Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
2013-2014

NEW HEIGHTS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT

2013 – 2014 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: School Overview

School Information for the 2013-2014 School Year

Name of Charter School	New Heights Academy Charter School
Board Chair(s)	Gail Grossmann
School Leader(s)	Robert Parkes (5-8), Chris Barfield (9-12), Christina Brown (ED)
Management Company (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 6
Physical Address(es)	1818 Amsterdam Avenue, New York 10031
Facility Owner(s)	Private

School Profile

- New Heights Academy Charter School (New Heights) is a middle and high school which served 745 students[1] in grades 5-12 during the 2013-2014 school year and is fully at scale. It opened in 2006-2007 and is under the terms of its second charter.
- The school is located in a privately-operated facility in Manhattan within Community School District (CSD) 6.[2]
- New Heights enrolls new students in grade 5 but backfills available seats in grades 6-12. There were 734 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2013 lottery.[3] The average attendance rate for the 2013-2014 school year to date as reported in February 2014 was 95.4%.[4]
- New Heights was renewed during the 2009-2010 school year for a full term (five years), and is consistent with the terms of its renewal application.
- The school leadership includes Christina Brown, Executive Director; Chris Barfield, High School Director; Robert Parkes, Middle School Director; Kimberly Cordova, Student Support Services Director; Domenick Recine, Facilities Director; and Karen Tyree, Finance & Operations Director. The Executive Director has been with the school since July 2013.
- The school reports that it has no current plans to expand or replicate.
- New Heights had a student to teacher ratio of 25:1 in the 2013-2014 school year and served four sections across all grades, with an average class size of 25.[5]
- The lottery preferences for the New Heights 2013-2014 school year included the New York State Charter Schools Act required preferences of returning students, students residing in the community school district of the school's location, and siblings of students already enrolled in the charter school.

[1] Enrollment reflects ATS data from 10/31/13.
[2] NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Management System database.
[3] Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.
[4] Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.
[5] Self-reported information given on 9/22/14.

Part 2: Summary of Findings

Essential Question 1: Is the school an academic success?

Overview of School-Specific Data through 2012-2013

ES/MS Students scoring at or above Level 3 on the NYS assessment, compared to CSD, NYC, and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**
New Heights Academy Charter School	20.9%	20.8%	25.4%	10.2%
CSD 6	27.7%	27.4%	31.1%	13.5%
Difference from CSD 6	-6.8	-6.6	-5.7	-3.3
NYC	40.5%	41.0%	45.0%	25.7%
Difference from NYC	-19.6	-20.2	-19.6	-15.5
New York State	53.2%	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%
Difference from New York State	-32.3	-32.0	-29.7	-20.9

% Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**
New Heights Academy Charter School	41.9%	62.0%	61.3%	18.1%
CSD 6	43.1%	47.8%	50.6%	15.0%
Difference from CSD 6	-1.2	14.2	10.7	3.1
NYC	52.8%	56.7%	59.3%	27.3%
Difference from NYC	-10.9	5.3	2.0	-9.2
New York State	61.0%	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%
Difference from New York State	-19.1	-1.3	-3.5	-13.0

* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself served.

HS Performance Compared to Peer and NYC Averages

4-year Graduation Rate				
	2009-2010	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**
New Heights Academy Charter School	77.4%	80.5%	70.7%	78.7%
NYC	65.1%	65.5%	64.7%	66.0%
Difference from NYC	12.3	15.0	6.0	12.7
6-year Graduation Rate				
	2009-2010	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**
New Heights Academy Charter School	-	-	87.1%	87.4%
NYC	69.2%	70.9%	73.2%	73.0%
Difference from NYC	-	-	13.9	14.4
College Readiness Index* - 4 years				
	2009-2010	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**
New Heights Academy Charter School	-	-	21.2%	12.0%
Peer Percent of Range	-	-	60.2%	35.5%
City Percent of Range	-	-	48.8%	25.8%

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 or city.

* The College Readiness Index score was not introduced until the 2011-2012 school year.

Credit Accumulation

% 1st-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits				
	2009-2010	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**
New Heights Academy Charter School	94.2%	90.7%	70.7%	88.8%
Peer Percent of Range	87.6%	84.7%	35.3%	71.9%
City Percent of Range	89.8%	82.9%	41.3%	75.3%
% 2nd-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits				
	2009-2010	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**
New Heights Academy Charter School	87.6%	87.2%	92.8%	81.4%
Peer Percent of Range	81.6%	84.4%	88.9%	63.2%
City Percent of Range	79.1%	78.2%	86.7%	64.2%
% 3rd-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits				
	2009-2010	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**
New Heights Academy Charter School	46.7%	83.3%	92.9%	81.5%
Peer Percent of Range	-14.6%**	83.2%	100.0%	67.8%
City Percent of Range	8.9%	73.4%	88.2%	66.3%

* 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 or city.

** In 2009-2010 the DOE reported "Peer Horizon Scores." The Peer Horizon Score was based on the school's performance relative to the performance of all peer group schools and was not constrained to a 0%-100% range. In 2009-2010 New Heights Academy Charter School's 3rd year credit accumulation rate was lower than that of all its peer group schools, resulting in a negative Peer Horizon Score.

Performance on the NYC Progress Report – Middle School Grades

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade	C	B	B	B
Student Progress	D	B	C	B
Student Performance	D	C	B	C
School Environment	A	B	B	B
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	-	6.0	3.2	4.0

Performance on the NYC Progress Report – High School Grades

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade	A	A	A	A
Student Progress	B	A	A	A
Student Performance	A	A	A	B
School Environment	A	B	B	B
College and Career Readiness*	-	-	D	C
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	-	-	6.0	0.1

* The College and Career Readiness grade was not introduced until the 2011-2012 school year.

Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals

- According to its 2012-2013 Annual Report to New York State Education Department (NYSED), New Heights fully met one of the 12 applicable academic performance goals identified in its charter, did not meet eight of these goals, and did not have enough data available to report on three of these goals.

Responsive Education Program & Learning Environment[6]

- New Heights implemented an action plan in 2013-2014 for its middle school that included three goal areas: student achievement/academic rigor, teacher growth/professional support, and student culture/attitude of learning.
- Starting in 2013-2014, New Heights purchased Pearson's CMP3 Math curriculum and Scholastic's Code X ELA and Writing Traits for use in its middle school grades. Both programs are Common Core-aligned.
- The school brought in consultants to deliver PD regarding close reading, Kagan strategies and Common Core implementation for instructional staff in its middle school grades.
- The school reports exercising more flexibility in its high school course offerings to ensure that students who may need longer than one year to complete a course receive more time to do so.
- The school reports that it has increased use of informational texts within all disciplines and across both middle school and high school grades.
- New Heights' high school students are now required to complete a fourth year of math or science, with many taking both classes and/or a third year of a language (Italian or Japanese).
- New Heights implemented a Response to Intervention (RtI) program throughout all grades in the 2013-2014 school year to support all students through tiered interventions.
- New Heights implemented an English as a Second Language (ESL) class in 2013-2014 to support English Language Learner (ELL) students with literacy-focused interventions. ELLs receive intervention in the form of a language enrichment class focusing on the acquisition of the English language through speech, listening, reading, and writing.

[6] Self-reported information from school-submitted self-evaluation form on 2/14/14.

- New Heights began using the data analysis system eDoctrina to help teachers administer assessments and analyze that data to inform instruction.
- The school's Learning Strategists (Special Education Teachers) now support CTT students only in their Math and ELA classes, helping these classes transition toward more of a co-teaching model.
- New Heights continues to offer afterschool ELA and Math tutoring provided by ELA, Math and special education teachers for students who did not earn a proficient score on their ELA and Math exams.
- The school added a Spanish class in 2013-2014 for grades 5-8 to support Spanish-speaking students who cannot read or write in the language.
- The school's high school schedule now includes an intervention period as a direct support for students who either failed or barely passed Regents exams as well as a proactive approach to help first-time takers prepare for upcoming Regents Exams.

Essential Question 2: Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

After reviewing information and documentation concerning Board turnover, Board minutes, reporting structure, organizational chart, annual accountability reporting documents, Board agendas, and school's website, NYC DOE notes the following:

- The Board has 11 Board members, all voting, with the exception of the Executive Director, who serves on the Board as an ex-officio member. The Board Chair, Gail Grossmann, has been on the board since May 2008.
- As evidenced from Board rosters, one Board member left during 2013-2014 school year and two members were added.
- As recorded in the Board's minutes, there is a clear reporting structure with school leadership providing regular updates on academic and operational performance to the Board and its committees.

School Climate & Community Engagement

After reviewing information and documentation concerning leadership turnover, staff turnover, attendance rate, student turnover, NYC School Survey results and response rates, and PTO meetings, NYC DOE notes the following:

- The school hired a new Executive Director in July 2013. The school also promoted its former High School Dean to High School Director during the 2013-2014 school year after its former Executive Director, who had also been its Acting High School Director, resigned.
- Instructional staff turnover was 41%, with 18 out of 59 instructional staff choosing not to return in the 2013-14 school year from the prior year and six asked not to return. To date as of February 2014, during 2013-14 school year four teachers have either left or been let go.
- As of February 2014, average daily attendance for students during that school year was at 95.4%, which is higher than the school's charter goal of at least 95%.[7]
- Student turnover was 4.1% of students from the prior school year not returning at the start of the 2013-2014 school year, and 7.1% of the students left the school between the start of the school year and February 2014.[8]
- The school reported that it has a parent teacher association, as evidenced on its website.

2012-2013 NYC School Survey Results[9]

Categories	Result		Community	Response Rate	Citywide Rate
Academic Expectations	Below Average		**Parents**	48%	54%
Communication	Below Average		**Teachers**	69%	83%
Engagement	Below Average		**Students**	89%	83%
Safety & Respect	Average				

[7] Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.
[8] Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.
[9] Results are particular to the school type as identified in the 2013 School Survey.

Financial Health

Near-term financial obligations:

- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's current ratio indicated a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school had sufficient unrestricted cash to cover its operating expenses for more than two months without an infusion of cash.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2013-14 budget to the actual enrollment as of the end of the school year revealed that the school had met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY13 financial audit, the school had no debt obligations.

Financial sustainability based on current practices:

- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY13, the school generated an aggregate surplus over the three audited fiscal years, and in FY13 the school operated at a surplus.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's debt-to-asset ratio indicated that the school had more total assets than it had total liabilities.
- Based on the financial audits from FY11 through FY13, the school generated overall positive cash flow from FY11 to FY13, though the school had negative cash flow from FY12 to FY13.

Annual Independent Financial Audit

- An independent audit performed for FY13 showed no material findings.

Essential Question 3: Compliance with charter and all applicable laws and regulations?

After a review of documentation submitted for the NYC DOE annual accountability reporting requirements for the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE finds the following:

Board Compliance
The Board is in compliance with:

- The Board's membership size falls within the range of no fewer than five and no greater than 15 members, as outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws.
- The Board has held the required number of Board meetings of six, as outlined in its bylaws. Based on submitted Board minutes, the Board held 9 meetings in 2013 in which quorum was reached.
- Currently, all officer positions outlined in the Board's bylaws are filled.

School Compliance
The school is in compliance with (as reviewed during May 2014):

- 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 to the NYC DOE.
- The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization.
- The school had an application deadline of April 1, 2014 and lottery date of April 10, 2014 adhering to charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1.
- The school leader was trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.
- The school has posted its 2012-13 NYSED Annual Report and annual audit to its website, as specified in charter law.

Essential Question 4: What are the school's plans for the next charter term?

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

- The school has no plans for expansion or replication at this time.

Enrollment and Retention Targets

As a reminder regarding accountability in the next charter term:

- 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.
- In the 2013-2014 school year, New Heights Academy Charter School served a higher percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced price lunch and a lower percentage of students with disabilities than CSD 6 and citywide averages. The school served a smaller percentage of English Language Learner students than the CSD 6 average, though a larger percentage than the citywide average.

Special Populations

	Free and Reduced Price Lunch					Students with Disabilities					English Language Learners				
	2009 - 2010	2010 - 2011	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014	2009 - 2010	2010 - 2011	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014	2009 - 2010	2010 - 2011	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014
School	92.5%	95.3%	91.1%	95.1%	95.0%	12.8%	13.6%	14.0%	12.5%	10.9%	20.4%	20.8%	20.6%	20.3%	17.8%
CSD 6	80.4%	82.5%	82.9%	82.1%	85.0%	14.0%	13.7%	14.0%	14.7%	15.6%	36.4%	35.8%	34.8%	32.8%	30.9%
NYC	61.7%	64.5%	67.3%	69.3%	72.7%	14.9%	15.0%	15.1%	15.5%	16.4%	14.8%	15.0%	14.6%	14.2%	13.9%

Additional Enrollment Information					
	2009-2010	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**	**2012-2013**	**2013-2014**
Grades Served	5-12	5-12	5-12	5-12	5-12
CSD(s)	6	6	6	6	6

Comparisons to both the CSD(s) and City are made against students in grades K-8, 9-12 or K-12 depending on the grades the school served in each school year. Special population figures are as of October 31 for each given school year, with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.