



Charter Schools Accountability and Support  
2012-2013

**DR. RICHARD IZQUIERDO HEALTH AND SCIENCE CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

**2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR**

# Part 1: School Overview & History

## School Overview and History

Dr. Richard Izquierdo Health and Science Charter School (Izquierdo CS) is a middle school serving approximately 239 students<sup>1</sup> in grades 6-8 during the 2012-13 school year. It opened in 2010-2011, and is under the terms of its first charter. The school's projected full grade span, if approved for renewal and continued expansion, is 6-12, which it expects to reach in 2016-2017.<sup>2</sup> The school is located in public<sup>3</sup> facilities at 800 Home Street in the Bronx within CSD 12.<sup>4</sup>

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

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall				F
Student Progress				F
Student Performance				D
School Environment				C
Closing the Achievement Gap Points				1.0

Dr. Richard Izquierdo Health and Science Charter School enrolls new students in grade 6. There were 33 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2012 lottery.<sup>6</sup>

The average attendance rate for the 2012-13 school year to date is 92.3%.<sup>7</sup>

On the 2011-12 NYC DOE School Survey, the school scored Average on the Safety & Respect section and Below Average on Academic Expectations, Communication and Engagement sections. Participation for school parents was at 76.0%, with 56.0% of the school's teachers, and 95.0% of the school's eligible students responding to the survey.<sup>8</sup>

Izquierdo CS has had a new school leader in each of its three years of operation: John Xavier was the principal in 2010-11, Frank Steele was the principal in 2011-12, and Anthony Lopez is the CEO/School Leader with Dr. John Kalaboukas serving as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction in 2012-13.

<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 DOEMSchool Survey,
- Data collection sheets provided by schools,

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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

- Student, staff, and Board turnover,
- 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 a full visit to the school on March 20, 2013 and April 3, 2013:

- Richard Larios, DOE
- Gabrielle Mosquera, DOE
- Kamilah O'Brien, DOE
- Lynnette Aqueron, DOE

## Part 3: Findings

### Summary of Findings

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

- has not yet demonstrated academic achievement or progress (pp. 6-9).
- has a developed governance structure and organizational design (p. 10).
- has not yet developed a stable school culture (pp. 10-11).
- is in a strong overall position to meet its near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practice (p. 12).
- is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others (p. 13).
- has plans to expand into high school grades during the current and next charter term, should the school's renewal application be approved (p. 14).

This review, as noted on page 2, included a desk audit of submitted documents, a school visit by CSAS staff and follow up communication via email. CSAS visited the school on March 20 and April 3, 2013.

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

To date in its first charter term, Dr. Richard Izquierdo Health and Science Charter School has not yet demonstrated academic achievement or progress.

- Izquierdo CS has two years of state assessment data at the time of this report.
- In 2011-12, 22.5% of its students scored a level 3 or 4 on the NYS ELA assessment and 30% of its students scored a level 3 or 4 on the NYS Math assessment.
- Its overall Math percent proficient declined from 2010-11 to 2011-12, from 57% of students achieving a level 3 or 4 to 30% of students doing so a year later.
- Its overall ELA percent of students scoring at a level 3 or 4 increased from 20.4% in 2010-11 to 22.5% in 2011-12.
- The school's overall proficiency when comparing same grades served has been below its district of location (CSD 12) in ELA both years of school operation. The school was below its district of location in Math in 2011-12, after being above the district during its first year of operation.
- The school received an Overall grade of F on its first NYC DOE Progress Report (see page 2), with an F in Student Progress and a D in Student Performance.
- In 2011-12, the school earned one Closing the Achievement Gap point on its NYC DOE Progress Report.

Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals<sup>10</sup>

- In 2011-12, Izquierdo CS met one of the 5 academic performance goals in its charter.<sup>11</sup>

Representatives of the CSAS visited the school on March 20 and April 3, 2013. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- School leadership reported that in response to disappointing results on ELA and Math NYS assessments, they implemented a block schedule and significantly increased the amount of daily Math and ELA instruction time, resulting in a weekly increase of 318 minutes for ELA (from 360 minutes to 678 minutes each week) and an increase of 192 minutes for weekly Math instruction (from 270 minutes to 462 minutes each week).
  - ELA instruction includes daily ELA block, daily ELA lab, and daily "Drop Everything And Read" (DEAR) period.
  - Math instruction includes daily Math block and daily Math lab.
- School leadership reported that they also reviewed the school's assessment system and made changes to improve assessment use, data collection and data analysis. These included:
  - discontinuing use of the Acuity system and implementing ClassMate.
  - beginning in January, the school began fully using ClassMate, providing a comprehensive data collection tool that administrators and the Board believe will provide better data management and use.
  - beginning use of TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) to assess and support Math and ELA literacy.
  - revising their mock assessments and administering them four times (Oct, Dec, Feb, and April).
  - drawing on Engage NY resources to ensure Common Core alignment for teacher-developed assessments, which are reviewed/approved by department chairs prior to administration.
- School leadership reported an increase this year in certified special education teachers from one part-time to three full-time teachers, including one with ELL (English Language Learners) certification, and the establishment of Academic Intervention Services.
  - Special education services are provided substantially through SETSS (Special Education Teacher Support Services) with either push-in or pull out support provided.

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

<sup>11</sup> School's 2011-12 Annual Report to NYSED

- Based on interviews with leadership and special education staff, ICT (Integrated Co-Teaching) is being considered for next year.
- School leadership reported that all students who received less than a Level 3 score on the NYS assessments received additional academic support.
- School has a contract with Kaplan, which supports Saturday Academy and provides test awareness support.
- Ten classroom observations were made by a CSAS reviewer with the school's Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the following was noted:
  - 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, with off-task students off-task for a short duration (generally during small group activities or intra-lesson transitions.)
  - Except for the Healthy Snack class and the ELA pullout class, observed class-sizes ranged from 11 to 24 students, with 4 of 10 observed classrooms having two teachers and the remainder, one teacher. One class with two teachers also had a crisis paraprofessional working with an individual student.
  - The Healthy Snack class had 2 teachers, 3 at the beginning of class, with 70 students.<sup>12</sup>
  - A variety of instructional techniques were observed: lecture, discussion, individual, partner or small group independent practice, modeling and guided practice.
  - Most questioning during the 10 classroom observations was basic comprehension or fact recall with supportive process checks ("How did you get the answer?") and only a couple of instances of higher level thinking or probing questions were observed.
  - All observed classrooms had posted lesson aims, an agenda, and an available lesson/unit plan to review.
  - With the exception of the Healthy Snack room, classrooms were print rich and resourced with appropriate instructional materials.
  - Classroom Smartboards and the technology lab were observed being used to support instruction. The former were used for presentation purposes, modeling, review, and direct instruction; the latter to support math and social studies instruction.
- School leadership reported a return to "instructional basics"—lesson plan writing, time management, classroom management, and reading and writing across the curriculum—as the focus for improving academic results.
- As part of its instructional organization re-structuring, the school added four department chairs in the core academic areas of English, Math, Science and Social Studies. Chairs provide instructional and content support and supervision, review lesson plans and approve unit assessments, do formal and informal observations, co-teach and model instruction.
- The DOE reviewer for special education who visited the school on April 3<sup>rd</sup> noted the following regarding special education compliance and program implementation:
  - Academic Intervention Services process has clear procedures for support and for IEP (Individualized Education Program) referral, when necessary.
  - Referral team is in place to process referrals; currently 35 students have IEPs and 12 referrals are in process with CSE.
  - Eight IEPs are overdue for annual reviews but are expected to be completed in April.
  - All student support staff are appropriately certified.
  - All instructional staff have access to appropriate IEPs.
  - The school reports a good working relationship with its CSE.
  - Special education team needs to review discrepancy report and make appropriate updates in ATS.

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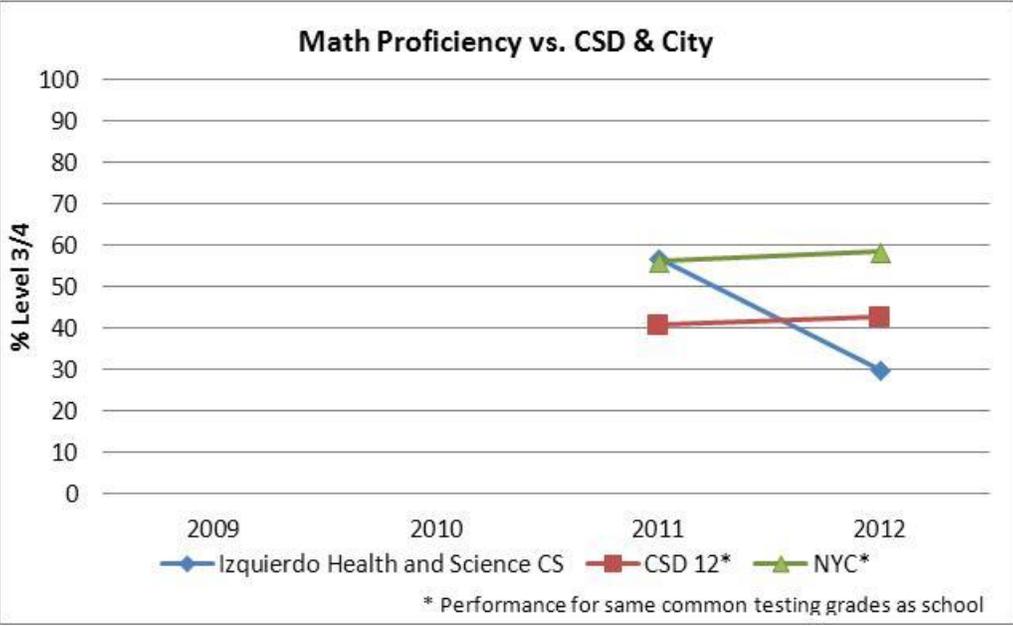
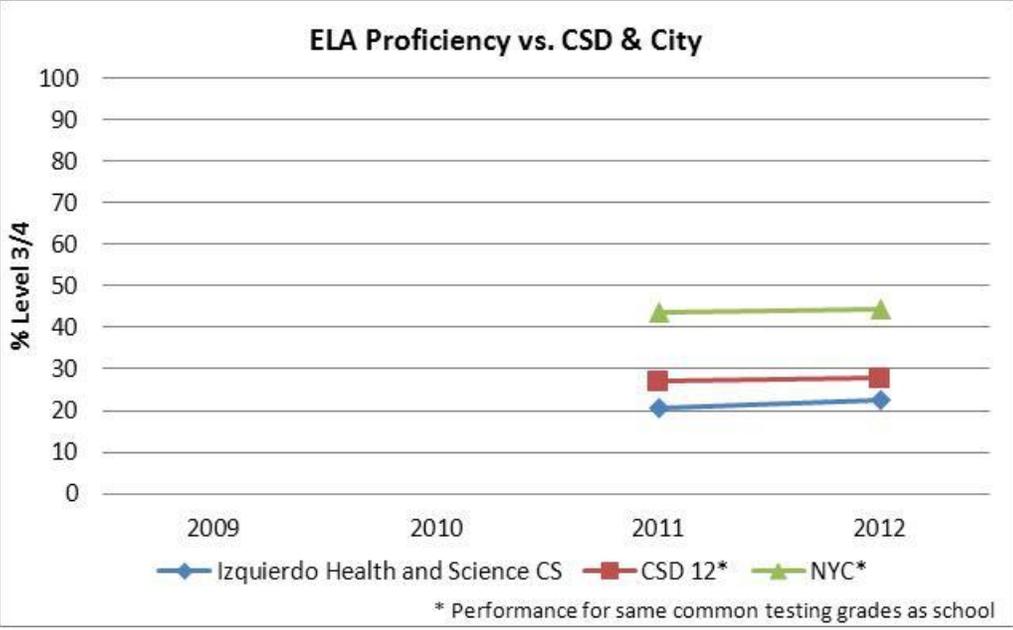
<sup>12</sup> School is co-located with two other schools and has a late lunch period so uses its multi-purpose room to provide a snack earlier in the day, with some health-related whole group instruction included during the period.

<b>Izquierdo Health and Science CS</b>				
<b>Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - Whole School</b>				
<b><u>ELA</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Izquierdo Health and Science CS			20.4	22.5
CSD 12*			27.0	27.9
<b><u>Math</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Izquierdo Health and Science CS			57.0	30.0
CSD 12*			40.8	42.8

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

<b>Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - By Grade</b>				
Grade 6				
<b><u>ELA</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Izquierdo Health and Science CS			20.4	22.8
CSD 12*			27.0	29.1
<b><u>Math</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Izquierdo Health and Science CS			57.0	28.7
CSD 12*			40.8	42.4

Grade 7				
<b><u>ELA</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Izquierdo Health and Science CS				22.2
CSD 12*				26.6
<b><u>Math</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>
Izquierdo Health and Science CS				31.3
CSD 12*				43.2



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

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

The Board of Trustees has a developed governance structure and organizational design.

- The Board has been stable in membership and leadership since school founding, with the founding Board chair stepping down and being replaced by current Board chair, Duarna Oller, during the 2011-12 school year. The founding Board chair remains on the school's Board.
- The Board has 11 voting members and has met in compliance with the school's charter and by-laws, with office positions filled as per their by-laws.
- The Board has monthly meetings and has met once a month from July 2012 to the time of this report and quorum was established in all but the September 12, 2012 meeting, as evidenced by minutes posted on the school's website.<sup>13</sup>
- The school has clear lines of accountability from Board to school leadership to school staff, as evidenced by the school's organization chart and monthly school leadership reports to the Board on academic, financial and operational performance.
- Board committees are active, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Board agenda and minutes are publicly available on the school's website.

Based on document review and interviews during the March 20<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup> visits to the school, the following was noted:

- While the Board has had stability and has clear lines of accountability from school leadership to the Board, school leadership turnover has occurred in each of its three years of operation and raises a concern regarding sustainability and effectiveness of leadership selection and oversight.
- In the spring of 2012, the Board revised the school's charter to adjust its organizational structure at the leadership level, making the school leader position a CEO role with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction (DCI) as the academic leader reporting to the CEO. The stated goal was to allow the DCI to focus 100% on instructional matters by having the CEO responsible for financial and operation matters with both the DCI and Director of Operations reporting to the CEO.
- School leadership and Board are developing resources and systemizing processes for monitoring school and leadership performance, including implementation of ClassMate and developing a school performance "dashboard," administering interim satisfaction surveys for parents and staff, revising the school Employee Handbook, and, in addition to monthly reports, conducting financial spot-checks by the Board finance committee.

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

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

- The school is currently on its third school leader in three years of operations with a new instructional leadership team and new operational leadership as well.
- Staff turnover was 31% of instructional staff not returning, by choice or request, from the end of 2011-12 to the start of 2012-13, and an additional 16 instructional staff leaving or being asked to leave between the start of the school year and February 2013.<sup>14</sup>
- Student turnover was over 25% in 2012-13 with over 25% of students enrolled at the start of the school year (69 of 258) leaving the school between the start of the year and February 2013<sup>15</sup> with the school currently under its targeted enrollment.
- As per the school's ACR Data Collection Form, current year average daily student attendance is 92.35% as of February 2013.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://healthscienceschool.org/>

<sup>14</sup> ACR Data Collection Form, 2/20/13

<sup>15</sup> ACR Data Collection Form, 2/20/13

- NYC DOE School Survey Results were at Average for Safety & Respect for a NYC Middle School and Below Average for Academic Expectations, Communication and Engagement on the 2011-2012 School Survey. Participation on the School Survey was above citywide averages for Parents (76% to 53%) and Students (95% to 82%) but below citywide averages for Teachers (56% to 82%).<sup>16</sup>

Based on document review and interviews during the March 20 and April 3 visits to the school, the following was noted:

- CSAS representative conducted 1:1 interviews with seven CSAS-identified teachers, including a range of recent hires and Izquierdo veterans.
  - All interviewed teachers expressed support for the school's direction and spoke positively about support received from administration, particularly from (Director of Curriculum and Instruction) DCI, department chairs and peers.
  - All interviewed teachers expressed a desire to return to the school in 2013-14.
  - Teachers have received 1-2 formal observations from department chairs and a varying number of informal observations by chairs, peers, DCI.
- Staff attendance is at 95% for the school year to date.
- Because of turnover among teachers, the school continues to have a high number of new teachers and teachers (8 teachers are first or second year teachers) new to the school (13 teachers are in their first year at the school with only 4 teachers remaining from the 2011-12 school year).
- The school administered interim satisfaction surveys to parents and staff in the winter of 2013 showed a mix of responses with more respondents seeing the school as "better" (43.9%), but a significant minority (22%) describing the school as "not as good." The school's "loyalty" rating was 81.4% of respondents expressing a likelihood of re-enrolling their child in the school.
- The Board is reviewing interim survey results, which had just been received at the end of March, and expecting a report with recommendations from school leadership.
- Resignations and withdrawals resulted in the Parent Association being without officers for several months. At the time of the visit, new officers had been elected.

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<sup>16</sup> NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

## Financial Health

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

- The school received a clean audit with no material findings on its most recent audited financial statements.
- The school is in a strong position to meet all of its liabilities over next 12 months.
- The school is in a position to cover all its future expenses without an infusion of cash.
- The school is currently meeting its debt obligations.
- The school has a good debt-to-asset ratio and is currently operating within its means.
- The school has a strong cash flow, which has trended upward.
- The school is operating on a surplus of 25% based on savings from previous two years. However, this could be undermined by continued under-enrollment.
- The school's under-enrollment is concerning but Board and school leadership made responsive adjustments to budget in October to account for below-plan revenue.

Based on interviews during the March 20<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup> visits to the school, the following was noted:

- In the coming year, the school leadership intends to backfill in all current grades in order to reach original enrollment targets as specified in their charter.
- It also intends to renew its community outreach to leverage anticipated improved academic results and a more stable school culture.

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

To date, the school is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

- The Board is in compliance with:
  - Board size is compliant with charter law and by-laws and has met the requisite number of meetings.
  - Board members have submitted required conflict of interest and financial disclosures forms.
  
- The school is in compliance with:
  - School has provided timely submissions of accountability reporting, including its annual report and financial audits.
  - 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 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.
  
- The school is out of compliance with:
  - School's enrollment is currently below its authorized charter projection.
  - At the time of the visits, the school had only one staff member with AED/CPR certification, though two others had been identified for training that would result in certification within the next couple of weeks.

Based on document review and interviews during the March 20<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup> visits to the school, the following was noted:

- The Parent Association was without officers and did not meet as regularly as intended for several months due to officer resignation and family withdrawals from the school. Elections, however, as noted above, were held and new officers elected prior to the March visit.
- The school's Employee Handbook is in process of revision.

## **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:

- The school continues to plan to grow to high school grades, an expansion that will begin during the current charter term, with the adding of 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2013-14. Full school growth to 6-12 would not be completed until the second charter term, should the school's application for renewal and continued expansion be approved.
- The school intends to further develop its health and science focus, by launching a Career and Technical Education program, pending required program approvals. The program is intended to begin for students in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- The school added a Board member with high school expertise to work with school leadership on high school program development.
- Given the leadership and staff turnover over the course of the school's first three years, questions of sustainability and capacity remain open.

## 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 school

- Have a formal or informal character education, social development, or citizenship program that provides opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens

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

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

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

### 2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

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

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

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

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

### 2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

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

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

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

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

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have:

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

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

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

#### 3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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