



Charter Schools Accountability and Support  
2012-2013

# **ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

## **2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR**

# Part 1: School Overview & History

## School Overview and History

Academic Leadership Charter School is an elementary school serving approximately 315 students<sup>1</sup> in grades K-4 during the 2012-13 school year. It opened in 2009-2010, and is under the terms of its first charter. The school's projected full grade span is K-5, which it is expected to reach in 2013-2014.<sup>2</sup> The school is located in a public<sup>3</sup> facility in the Bronx within CSD 7,<sup>4</sup> at 677 E 141st St, Bronx, NY 10454. The school is considering expansion in its second charter term to include middle school grades in a separate facility.

The table below details the school's performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report.<sup>5</sup>

**ALCS Progress Report Results**

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall Grade				A
Student Progress				B
Student Performance				B
School Environment				B
Closing Achievement Gap Points				4.8

Academic Leadership Charter School accepts applications for new students at grades K-2, with Kindergarten being the primary intake grade and the school backfilling empty seats at grades 1-2. There were 744 students on the school's waitlist after the Spring 2012 lottery.<sup>6</sup>

The average attendance rate for the 2012-13 school year to date is 93.9%.<sup>7</sup>

On the 2011-12 NYC DOE School Survey, the school scored Well Above Average on the Academic Expectations and Communication sections of the survey, and Above Average on the Engagement and Safety & Respect sections compared to other Early Childhood Schools. Participation on the survey for school parents was 92.0% and 100.0% for the school's teachers.<sup>8</sup>

The school's current Executive Director (ED), Norma Hurwitz, is the school's founding school leader and served as both ED and principal until 2012-13. The school promoted two founding teachers to leadership positions at that time: Leena Varghese to Principal and Jaime Kennedy to Assistant Principal.

The school was issued a Notice of Probation by the Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team on July 19, 2011, with the probation period lasting from that date until August 31, 2012. During the probationary period the school was charged to address a series of concerns and violations related to operations, particularly but not limited to its administration and management of its 2011 enrollment lottery, high annual turnover among operations and office staff, and board oversight. The Board and school leadership were cooperative with the CSAS and successfully addressed the probation terms. As a result, the CSAS removed ALCS from probation in September 2012. During the current school year, the CSAS continued to monitor the school under a notice of concern.

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

<sup>2</sup> NYC DOE internal data.

<sup>3</sup> NYC DOE internal data.

<sup>4</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

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

<sup>6</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted Data Collection Form.

<sup>7</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted Data Collection Form.

<sup>8</sup> NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

## Part 2: Annual Review Process Overview

### Rating Framework

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability & Support Team (CSAS) performs a comprehensive review of each NYC DOE-authorized charter school to investigate three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization; and is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations? To ascertain matters of sustainability and strategic planning, CSAS inquires about the school's plans for its next charter term.

This review is conducted by analyzing student performance data and collecting and evaluating school-submitted documents during the 2012-2013 school year. The report outlines evidence found during this review.

As per the school's monitoring plan, CSAS may also conduct a visit to a school. Visits may focus on academic outcomes, governance, organizational structure, operational compliance, fiscal sustainability or any combination of these as necessary.

In addition, a school's charter goals are reviewed. The progress that a school has made towards achieving its goals at this particular point during its charter period is noted. However, as this is an interim review before the end of the charter term, progress towards goals is not used as part of this evaluation.

### Essential Questions

#### *Is the school an academic success?*

To assess whether a school is an academic success, CSAS considers performance measures, including, but not limited to the following:

- Overall NYC DOE Progress Report score,
- New York State ELA and Math results and/or New York State Regents exams,
- ELA and Math proficiency compared to the district for elementary and middle schools, and graduation rates compared to the city for high schools,
- New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) or other approved alternate assessments, and
- Performance data pertaining to college and career readiness.

Academic success is rated as **Demonstrated, Partially Demonstrated, or Not Yet Demonstrated**. If a school does not yet have a NYC DOE Progress Report, it is rated as Not Yet Demonstrated.

#### *Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?*

To assess whether a school is a fiscally sound, viable organization, CSAS focuses on three areas: Governance Structure & Organizational Design, School Climate & Community Engagement, and Financial Health. This includes an analysis of the school's audited financial statements, based on the NACSA (National Association of Charter School Authorizers) Financial Framework<sup>9</sup>.

CSAS also considers a variety of supporting materials and data, including but not limited to the following:

- Board of Trustee bylaws,
- Board of Trustee meeting minutes,
- Annual Reports submitted by schools to New York State Education Department (NYSED),
- NYC DOE School Survey,
- Data collection sheets provided by schools,
- Student, staff, and Board turnover,

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<sup>9</sup>[http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance\\_Framework\\_Fall\\_2012\\_Draft.pdf](http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance_Framework_Fall_2012_Draft.pdf), page 38-59

- Authorized enrollment numbers, and
- Annual financial audits.

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

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

As it pertains to compliance, CSAS identifies areas of compliance and non-compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

**Staff Representatives**

The following staff representatives participated in the review of this school's documents as detailed above and conducted an operations-based monitoring visit to the school on March 7, 2013:

- Gabrielle Mosquera, DOE
- Kamilah O'Brien, DOE
- Rick Larios, DOE

In addition to this, staff representatives of the CSAS team conducted a monitoring visit to the school's regular Board meeting on February 28, 2013 and have conducted two monitoring visits to the school, March 7, 2013 and June 18, 2013.

## Part 3: Findings

### Summary of Findings

Based on CSAS review, the following findings are made. To date, the school:

- has demonstrated academic achievement and progress (pp. 6-8).
- has a developed governance structure and organizational design (p. 9).
- has developed a stable school culture (p. 9).
- is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices (p. 10).
- is compliant with its charter and applicable laws and regulations (p. 11).
- has plans to expand to expand into middle school grades (6-8) as well as to expand its elementary school enrollment (p.12).

This review included a desk audit, a self-evaluation completed by the school, and CSAS conducted operations-based monitoring visits to the school on March 7<sup>th</sup> and June 18, 2013 and also conducted a monitoring visit to the school's regular Board meeting on February 28, 2013.

As a result of this review, CSAS has determined that ALCS has been able to sustain operational and oversight practices necessary for effective school management and governance. Therefore CSAS will not renew the Notice of Concern when its term ends at the end of the 2012-13 school year.

## **Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?**

To date, Academic Leadership Charter School has demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

- To date, the school has received one year of NYS assessment results (School Year 2011-12), which include one testing grade (that year's Grade 3 students).
- The school's overall proficiency scores, students scoring at Level 3 or above, were 62.5% of ALCS students in ELA and 70.8% of students in Math.
- The school's overall ELA proficiency rate in 2012 (consisting only of Grade 3, as shown below) was 34.9 percentage points higher than its district of location, CSD 7.
  - Additionally, the school outperformed the city's rate of ELA proficiency by 13.5 percentage points.
- The school's overall Math proficiency rate in 2012 (consisting only of Grade 3, as shown below) was 34.4 percentage points higher than its district of location, CSD 7<sup>10</sup>.
  - Additionally, the school outperformed the city's rate of Math proficiency by 13.8 percentage points.
- The school has thus far received one NYC DOE Progress Report, for which it received an Overall grade of A, a Student Performance grade of B, and a Student Progress grade of B (see p.2).
- In school year 2011-12 the school earned 4.8 Closing the Achievement Gap points on its Progress Report.

Progress Toward Attainment of Academic Goals<sup>11</sup>

- In school year 2011-12, according to its Annual Report submitted to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), the school fully achieved 5 of its 9 academic charter goals applicable to grades and cohorts served.

Based on the submitted document review, the following was noted:

- School leadership reported that this year the school has refined the four core subject areas of its academic program (literacy, mathematics, social studies and science) to meet Common Core Standards, and has also expanded the number of topics covered within the program.
- School leadership reported that the school devoted professional development sessions to focus on making assessments more reflective of the school's instructional program and the state's more rigorous Common Core Standards. Leadership also reported that it has added more authentic texts to its mock standard assessments, and that the assessments themselves became increasingly rigorous as the school year progressed.
- School leadership reported that the school has introduced vocabulary contests this year, which are conducted by the Principal and Assistant Principal and use words related to material covered during mock assessment periods.

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<sup>10</sup> New York State proficiency data: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>

<sup>11</sup> Goal analysis is considered a neutral point for the purposes of this evaluation.

**Academic Leadership Charter School  
Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - Whole School**

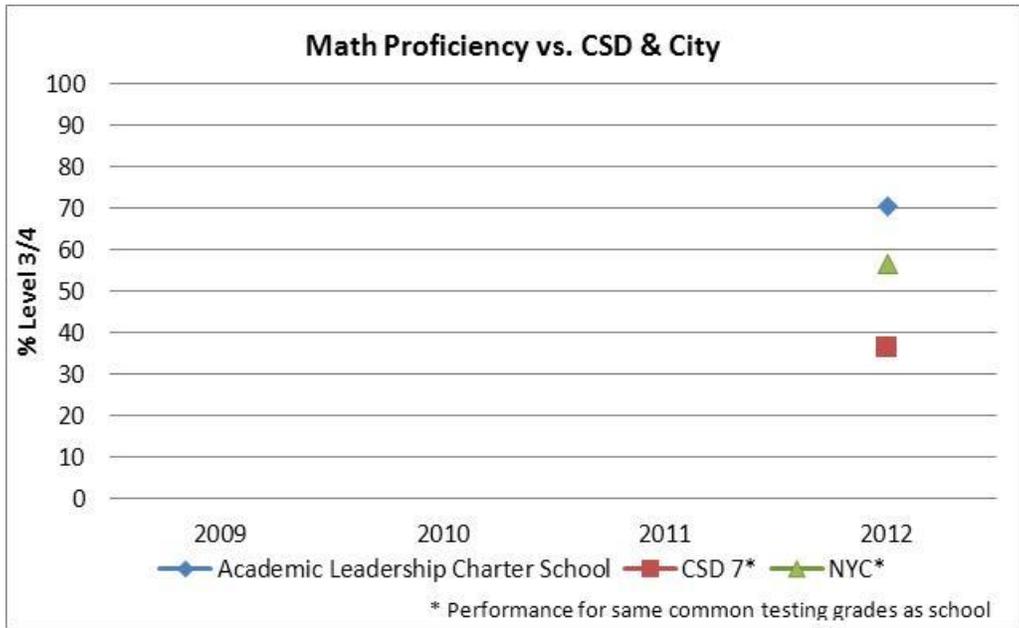
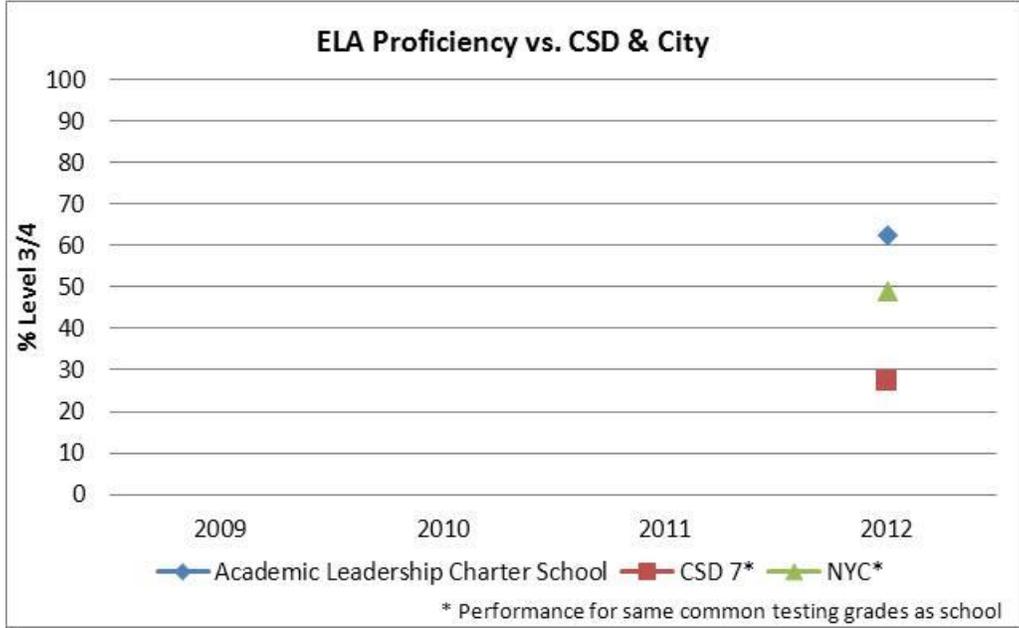
<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Academic Leadership Charter School				62.5
CSD 7*				27.6
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Academic Leadership Charter School				70.8
CSD 7*				36.4

\*CSD data represents only common testing grades, for all years presented

**Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - By Grade**

Grade 3

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Academic Leadership Charter School				62.5
CSD 7*				27.6
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Academic Leadership Charter School				70.8
CSD 7*				36.4



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

### **Governance Structure & Organizational Design**

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

- The Board's membership has been stable, with new members added in 2011-12 and 2012-13 to improve capacity, and, as recorded in meeting minutes, Board votes consistently demonstrate a quorum.
- The Board has 8 voting and 2 non-voting members and the officer positions outlined in the Board's bylaws are filled, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Board has monthly meetings and has met once a month between July 2012 through the time of this report, as evidenced by agenda and minutes posted to the school's website<sup>12</sup>.
- There are clear lines of accountability between Board and school leadership and school staff as evidenced by the school's organization chart and school leadership's monthly updates on academic, financial and operational performance to the Board and its committees, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.
- The committees outlined in the Board's bylaws are active, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Board minutes and agenda items have been posted for inspection by the public.

Based on monitoring and document review, the following was noted:

- The Board presidency changed this year and is now held by Robert Podhurst. The previous Board president, Nick McNickle, continues to serve on the Board.
- Committees additional to those in the Board's bylaws have been added, including a Lottery Committee in 2011-12 and a Long-Term Planning Committee in 2012-13.

### **School Climate & Community Engagement**

To date, the school has developed a stable school culture.

- The founding school leader has remained its Executive Director and two founding teachers have been promoted to leadership positions as Principal and Assistant Principal.
  - The school has added a co-teacher position to some of its classrooms in order to retain associate teachers whose development was progressing but not yet at lead teacher level.
  - The school has retained the Operations Director and Operations Associate who served in these positions at the end of school year 2011-12, providing continuity into the current school year.
  - Its previous Executive Assistant, who handled several operations-related responsibilities at the school, continues to assist the school with data analysis on a consulting basis (3 days per week during school year 2012-13).
- The school has retained stable levels of students and staff members from school year 2011-12.
- The school scored Well Above citywide averages for Early Childhood Schools for Academic Expectations and Communication and Above citywide averages for Engagement and Safety & Respect on the NYC DOE School Survey and the school had above citywide participation averages among both Parent and Teacher participant groups, 92% to 53% and 100% to 82% respectively.

Progress Toward Attainment of Accountability Goals<sup>13</sup>

- The school's 2011-12 student attendance rate of 94% exceeded its charter attendance goal of 90% and the current year attendance rate of 93.9%<sup>14</sup> is on target to exceed its charter attendance goal.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.alcsbronx.org/home>

<sup>13</sup> Goal analysis is considered a neutral point for the purposes of this evaluation.

<sup>14</sup> As reported in its Annual Report to the New York State Department of Education and its ACR Data Collection Form to the NYC DOE.

## **Financial Health**

To date, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices.

- The school is in a strong position to meet all of its liabilities in the next 12 months.
- The school is in a position to cover all anticipated expenses for the foreseeable future without an infusion of cash.
- The school is meeting its enrollment target, indicating stable revenue for its budget.
- The school is meeting its debt obligation.
- The school is operating at a surplus of almost 40% indicating an ability to create a strong reserve to support ongoing growth.
- The school has a good debt to asset ratio that has been on a decline over the past three years.
- The school has a strong cash flow that has trended upward.
- The school has minimal debt and is in a strong position to meet its obligations.
- The school received a clean audit with no material findings on its most recent audited financial statements.

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

To date, the school is compliant with its charter and applicable laws and regulations.

- To date, the Board is in compliance with:
  - The Board's membership size falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws.
  - The Board has held the number of board meetings outlined in its charter and required by the Charter Schools Act.
  - All Board members have submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms and do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.
  
- To date, the school is in compliance with:
  - The school has provided timely submissions of accountability reporting documents to the CSAS team.
  - The school has submitted required documentation for staff-fingerprint clearance and 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 school has the required number of staff with AED-CPR certification.
  - The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents.
  - The school submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 98.8% for immunization.

Based on interviews and document review during the March 7<sup>th</sup> and June 18<sup>th</sup> visits to the school, the following was noted:

- The school has successfully sustained remedies and improved its operational and oversight processes put in place in response to the circumstances that led to its July 2011 probation notice.
  - Each of the school's operations staff members has well-defined responsibilities and has been evaluated by either the school principal or assistant principal.
  - The school's revised operations and finance manual has been successfully used as a training resource for new staff, and its policies, procedures and tools have been consistently implemented.
  - The school has continued to operate with appropriate internal fiscal controls regarding payroll, purchase orders, and general bookkeeping. The school continues to work with a consultant from Victory Schools to structure its overall budget and reconcile its financial records at the end of each month.
  - The school conducted a fair and public lottery with appropriate controls related to applications, lottery administration, and management of enrollment and wait list processes.
    - Applications receive three stamped process-checks: upon receipt, confirmation of entry into electronic database, verification that application is complete and database entry is correct.
    - Lottery was conducted electronically by an outside vendor.
    - Mailings regarding lottery results were sent out one day after the lottery.
    - Protocols for enrollment process were followed by operations staff.
    - School leadership regularly reported on application, lottery and enrollment to Lottery Committee and Board.
  - The school's employee files are now separated by temporary and permanent staff members. A spot check of employee files found records to be complete and reflective of the checklist utilized by the school.
  - The school's operational staff is led by the Director of Finance and Operations and supported by an Operations Associate.
  
- As a result of the above review, CSAS has determined to withdraw the Notice of Concern at the end of this school year.

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

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

- The school is considering expansion into middle school grades (6-8) during its next charter term, if approved for renewal, as well as potentially expanding its elementary school enrollment.
- The school is considering public and private facility options for its proposed middle school grades, but intends to keep some or all of its elementary grades, depending on expansion, housed at its current location.

## Part 4: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

### The CSAS Accountability Framework

To help NYC DOE authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the NYC DOE's Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) has developed an Accountability Framework build around four essential questions for charter school renewal:

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

#### 1. Is the School an Academic Success?

##### 1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

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

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

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

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

##### 1b. Mission and Academic Goals

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **1d. Learning Environment**

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

- Have a strong culture that connects high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to give their best effort academically and socially
- Use a comprehensive approach to student management, including positive behavioral expectations and a clear discipline policy to build and sustain a safe, orderly, and supportive classroom environment
- Provide for safe, respectful, efficient transitions, hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.
- Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and supported
- Provide opportunities for students to actively engage in their own learning and in the life of the

<p>school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a formal or informal character education, social development, or citizenship program that provides opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens</li> </ul>
<p>Evidence for successful learning environments may include, but not be limited to, many of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School mission and articulated values</li> <li>• Student management plan (code of conduct, school values, discipline policy, positive incentive system, etc.)</li> <li>• Student attendance and retention rates</li> <li>• Student discipline data</li> <li>• DOE School Survey student results</li> <li>• DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results</li> <li>• Self-administered satisfaction survey results</li> <li>• Leadership, staff, and, if appropriate, student interviews</li> <li>• Classroom observations</li> <li>• Scheduled student engagement opportunities (e.g., student advisory, internships, student government, student led conferences, peer tutoring, peer mediation, etc.)</li> </ul>

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

**2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design**

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

- Operate with a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate blend of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter
- Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly but not limited to open-meeting laws and conflict of interest regulations
- Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time and despite circumstance
- Implements a school leadership structure that is aligned with charter and that is sufficient to fulfill school's mission and achieve its accountability goals; it also has clear lines of accountability for leadership roles, accountability to Board, and, if applicable, relationship with a charter management organization
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implemented a process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's organization and leadership structure
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers

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

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar, professional development plan

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

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

- A healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered, and open to parents and community support
- An effective process for recruiting, hiring, supporting, and evaluating leadership and staff
- A flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- An effective way of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including the DOE School Survey
- Effective home-school communication practices to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Strong community-based partnerships and advocacy for the school

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

- DOE School Survey satisfaction parent, teacher, and, if appropriate student results
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs

## **2c. Financial and Operational Health**

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

- Consistently meet its student enrollment and retention targets
- Annual budgets that meets all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- School leadership and Board that oversee financial and operational responsibilities in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to decision-making
- Boards and school leadership that maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of chartered school design and academic program
- A safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations

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

- School budget, P&Ls, and monthly/quarterly cash-flow reports
- Appropriate insurance documents
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- Financial audits
- Financial leader(s) resume and accountability documents
- Operational policies and procedures
- Operational org chart
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- School safety plan

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

#### 3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

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

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

- Authorized charter and signed agreement
- Charter revision request approval and documentation
- School mission
- School policies and procedures
- Site visits
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership/board interviews

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

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have:

- Met all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Comparable enrollment of FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location *or* are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages
- Implemented school policies related to student discipline and promotion and retention that are fully compliant with laws and regulations related to students with disabilities and due process regulations
- Conducted independently verified fair and open lottery and manage with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employed instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and certification requirements

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

- School reporting documents
- School's Annual Report
- Student recruitment plan and resources
- Student management policies and promotion and retention policies
- Student discipline records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Staff roster, fingerprint clearance for all staff, certification status of all instructional staff

#### 3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

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

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

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

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

##### **4a. School Expansion or Model Replication**

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

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

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

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and Board interviews

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

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

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

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

- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organization chart
- Staff rosters
- Staff handbook
- Leadership and staff interviews
- Budget

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

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

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

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

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- MOUs or contracts with partners