or contracts with professionals who provide these services to meet the students' IEP requirements.
- Individual student progress toward IEP goals and/or objectives is tracked and reviewed throughout the school year.
 - Progress monitoring data is used to complete student IEP progress reports, which are distributed to parents at least four times a year.
 - Parents are given the opportunity to discuss these reports in detail with the special education and general education teachers during two scheduled parent-teacher conferences during the year. Beyond the student progress report, parents are encouraged to contact special education providers at any point throughout the school year to discuss students' progress toward meeting IEP goals.
 - Consistent with applicable law, Riverton Street Charter School works with the local Committee on Special Education (CSE) to ensure that all students with disabilities that qualify under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) receive services.
- ELLs receive services through Riverton Street Charter School's English Learner Program (ELP).
 - The school utilizes the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) to assess student listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. The results of this assessment are utilized, along with teacher observation and input, to determine and plan the type of assistance needed for each student.
 - Student progress is assessed using the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), which is administered annually, in addition to regular curricular assessments.
 - To exit the ELP, an ELL student must score at the proficient level on the NYSESLAT. Additional exit criteria are also considered to ensure that the student is ready to exit the ELP, notwithstanding any applicable transition services. Students are monitored for two years after exiting the ELP to ensure continued success.
- Riverton Street Charter School strives to challenge children at their individual instructional level whether the student is academically below, at, or beyond the level of their age-group peers. Recognizing that some students may possess exceptional gifts and talents, the school works with families to identify these students and give them the direction, time, encouragement, and resources needed to maximize their potential.
 - For example, classroom teachers offer accelerated students differentiated instruction and extended opportunities in various ways, including: enrichment; differentiation in content, process, products, and/or learning environment; infusion of higher-order thinking skills; and individualized learning opportunities.
 - Staff also work with parents and students to complete Regents coursework as early as grade six.

- Riverton Street Charter School uses a distributed leadership model that allows it to closely monitor the quality of instruction in each classroom.
 - There are three Deans at the school, one each for grades kindergarten through two, grades three through five, and grades six through seven (grades six through eight at scale).
 - This model allows greater opportunity for classroom observation, collaboration, and instructional coaching. Deans meet weekly with their staff to review lesson plans and provide feedback.
 - In addition, teachers are observed weekly and given feedback on the quality of their instruction and effectiveness in meeting the needs of all students.
 - This system allows the school's instructional leaders to provide direct, ongoing support to teachers through critical feedback, data analysis, coaching, and/or modeling.
- **Instructional Model and Classroom Instruction:**
 - During the renewal visit, the NYC DOE observed 12 classrooms across grades kindergarten through seven with the school's principals and deans of instruction.
 - Class-sizes observed ranged from 25 to 27 students in size, with one teacher in all observed classrooms.
 - Forms of questioning identified during the classroom observations mostly included challenging students to demonstrate understanding or to analyze and apply. In a fourth grade literature class, students were asked to refer back to the text to describe why the character felt happy. Students were then asked to build off of the answer by agreeing or disagreeing.
 - In most observed classrooms, checks for understanding that included questioning, polling, classwork, teacher observation, and frequent use of student turn and talk, were observed.
 - In some observed classrooms, differentiation of materials, tasks, and products, through small group instruction or independent practice, was observed. These were consistent with the school model.
 - In all observed classes, students were responsive to teacher directions and instruction.
 - In all observed classes, students were either fully on task or mostly on task. Off-task students were off task for a short duration.
 - Based on debriefs with the school's leadership team members after classroom visits, most classrooms had instruction that aligned with the instructional model and current academic goals of the school.
- Teachers use assessment data to monitor progress and adjust instruction to meet the identified needs of students. Assessment data helps teachers identify their students' strengths and weaknesses – and differentiate instruction accordingly. Teachers use data in three stages:
 - Before Instruction (Pre-Assessment) stage— The NWEA MAP is administered in the fall and in the spring. Data from the fall administration of the NWEA MAP is used to help teachers plan for instruction. In addition, classroom assessments are administered before instruction and allow teachers to discover the needs, interests, previous experience, and background knowledge of their students in terms of the identified curricular objectives. Teachers use data from these assessments to shed light on what students already know and can do. This information also helps teachers determine a particular instructional approach or strategy for new learning. Examples of assessments that teachers administer before instruction include:

- Teacher-led discussion and questions;
 - Observation;
 - Student evaluation of sample work products using a scoring rubric; and
 - Teacher-developed or commercially produced quizzes or pre-tests.
- During Instruction (Formative Assessment) stage— Assessments administered during the instruction process serve as checkpoints to determine students’ understanding and progress. They also help identify successes or difficulties in learning. This information allows teachers to effectively adjust instruction. Examples of assessments that teachers administer during instruction, each of which can be used formatively to guide further instruction, include:
 - Teacher or commercially-developed mid-unit quizzes;
 - Homework;
 - Teacher or commercially-produced worksheets;
 - In-class observation;
 - Questioning strategies;
 - Graphic organizers;
 - Learning logs;
 - Lab reports;
 - Anecdotal notes; and
 - Teacher-led discussions.
- After Instruction (Summative Assessment) stage— Assessments administered after instruction help teachers determine what students have learned and the quality of that learning. This information helps teachers gauge the effectiveness of their instruction and changes to their teaching methods as needed. Examples of assessments that teachers administer after instruction to determine students’ understanding of the lesson include:
 - Teacher or commercially-developed post-tests;
 - Projects;
 - Papers;
 - Oral reports;
 - Student presentations;
 - Self-assessments; and
 - Peer assessments.
- In addition to these three assessment stages, benchmark assessments are administered two times per year. After each administration, teachers have dedicated time to meet with their grade level peers as a professional learning community to review the data, reflect on their instruction, and build/adjust instructional plans.

Learning Environment

NYC DOE representatives conducted one-on-one interviews with six teachers. The following was noted:

- All interviewed teachers reported that they received school-based professional development both in the summer and weekly during the school year, with both the school administration and National Heritage Academies providing resources.
- Some of the interviewed teachers mentioned the use of the Teacher Evaluation Rubric by Danielson for formal teacher evaluations conducted by the school’s dean and/or principal, while most of the interviewed teachers discussed the use of informal observations for receiving feedback from the dean who oversees their respective grade level.
- All interviewed teachers reported that they use data in the classrooms through both formal and informal assessments.

- According to the 2013-2014 School Environment Survey, all parents agree “that the school has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss [their] child” and all parents agree “that the school has high expectations for [their] child.”¹⁷
- According to the 2013-2014 School Environment Survey, all teachers agree that “order and discipline are maintained at the school” and only 3% agree with the statement that “at my school students are often harassed or bullied in school.”¹⁸

¹⁷ According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 80% of parent respondents strongly agree that Riverton Street Charter School has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss their child; another 20% agree with the statement. Similarly, 84% of parent respondents strongly agree that Riverton Street Charter School has high expectations for their child; another 16% agree with the statement.

¹⁸ According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 71% of teacher respondents strongly agree that order and discipline are maintained at Riverton Street Charter School; another 29% agree with the statement. Of teacher respondents, 3% marked that they strongly agree that students are often harassed or bullied in the school; 32% of teacher respondents marked ‘disagree’ and 65% marked ‘strongly disagree’ to the statement.

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

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has developed its governance structure and organizational design.

On October 1, 2014 as part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE attended a meeting of the school's Board of Trustees. Based on document review and observation, the following was noted:

- The Board currently has six active members. This level of membership is consistent within the minimum of five members and maximum of 13 members established in the Board's bylaws.
- The Board's President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, specified positions in the bylaws, are currently filled with no vacancies.
- The Board has consistently achieved quorum, as recorded in meeting minutes across 24 meetings reviewed.
- The Principal and Board President update the Board on academic progress, operations, and financial standing at the school as recorded in monthly meeting minutes.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership as evidenced by the school's organization chart. NHA and school leadership provide monthly updates on academic, financial and operational performance to the Board, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.
- The Board's bylaws reference the following committees: Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Development Committee, and Grievance and Family Life Committee. However, meeting minutes do not indicate that the Finance, Development, and Grievance and Family Life committees are active. The Board is amending its bylaws to eliminate the need for the Finance, Development, and Grievance and Family Life committees as the Board believes it can successfully manage these focus areas as an aggregate body.
- The founding Board President, Rochelle Noel, is still a member of the school's Board and has served as Board President since the school's inception.
- The founding school principal, Verone Kennedy, served as principal since the school's inception in 2010-2011 until the end of the 2013-2014 school year. The current school principal is Andrea Whitehurst, who has been at the school since the 2014-2015 school year.

School Climate & Community Engagement

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has developed a stable school culture.

- To date, the school has met its charter goal of having an annual average student attendance rate of at least 90% in every year of the retrospective charter term, and at least 94% by 2013-2014. Average daily attendance for students over the course of the charter term is 96.6% according to the data in the table below, which is also above the citywide average in each year.¹⁹

¹⁹ The table reflects attendance data taken from the NYC DOE's Automate the Schools (ATS) system for school years 2010-2011 through 2013-2014. Please note that the school self-reported different attendance rates in its Renewal Application than those recorded in ATS for the first and last years, 2010-2011 and 2013-2014, though the differences are not significant. The school self-reported attendance rates of 95.8% and 96.7% for school years 2010-2011 and 2013-2014, respectively.

Average Attendance

Elementary and Middle School Attendance				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Riverton Street Charter School *	95.9%	96.8%	97.0%	96.5%
NYC**	93.2%	93.9%	93.6%	93.2%
Difference from NYC	2.7	2.9	3.4	3.3

* Attendance figures reflect average attendance as reflected in ATS.

** NYC attendance figures reflect average attendance across all general education district schools as reflected in ATS.

- Staff turnover has not been consistent over the charter term, but has improved over the charter term. In years one, two, and three of the charter term (2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013), 38%, 14%, and 8% of instructional staff did not return, either by choice or request, at the start of the following school year, respectively. For the most recent period, staff turnover was only 5% of instructional staff not returning, by choice or request, at the start of the 2013-2014 school year.²⁰
- Student mobility is presented below for the charter term without comparison to other schools, the CSD, or NYC as final student retention goals were not established by the New York State Education Department for the retrospective charter term. Based on the NYC DOE's evaluation and not in comparison to any other school, the CSD, or NYC averages, the school has not had challenges with retaining students.

Mobility

Student Mobility out of Riverton Street Charter School *				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Number of Students who Left the School	13	14	9	30
Percent of Students who Left the School	6.6%	5.5%	2.1%	5.1%

* Figures are based on student enrollment as of October 31 for each respective school year with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012. Students in terminal grades are not included.

- The NYC DOE has made changes to the NYC School Survey during the entirety of the retrospective charter term. Questions asked have been altered, added or deleted from year to year. Also, beginning with the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, survey categories will not be measured in total points out of 10 possible points. To allow for consistency during the evaluated charter term, selected questions, consistent with the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework were identified as relevant for charter schools. These are presented below for the duration of the retrospective charter term. In the most recent year of survey results, 2013-2014, the percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing was above citywide averages for all of the four selected questions; the percentage of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing was above citywide averages for all of the three selected questions; and the percentage of students agreeing or strongly agreeing was also above citywide averages for all of the three selected questions.
- NYC School Survey Response Rates should be comparable over time, however, as the measurement of these has remained consistent. Response rates for parents, teachers and students (if participating) are presented below for each year of the charter term. In general, the response rates for Riverton Street Charter School parents and teachers show no consistent trend of being above or below citywide averages. Parent response rates were above citywide averages in two of the four years of the retrospective charter term; teacher response rates were above the Citywide average in only one of the four years. Riverton Street Charter School students

²⁰ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form in May 2014

participated in the NYC School Survey for the first time in 2013-2014; the student response rate of 100% was above the citywide average in that year.

NYC School Survey Results

Percent of Respondents that Agree or Strongly Agree						
Survey Question		Riverton Street Charter School				Citywide Average
		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014
Students*	Most of my teachers make me excited about learning.**	-	-	-	81%	62%
	Most students at my school treat each other with respect.	-	-	-	74%	60%
	I feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker room, cafeteria, etc.	-	-	-	89%	79%
Parents	I feel satisfied with the education my child has received this year.	100%	99%	97%	99%	95%
	My child's school makes it easy for parents to attend meetings.	98%	97%	98%	98%	94%
	I feel satisfied with the response I get when I contact my child's school.	100%	99%	100%	99%	95%
Teachers	Order and discipline are maintained at my school.	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%
	The principal at my school communicates a clear vision for our school.	100%	100%	96%	100%	88%
	School leaders place a high priority on the quality of teaching.	100%	100%	100%	100%	92%
	I would recommend my school to parents.***	-	100%	92%	94%	81%

* Students in grades kindergarten through five do not participate in the NYC School Survey.

** This question was phrased as "My teachers inspire me to learn" in the 2009-2010 through 2012-2013 School Surveys.

*** This question was not introduced until the 2011-2012 School Survey.

NYC School Survey Results

		Response Rates			
		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students*	Riverton Street Charter School	-	-	-	100%
	NYC	-	-	-	83%
Parents	Riverton Street Charter School	25%	84%	44%	61%
	NYC	52%	53%	54%	53%
Teachers	Riverton Street Charter School	65%	100%	68%	58%
	NYC	82%	81%	83%	81%

* Students in grades kindergarten through five do not participate in the NYC School Survey.

- The school's charter goals include, "parents will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the NYC School Survey in which the school receives scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety and Respect." The school met this goal in 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013. This goal was not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year.
- The school's charter goals include, "staff will express satisfaction with school leadership and professional development opportunities as determined by the NYC School Survey in which the school receives scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety and Respect." The school met this goal in 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013. This goal was not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year.

As part of the renewal process, representatives for the NYC DOE have collected evidence relevant to the school's climate and community engagement over the school's charter term. Based on discussion, document collection and review, and observation, the following was noted:

- An internal survey performed by the school during the 2012-2013 school year indicated that 95% of parents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their child's education. (Less than 50% of the schools families participated in the survey.)
- The NYC DOE conducted a public renewal hearing on October 1, 2014 at Riverton Street Charter School located at 118-34 Riverton Street, Queens, NY 11412 in an effort to elicit public comments. Approximately 50 participants attended the hearing with eight persons speaking in support of the school's renewal and none speaking in opposition.
- The NYC DOE made randomized phone calls to parents/guardians from a roster provided by the school for students of all grades. Calls to school parents/guardians were made during November 2014 until 20 phone calls were completed. Of these calls, 95% provided positive feedback regarding the school.

Financial Health

Overall, the school is in a neutral position to meet near-term financial obligations.

- Based on the fiscal year 2014 (FY14) financial audit, the school's current ratio of 1.36 indicates a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY14 financial audit and follow up, the school's unrestricted cash availability of eight days cash on hand indicates a risk that the school will not be able to cover at least one month of its operating expenses without an infusion of cash. Based on the Board's management agreement with National Heritage Academies, however, National Heritage Academies will add to the resources available to the school in the event that additional funds are necessary to meet the school's operational expenses. There is not a ceiling on the amount that National Heritage Academies will provide to cover expenses.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2014-2015 budget to the actual enrollment as of September 30, 2014 revealed that the school had met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY14 financial audit, the school had met its debt obligations.

Financial Sustainability

Overall, the school is financially sustainable based on its current practices.

- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY14, the school generated an aggregate surplus over these audited fiscal years, and in FY14 the school operated at a surplus.
- Based on the FY14 financial audit, the school's debt-to-asset ratio of 0.64 indicated that the school had more total assets than it had total liabilities.
- Based on the financial audits from FY11 through FY14, the school generated overall positive cash flow from FY11 to FY14, and the school had positive cash flow in each measurable year

There was no material weakness noted in the four independent financial audits.

Essential Question 3: Is the School Compliant with its Charter and All Applicable Law and Regulations?

Over the charter term, Riverton Street Charter School has been compliant with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

As of the review in December 2014, the Board of Trustees for Riverton Street Charter School is in compliance with:

- **Membership size.** Over the charter term, the Board has consistently had a membership size that falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws, a minimum of five and maximum of 13 members.
- **Submission of all required documents.** All current Board members have submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms. The documents submitted do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.²¹
- **Posting of minutes and agendas.** The Board has consistently made all Board minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to or at Board meetings by posting on the school's website.
- **Notification of Board Member Resignations/Submission of New Board Members for Approval.** The board has consistently submitted board resignation notices or new board member credentials within the required five days of change to OSDCP for review and if necessary, approval.
- **Timely submission of documents.** The Board did consistently submit the Annual Report to the New York State Education Department by the deadline of August 1 (or by the NYSED granted extension date) for each year of the current charter term.

As of the review in December 2014, the Board of Trustees for Riverton Street Charter School is out of compliance with:

- **Required number of monthly meetings.** The school's bylaws indicate that the Board is to hold 10 meetings a year. In years two and four of the charter term (2011-2012 and 2013-2014), the Board held nine and seven board meetings, respectively, which is below the required number of meetings as per the bylaws, as evidenced by school reported data. Required meetings are those which met quorum. The current Charter Schools Act requires that the Board hold monthly meetings over a period of 12 calendar months, per year. The Board has not updated its bylaws to comply with this law.
- **Required posting of Annual Audit.** The school has not posted to its website its annual audit for each year of the charter term, as required in charter law. Riverton Street Charter School has only posted its FY14 audit to its website.

As of the review in December 2014, the charter school is in compliance with:

- **Application and Lottery.** For the 2014-2015 school year, the school had an application deadline of April 1, 2014 and lottery date of April 9, 2014 adhering to charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1. Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently adhere to this requirement.
- **Student Discipline Plan.** The school has provided the NYC DOE with a current and complete copy of its Student Discipline Policy for the 2014-2015 academic year. This policy was determined to be compliant with federal law regarding disciplining students with disabilities and due process.
- **Teacher certification.** The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is compliant with state requirements for teacher certification. The Charter Schools Act prohibits more than five staff members or more than 30% of the teaching staff from not being certified in accordance with requirements applicable to other public schools.
- **Fingerprint clearance.** All staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.

²¹ Source: New York State Education Department Annual Report

- **Immunization.** The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization.
- **Insurance.** The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to the NYC DOE.
- **Fire Emergency.** One or more of the school leaders were trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.
- **Timely Submission of Invoicing and Reconciliation Documents.** Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently submit complete invoicing and reconciliation documents by the associated deadlines.

As of the review in December 2014, the charter school is out of compliance with:

- **Safety Documents.** The school has submitted the required safety plan. The school does not have the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification.

Enrollment and Retention Targets

- Amendments to Article 56 of the New York State Consolidated Laws: Education, which relates to Charter Schools, call for charter schools, as a consideration of renewal, “to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets” for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program. The amendments further indicate “Repeated failure to comply with the requirement” as a cause for revocation or termination of the charter.
 - The law directs schools to demonstrate “that it has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students” in the event it has not yet met its targets.
 - The NYC DOE, as authorizer, will annually monitor the school’s performance against these targets and the efforts it makes to meet this state requirement.
 - As of November 1, 2014, charter school enrollment and retention targets as required by the NYS Charter Schools Act are still in a *proposed* status. The information presented below for enrollment is compared to NYC CSD and NYC averages, however, these averages should not be assumed to be similar to the final enrollment targets to be released by NYSED.²²
- In all years of operation, including the most recently completed school year 2013-2014, Riverton Street Charter School:
 - served a lower percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch compared to both the CSD and citywide percentages, with the exception of 2013-2014, in which the school reported that 87.0% of its students received free or reduced price lunch, which is higher than both the CSD and citywide percentages;
 - served a lower percentage of students with disabilities compared to both the CSD and citywide percentages; and
 - served a significantly lower percentage of English Language Learner students compared to both the CSD and citywide percentages.

²² Please see the following website for more information: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/enrollment-retention-targets.html>

Enrollment of Special Populations²³

Special Population		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014 State Enrollment Target (Proposed)
Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) ²⁴	Riverton Street Charter School	81.8%	83.6%	79.2%	87.0%	84.7%
	CSD 29	85.2%	90.0%	87.4%	86.3%	
	NYC	81.4%	83.8%	83.0%	82.4%	
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	Riverton Street Charter School	7.6%	9.0%	8.2%	11.3%	12.2%
	CSD 29	12.4%	12.8%	14.0%	16.1%	
	NYC	16.3%	16.8%	17.9%	19.9%	
English Language Learners (ELL)	Riverton Street Charter School	0.5%	0.0%	1.2%	0.8%	10.5%
	CSD 29	11.2%	10.4%	9.4%	8.6%	
	NYC	18.7%	17.6%	16.6%	15.6%	

Additional Enrollment Information				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grades Served	K-3	K-4	K-5	K-6
CSD(s)	29	29	29	29

²³ Comparisons of a charter school's special populations to the CSD and City are made relative only to the grades served by the school. For example, if a charter school serves grades kindergarten through five, comparisons of that school's special populations will only be made relative to grades kindergarten through five in the CSD and citywide. CSD comparisons are particular to the grades served in each CSD each year. Enrollment rates reflect demographic characteristics as of June 1 and enrollment as of October 31 for each given school year, with the exception of enrollment in the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.

State enrollment targets were generated by a calculator developed by the State Education Department (SED). Once a school's CSD, total enrollment and grade span are entered, the calculator generates a school-specific enrollment target. The CSD for a multi-district school is the primary CSD as determined by each school. The enrollment is determined by the total number of students enrolled as of October 31, 2013. Any school with an unusual grade configuration (i.e. K, 6-9) should use an available grade configuration provided by SED that is most aligned as determined by the DOE, otherwise a school's actual grade span is used. For more information regarding SED's methodology behind the calculation of charter school enrollment and retention targets, please refer to the memo at <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2012Meetings/July2012/712brca11.pdf>.

²⁴ The school used a private vendor for school lunch services for the entirety of the retrospective charter term. As a result, the percentage of students receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch in each year was self-reported by the school as part of its Renewal Application dated May 2014. Please note that the NYC DOE's ATS records indicate that 80.2%, 78.1%, 77.6% and 36.7% of students at Riverton Street Charter School were eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch for school years 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, respectively. Please note that the 2013-2014 figure taken from ATS reflects only those students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch based on HRA (Human Resources Administration) eligibility and does not reflect those students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch based on the NYC DOE's eligibility form.

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

As reported by school leadership and the school's Board, the following was noted:

Riverton Street Charter School will add eighth grade in the next charter term and will serve grades kindergarten through eight at scale. Riverton Street Charter has no plans for further expansion beyond serving grades kindergarten through eight.²⁵

²⁵ In a previously approved material revision to its original charter application in March 2013, the school was granted approval to increase its student enrollment and go from two sections per grade to four sections per grade at scale for a total enrollment of 990 students in grades kindergarten through eight.

Part 5: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

Renewal Process

In the final year of its charter, a NYC DOE Chancellor-authorized charter school seeking renewal must demonstrate its success during the current 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 prior term, to make a compelling, evidence-based case that it has earned the privilege of an additional charter term, and, if renewed, to carry out an ambitious plan for the future.

The NYC DOE does not automatically grant charter renewal, and no charter operator is entitled to renewal. Rather, a school must prove that it has earned renewal and is worthy of continuing the privilege of educating New York City public school students. To make such determinations, the NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) renewal team performs a comprehensive review of the school's academic, operational and fiscal performance over the course of the charter which includes an analysis of the school's renewal application. This application is built around the four essential questions of the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework and includes a retrospective analysis of the school's prior track record as well as a prospective plan for the school. In reviewing this information, a school must be able to demonstrate that it can satisfy the four essential questions of the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework:

1. Is the school an academic success?
2. Is the school a fiscally and operationally 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?

The school presents evidence to support its application for renewal by providing a compelling response to these overarching questions that demonstrates its students have made significant academic progress, is serving students equitably, has sustainable operations to be successful in the next charter term, and that the school has met the goals and objectives pledged in its current 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.

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 also important factors that inform a renewal decision. For more information on how OSDCP makes renewal recommendations to the Chancellor, please see the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework overview in Part 6 of this report.

Statutory Basis for Renewal

The New York State Charter Schools Act ("the Act") authorizes the creation of a system 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:

§2850:

- (a) Improve student learning and achievement;
- (b) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- (e) Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and

- (f) Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

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.²⁶

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.
- (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.

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.

The determination of whether to approve a renewal application rests in the sole discretion of a charter school's authorizer.

A school seeking renewal of its charter must submit a renewal application to the charter entity to which the original charter application was submitted.²⁷ As one such charter entity, the New York City Department of Education ("NYC DOE") 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;

²⁶ See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

²⁷ 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; and
- The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the board of regents 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.²⁸

Where the NYC DOE 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.²⁹

²⁸ § 2851(4)(e) added with the 2010 amendments to the Act.

²⁹ See § 2852(5).

Part 6: NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework

The Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) team may recommend to the Chancellor three potential outcomes for charter schools applying for renewal: full-term renewal (with or without conditions), short-term renewal (with or without conditions), or non-renewal.

After the OSDCP renewal site visit, the OSDCP team incorporates its findings from the visit into this renewal report. The evidence and findings align to the four essential questions of our accountability framework and may include classroom observations, leadership interviews, assessment results, School Survey results, public hearings and other community feedback, as well as a variety of other data. Schools will be given the opportunity to correct factual errors in this report. If the OSDCP renewal team determines that renewal is not warranted, the school will be informed in writing of the reasons for the non-renewal. If OSDCP approves the renewal application and the Chancellor recommends renewal for the school, prior to the school's charter expiration date, OSDCP will send the renewal report and recommendation along with the school's renewal application and other supporting evidence to the Board of Regents for its approval.

Full-Term Renewal, With or Without Conditions

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 clearly and consistently demonstrated high academic attainment and/or consistent and significant student academic progress, has met the majority of its charter goals, has demonstrated financial stability, has demonstrated operational viability, has attained sufficient board capacity, and has an educationally sound learning environment in order to gain this type of renewal.

Short Term Renewal, With or Without Conditions

In cases where a school is up for renewal of its initial charter and has two years or fewer of state-assessment results, or where any school has demonstrated mixed academic results or has uncertain organizational or financial viability, a short-term renewal with conditions may be considered.

Non-Renewal

Renewal is not automatic. 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.

Grade Expansions or Enrollment Changes

A school may seek material charter revisions as part of the renewal process. In the case of a grade expansion or change in authorized enrollment, these material charter revisions are considered separately from the charter renewal. Charter renewal, with or without conditions, is not a guarantee of approval for a proposed material charter revision.

The NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework

To help Chancellor-authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the OSDCP 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 and operationally 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?

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. These factors include academic, fiscal, operational and environmental indicators of a charter school's performance. Additionally, some of the indicators we evaluate relate to expected performance as defined in the New York State Charter Schools Act including evidence of improved student learning and achievement, special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure, use of different and innovative teaching methods, parent and student satisfaction, and enrollment and retention of special student populations. Further detail about the application of the framework to school reflection and evaluation is provided beginning on page 17 of the NYC DOE Chancellor-Authorized Schools Accountability Handbook for 2014-2015.

What follows is a framework that outlines strands, indicators, and potential evidence for each of the four essential questions. The framework identifies what OSDCP looks at in determining whether a school is successful enough to earn a new charter term, with or without conditions, and the duration of the charter term recommended by NYC DOE. As schools use the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework, they should remember that charter schools exist to deliver improved student achievement for the students they serve, particularly at-risk students, so the schools are 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, while also recognizing the importance of closing the achievement gap and offering high-quality learning opportunities for all students.

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
- Meet other rigorous academic goals as stated on school charter
- Demonstrate increasing student achievement/growth
- Are closing the achievement gap for at risk students, including special needs and ELL students
- Are surpassing academic performance measures of DOE identified peer-schools
- Are surpassing academic performance measures compared with district/city proficiency averages

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

- Grades 3-8 NYS ELA Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- Grades 3-8 NYS Math Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- Grades 4 and 8 NYS Science Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- HS 4- and 6-Year Graduation Rates
- Grades 8-12 NYS Regent Exam Results
- 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
- When applicable, NYSAA or other approved alternate assessments results
- Results on state accountability measures
- Charter School Academic Goals
- School-reported internal assessments
- NYC DOE Progress Reports or School Quality Reports³⁰

1b. Instructionally Sound and 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 and Common Core Learning Standards
- Use instructional models and resources that are consistent with school mission and 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
- Utilizes 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 and supporting curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals

³⁰ Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE replaced the DOE Progress Report with the DOE School Quality Report. The 2012-2013 school year is the last year NYC public schools will have a Progress Report score. The Progress Report and School Quality Report contain similar indicators of performance.

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

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

1c. Learning Environment

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

- Provide a safe, respectful, and stable academic environment conducive to student learning (one with efficient transitions and safe hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.)
- Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best effort academically and to actively engage in their own learning and the life of the school
- 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
- Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and supported
- Have 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:

- Classroom observations
- NYC DOE School Survey results (students, parents and teachers)
- 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 (referral, suspension, expulsion)
- Parent complaint/concern information
- Self-administered satisfaction survey results
- Interviews with school leadership, staff, and, if appropriate, students
- Scheduled student engagement opportunities (e.g., student advisory, internships, student government, student led conferences, peer tutoring, peer mediation, etc.)
- School calendar and class schedules

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

2a. Mission and Goals

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

- Have an animated mission statement and clearly articulated goals (both academic and non-academic) that staff, students and community embrace
- Demonstrate an active self-evaluation process that involves regular monitoring, an examination of practices based on outcomes against goals, and reporting on progress towards school goals
- Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring data

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

- Mission Statement
- School charter and external documents (student/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
- Stakeholder interviews (board, parents, staff, students, etc.)

2b. Leadership and Governance Structure

Schools with successful leadership and governance 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 Law and conflict of interest laws, 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
- 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
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provides 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 and core operational policies
- School calendar
- Professional development plans
- Stakeholder interviews (board, school leadership and staff)

2c. 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
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the NYC DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Strong community-based partnerships that support and advocate for the school
- Engage families actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- 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
- Share instructional and operational practices with the larger NYC school community and actively seek opportunities for partnering and collaboration
- 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

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

- NYC 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
- Participation in NYC DOE initiatives and efforts to collaborate/partner with other NYC schools
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)
- 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
- Student/Family and Staff Handbooks

2d. Operational Health

Schools that are effective, sustainable organizations have many of the characteristics below:

- A safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Demonstrate efficient and orderly daily operations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage and insurance and facility documents
- An effective process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, supporting, and evaluating school leadership and staff
- A flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- Consistently meet student enrollment and retention targets as established by SED (applicable to schools renewed after 2010)
- Communications with NYC DOE are timely, comprehensive, and appropriate
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees

Evidence of an operationally viable organization may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- Appropriate insurance documents
- Operational policies and procedures
- Operational organizational chart
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- School safety plan
- Immunization completion rate information
- Appropriate AED/CPR certifications

2e. Financial Sustainability

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

- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, at 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
- Consistently clean financial audits and compliant escrow accounts
- If applicable, strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school's design and academic program
- School leadership and Board maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- School leadership and Board oversee financial and operational responsibilities in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to decision-making
- Demonstrate financial planning for future school years, including per-pupil and space-related cost projections

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 audits, escrow accounts and other fiscal reporting documents
- Financial leader(s) resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships

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 the school's charter and charter agreement have the characteristics below:

- Implement 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
- Implement 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 Comprehensive Review reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership/Board and staff interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have the characteristics below:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for Free and Reduced Price Lunch, ELL and Special Education students to those of their community school district of location³¹ 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 enrollment process and annual waiting lists with integrity
- Employ instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and meet all 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 NYSED Annual Report
- Student recruitment plan and resources
- Student management policies and promotion and retention policies
- Student/Family Handbook
- Student discipline policy and 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

³¹ School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from the NY State Education Department. This requirement of the New York State Charter Schools Act applies to schools renewed after 2010.

3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have the characteristics below:

- Safe and secure facilities with no significant compliance concerns
- Consistently clean annual audits, up-to-date escrow accounts, and complete 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 comply with NYC DOE OSDCP's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members
- Inform NYC DOE OSDCP, and where required, receive OSDCP 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
- Stakeholder 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, a school may consider various growth options: replication, expansion to new grades or increased enrollment, or alteration of its 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 determine community needs and to communicate regarding the school's 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 revision or merger applications
- 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 (for example, human resource policies for growing your own talent, 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)
- School develops contingency plans especially for facilities or financial scenarios

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

- Charter renewal application
- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organizational 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 without major changes through expansion or replication, 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 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

Appendix A: School Performance Data

Students scoring at or above Level 3

Grade-Level Proficiency in English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Riverton Street Charter School				
Grade 3	50.0%	46.2%	43.6%	36.9%
Grade 4	-	71.2%	34.6%	44.0%
Grade 5	-	-	28.3%	26.3%
Grade 6	-	-	-	25.9%
DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 29 *				
Grade 3	2.0	-3.5	15.3	9.7
Grade 4	-	18.9	8.1	13.7
Grade 5	-	-	3.1	-0.9
Grade 6	-	-	-	9.8
DIFFERENCE FROM NYC				
Grade 3	1.9	-2.8	15.5	7.0
Grade 4	-	18.8	7.4	12.9
Grade 5	-	-	-0.4	-2.1
Grade 6	-	-	-	0.6

Grade-Level Proficiency in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Riverton Street Charter School				
Grade 3	80.8%	71.2%	46.2%	47.6%
Grade 4	-	84.6%	46.2%	54.8%
Grade 5	-	-	39.6%	47.4%
Grade 6	-	-	-	50.0%
DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 29 *				
Grade 3	31.4	21.4	18.8	16.2
Grade 4	-	27.2	18.0	20.5
Grade 5	-	-	18.7	13.9
Grade 6	-	-	-	29.8
DIFFERENCE FROM NYC				
Grade 3	26.0	14.2	13.0	9.0
Grade 4	-	18.9	10.9	14.8
Grade 5	-	-	10.0	8.6
Grade 6	-	-	-	16.2

* CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

Appendix B: Additional Accountability Data

NYC DOE Accountability Reports

[Annual Site Visit Report 2010-2011](#)

[Annual Site Visit Report 2011-2012](#)

[Annual Comprehensive Report 2012-2013](#)