Department of Education
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ACCOUNTABILITY HANDBOOK
for NYC DOE Chancellor-Authorized Charter Schools

SCHOOL YEAR 2016-17

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Introduction

The Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) is an authorizer currently overseeing 53 charter schools operating across New York City.

The role of the Chancellor as a chartering entity is governed by Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, or the New York State Charter Schools Act of 1998 ("the Act"), and each school's executed contract between the school's board and the NYC DOE (the "charter agreement"). This handbook describes the 2016-17 Accountability Framework for Chancellor-authorized charter schools (the "framework") and the tools through which the NYC DOE measures and evaluates charter school performance annually and upon renewal.

The Act enabled the creation of independent, innovative, and autonomous charter schools. The Act states that a charter may be granted for no more than a five-year period, near the end of which the school can apply to its authorizer for renewal of its charter for an additional period of up to five years. The purpose of this renewal period is to hold charter operators accountable to their individual charter goals and for making significant academic progress with their students. The Act establishes a system of charter schools with objectives that include:

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

In addition to this document, schools and their governing boards should refer to the goals and standards established in their charter, charter agreement, the framework, and other New York State Education Department (NYSED) and NYC DOE-issued memoranda. If a school has been issued a Notice of Concern, Notice of Deficiency, or Notice of Probation by the NYC DOE, the school should follow the guidelines and requirements set forth in that notice in order to reach full compliance.

NYC DOE's oversight process described in this handbook will continue to evolve as a result of changes to the Act, amendments to and newly issued state laws, federal laws and NYC DOE Chancellor Regulations, ongoing revisions to the standard charter agreement, and NYC DOE's continuing efforts to ensure rigorous accountability while respecting schools' autonomy.

Accountability Framework

On behalf of the Chancellor, the Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) has developed a framework for Chancellor-authorized charter schools built around three essential questions that address key areas of charter school performance:

1. Is the school an academic success?
2. Is the school effective and well run?
3. Is the school financially viable?

The OSDCP Charter Authorizing Team takes into account a wide variety of factors when evaluating a school. Chancellor-authorized charter schools are expected to meet standards in key areas associated with each essential question, based on reliable and verifiable evidence. The ability to meet the standards outlined in the framework determines the terms for charter renewal or revision, as well as duration of the charter term. Key areas and standards, as well as primary and secondary evidence used to evaluate these standards, are published in this document.

Schools that do not meet certain performance expectations or are out of compliance with their charter agreement may receive additional monitoring and/or be put on notice, which may require a Corrective Action Plan. A variety of circumstances may trigger this additional monitoring, including the outcome of an annual accountability cycle event (concerns regarding a fiscal audit, New York State (NYS) assessment results, operational issues, etc.), or in response to an investigation prompted by a complaint or academic performance concerns related to charter renewal.

What follows is a framework that outlines the three essential questions and specific standards evaluated by the Charter Authorizing Team[1]. The framework also outlines primary and secondary sources of verifiable evidence used to evaluate success for each key area. The framework identifies what the Charter Authorizing Team examines in determining whether a school is successful enough to earn a new charter term, with or without conditions, at the time of charter renewal[2]. The framework should be referenced by boards and school leaders to keep these critical outcomes clearly in focus, reflect on their own progress in pursuit of positive outcomes, and to define the interim measures that will be regularly monitored to ensure positive results for these outcomes each year.

As Chancellor-authorized charter schools use the framework, they should remember that charter schools exist to deliver improved student achievement for the students they serve, particularly at-risk students, so that the schools are high-quality choices for families. This reminder should help a school apply this framework to its own performance analysis, underscoring the commitment to superior academic performance as the most important factor in a school's success, while also recognizing the importance of closing the opportunity gap and offering high-quality learning opportunities for all students.

[1] The NYC DOE reserves the right to analyze all standards by subgroup populations not specifically noted above, including but not limited to cohort, gender, race/ethnicity, poverty, and performance status.
[2] For detail on the renewal process and application, please see Appendix C.

Essential Question 1: Is the school an academic success?	
Key Areas	*Standards*
Comparative Academic Performance	• New York State (NYS) English Language Arts (ELA) exam proficiency rates meet or exceed comparable community school district (CSD), Citywide and DOE-defined comparison group[3] • NYS Math exam proficiency rates exceed comparable CSD, Citywide and DOE-defined comparison group • NYS Science exam proficiency rates exceed comparable CSD, Citywide and DOE-defined comparison group • NYS Regents exam pass rates exceed Citywide rates (including ELA, Math, Science, History, etc.) • Graduation rates[4] exceed Citywide rates
Academic Growth	• NYS ELA exam proficiency rates increase • NYS Math exam proficiency rates increase • NYS Regents exam pass rates increase • Graduation rates increase
Closing the Achievement Gap	• NYS ELA and Math exam proficiency rates for English Language Learners (ELLs) exceed CSD and Citywide rates • NYS ELA and Math exam proficiency rates for Students with Disabilities (SWD) exceed CSD and Citywide rates • NYS ELA and Math exam proficiency rates for students eligible for free and reduced price lunch[5] exceed CSD and Citywide rates • NYS Regents exam pass rates for ELLs exceed Citywide rates • NYS Regents exam pass rates for SWD exceed Citywide rates • NYS Regents exam pass rates for students eligible for free and reduced price lunch exceed Citywide rates • Graduation rates for ELLs exceeds Citywide rates • Graduation rates for SWD exceeds Citywide rates • Graduation rates for students eligible for free and reduced price lunch exceeds Citywide rates
College & Career Readiness (for grades 9-12 only)	• Postsecondary enrollment rates[6] exceed Citywide rates • College & Career Preparatory Course Index exceeds Citywide average • College Readiness Index exceeds Citywide average
Primary Evidence: NYS assessments including Regents, Grades 3-8 ELA and Math, Grades 4 and 8 Science, and New York State Alternative Assessment (NSAA); Graduation rates; Post-secondary enrollment; Charter school academic goals *Secondary Evidence:* NYC DOE School Quality Reports; College and Career Preparatory Course Index (CCPCI); College Readiness Index (CRI), NYS Mean Growth Percentile	

[3] The NYC DOE defines comparison groups; these groups are subject to change (in previous years, these groups have been referred to as "peer groups" and "similar schools"). Please refer to the NYC DOE's school quality resources for a current definition.
[4] The NYC DOE evaluates all applicable graduation rates.
[5] The students eligible for free and reduced priced lunch grouping is inclusive of all students in the economically disadvantaged students grouping used by NYSED.
[6] The NYC DOE evaluates all applicable postsecondary enrollment rates.

Essential Question 2: Is the school effective and well run?	
Key Areas	*Standards*
Supportive Environment	• School program differentiates instruction for SWD and ELLs • School schedule and program offers defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration • School utilizes an interim assessment system • School has a compliant, formal, and posted procedure for parents and staff to express concerns to school leadership, the Board, and the authorizer • Parent, staff, and student responses on the NYC DOE School Survey exceed Citywide averages • Student attendance rate exceeds CSD and Citywide averages • Improved student retention rate over course of charter • Decreased student suspension rate over course of charter
Operational Stability	• School has an operations manual • School meets all DOE deadlines for annual reporting requirements, the Annual NYC DOE Charter School Survey, and renewal application documents • School has documented teacher evaluation procedures and professional development opportunities • School has a formal process for evaluating progress against charter school goals • Board has a formalized governance structure including lines of accountability for the board, school leadership, and all staff • Board has developed a succession plan for board and school leadership • Board has access to legal counsel • Board meetings consistently meet quorum
Compliance (with all applicable laws & regulations)	• School meets NYSED enrollment and retention targets for ELLs, SWD, and students eligible for free and reduced price lunch at the conclusion of charter term • School is in compliance with its charter and its charter agreement • School is in good standing with authorizer • School has discipline policy that is consistent with due process and with state and federal laws and regulations governing the placement of SWD • School has required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections) • School is in compliance with teacher certification requirements proscribed in N.Y. Educ. Law § 2854(3)(a-1) • School is in compliance with employee fingerprinting requirements • School has an appropriate safety plan • School has appropriate insurance documentation • School is meeting Department of Health immunization requirements • School has submitted its Annual Report to NYSED and posted it online • School has followed all applicable lottery and enrollment regulations • Board held the required number of meetings • School and board follows posting and procedural requirements of NYS Open Meetings Law and Freedom of Information Laws (FOIL)
Primary Evidence: NYC DOE School Survey; Attendance data (ATS); Retention data (ATS); Student discipline data; Received complaints and other feedback; board by-laws and meeting minutes; School leadership, board, and staff interviews; Operational policies and procedures; School records pertaining to health, safety, and civil rights; Charter and charter agreement; NYSED BEDS data; NYSED TEACH system data *Secondary Evidence:* Student/Family and Staff Handbooks; Parents Association meeting calendar and minutes; School visit observations; Operational organizational chart; Professional development plans and resources; Other school records	

Essential Question 3: Is the school financially viable?	
Key Areas:	*Standards*
Short-term Financial Viability	• Cash position – school has at least 60 days of cash on hand to cover operating expenses • Liabilities – school has sufficient cash flow to cover 100% of liabilities expected over the next 12 months • Projected revenues – actual enrollment should be within 15% of projected (budgeted) enrollment • Debt management – school is meeting all current debt obligations
Long-term Financial Sustainability	• Total margin – school operated at a surplus during the previous fiscal year (more total revenues than expenses) • Aggregated three-year total margin – school operates at a surplus over three-year period • Debt to assets ratio less than 1.0 • Aggregate assets to liabilities ratio greater than 1.0 • One-year cash flow – positive cash flow over previous two fiscal years (change in cash balance is positive) • Multi-year cash flow – positive cash flow over previous three fiscal years
Primary Evidence: Audited financial statements; Projected budgets *Secondary Evidence:* Quarterly financial statements; Escrow accounts and other fiscal reporting documents	

Accountability Cycle and Required Reporting

The Charter Authorizing Team supports and monitors Chancellor-authorized schools via an annual cycle of accountability, supported by the school's submission of required documentation as detailed in the 2016-17 Calendar of Reporting Requirements.

- Annual Report: All charter schools, including Chancellor-authorized charter schools, submit an Annual Report of their students' academic performance outcomes and their progress toward the goals of their charter to NYSED.
- Annual Audit: All charter schools, including Chancellor-authorized charter schools, are required to engage in an independent financial audit annually and submit to NYSED.
- Annual Comprehensive Review: Chancellor-authorized charter schools undergo an Annual Comprehensive Review (ACR), which may involve a school visit.
- Renewal Report: If a school is up for renewal it will be subject to the full renewal process including a visit during the school year in which the renewal is considered.
- Monitoring Visits: All Chancellor-authorized charter schools are subject to monitoring visits by the NYC DOE.
- Board Meetings: The Charter Authorizing Team may attend regularly scheduled meetings with a school's board of trustees or request an interview with board members during the year.

All templates used for reporting requirements are available on the NYC DOE's website.

Required Public Postings

Section 104 of the Open Meetings Law, excerpted below, requires public bodies (including charter schools) to give notice of all public meetings (including board meetings) to news media by conspicuously posting in one or more designated public locations and by posting on the school's website. Additionally, Section 103 of the Open Meetings Law requires that all documents subject to Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), as per Article 6 of the Public Officers law, be discussed during a board meeting, or any other public meeting, and be made available upon request prior to or at the meeting. This means that many documents that could be discussed in a board meeting including, but not limited to, agendas, meeting minutes, financial statements, school policies, etc. must be made available. Please note that the opinion of the Committee on Open Government is that "Optimally, the record will be made available online; if that cannot be done, the record can be made available in paper form in response to a request."

> **§ 104**
> 1. Public notice of the time and place of a meeting scheduled at least one week prior thereto shall be given to the news media and shall be conspicuously posted in one or more designated public locations at least seventy-two hours before such meeting.
> 2. Public notice of the time and place of every other meeting shall be given, to the extent practicable, to the news media and shall be conspicuously posted in one or more designated public locations at a reasonable time prior thereto.
> 3. The public notice provided for by this section shall not be construed to require publication as a legal notice.
> 4. If videoconferencing is used to conduct a meeting, the public notice for the meeting shall inform the public that videoconferencing will be used, identify the locations for the meeting, and state that the public has the right to attend the meeting at any of the locations.
> 5. When a public body has the ability to do so, notice of the time and place of a meeting given in accordance with subdivision one or two of this section, shall also be conspicuously posted on the public body's internet website.

In addition, New York State statute requires that the school's Annual Report to NYSED (with board member personal contact information redacted) and audited financial statements be posted and regularly updated as applicable on the school's website.

Required Public Hearings

For Chancellor-authorized charter schools, public hearings are required for any charter proposal that may result in a charter revision or renewal. When a hearing is required, NYC DOE staff will contact the school to schedule a public hearing.

The hearing must be held in the CSD where the school is located. Public notice should be distributed at least two weeks before the hearing is conducted. The NYC DOE will create the hearing notice; distribute the notice to the NYC DOE Offices of Communications, Public Affairs, Family and Community Engagement, and Community Education Councils; post the hearing notice on the NYC DOE website; and facilitate the hearing, including materials. The school is responsible for:

- Confirming the hearing date, time, and location with the NYC DOE (the NYC DOE will secure an extended use permit if the hearing is located within a NYC DOE school building);
- Securing translation services (as needed), translating the notice, and providing the translation to the NYC DOE;
- Informing school staff of the hearing;
- Posting the hearing notice in the school and on the school website;
- Backpacking the hearing notice; and
- Providing a school representative for the hearing.

Charter Revisions

Charter schools seeking to make changes to the programs, policies, and procedures outlined in their charters are required to request a charter revision from their authorizer and to receive approval before those changes may be implemented at the school. These revisions may be material or non-material in nature. More information and guidance on differentiating between a material and non-material revision, and the process for submitting each, is below.

Material Revisions

Some changes to a charter are considered material revisions. For Chancellor-authorized charter schools, these changes require initial approval from the Charter Authorizing Team, as well as subsequent approval from the Board of Regents through a vote at one of its monthly meetings. Additionally, material charter revisions must be put before the school's community through a public hearing to collect comments regarding the proposed change(s). Material revisions include, but are not limited to:

- Revisions which fundamentally alter a school's mission, vision or educational philosophy, including changes to lottery preferences;
- Changes in the school design and/or educational program that are inconsistent with those in approved charter;
- Significant changes in the organizational or leadership structure of the school;
- Contracting with or discontinuing a contract with a management company;
- Increases or decreases in the maximum approved enrollment (enrollment is capped at the maximum or total projected enrollment as in the renewal application);
- Changes to the school's grade configuration or grades served (adding or removing grades);
- Relocation of the school to a different school district (in NYC, this is a change in CSD); and/or
- Changing the name of the school.

Non-material Revisions

Changes to a charter that do not fundamentally alter the school's mission, organizational structure, or educational program are considered non-material revisions. For Chancellor-authorized charter schools, these changes must still be submitted to the Charter Authorizing Team for initial approval and then

submitted to the Board of Regents for consideration and final approval. Non-material changes do not necessitate a public hearing to solicit comment from the school community. Non-material changes include, but are not limited to:

- Corrections or clarifications involving the school's mission, vision statement, or other sections of the charter that do not fundamentally alter a school's mission, vision or educational philosophy and are consistent with the approved charter;
- Minor corrections/clarifications to the school's organizational structure or charter;
- Changes in the school's by-laws, code of conduct, discipline policy, personnel policy, complaint policy, student/family handbook, or teacher/staff handbook;
- Changes in the school's admissions policy or enrollment process; and/or
- Changes in the school's schedule (length of school year, school week, or school day).

Revision Request Timeline

Schools must submit material charter revisions to the Charter Authorizing Team no later than November 2, 2016 for implementation in the next school year in order to allow for timely submission to the Board of Regents, review of the revision request and scheduling and conducting the public hearing. Material charter revisions will be submitted by the Charter Authorizing Team to the Board of Regents by December 15 of the academic year prior to when the proposed change is intended to be implemented.

Non-material charter revision requests can be made at any time throughout the calendar year.

Revision Request Process

Many charter revision requests straddle the line between material and non-material. Because of this, schools that are considering making a material or non-material revision to their charter should begin by contacting their Charter Authorizing Team point of contact to confirm the nature of the revision. Once a material vs. non-material revision determination is made, and the revision is approved by a school's board of trustees, charter revisions follow a clear process:

1. The school's board submits the board-approved charter revision request to the Charter Authorizing Team with the following components:
    a. A cover letter including the following information:
        i. School name and address;
        ii. Contact person's name, position, telephone number, and email;
        iii. If different, name and position of the person submitting the revision;
        iv. Date/year the school's charter was initially issued;
        v. Date(s)/year(s) of school's renewal(s); and
        vi. Description of the change(s) being requested (how it differs from the current charter) and rationale for the change.
    b. Written statement of acknowledgement signed by the board chairperson (if the submitter is not the board chairperson) indicating that the board of trustees has authorized the individual to submit the proposed revision on behalf of the board.
    c. Board minutes that record the approval of the resolution for the revision.
    d. Revised pages of the current charter, which show how all affected sections of the current charter will change. Use ~~strikethroughs~~ for deleted text. Use **bold** or *italics* for added text. Please submit actual revised pages, not a summation of revised text.
2. (For material revisions only) The NYC DOE conducts a public hearing in collaboration with the school.
3. The Charter Authorizing Team approves or denies the revision request. Notification is sent to the school's board chairperson and the school's leader.
4. If a material request is approved, the NYC DOE sends its approval to the Board of Regents for consideration and final approval. NYSED will notify the NYC DOE about approval of a material charter revision.
5. Acknowledgement of the revision is signed by both the school and the NYC DOE and kept on file.

Other Change Notifications

There are several changes that do not constitute charter revisions, including changes to instructional approach, governance policies, leadership or board composition, and fiscal status, which require Chancellor-authorized charter schools to notify the Charter Authorizing Team within a strict timeline:

Change Type	**Notification Timeline**
Change of facility	60 days prior to occurrence
Significant change in the school's curriculum or instructional approach	30 days prior to occurrence
Change in the school's by-laws	30 days prior to occurrence
Change in the school's code of ethics	30 days prior to occurrence
Change in management agreement	30 days prior to occurrence
Addition to or removal of members of the board of trustees	Within 5 business days of occurrence
Hiring or dismissal of the director/principal of the school	Within 5 business days of occurrence
Execution of contracts or incurring of debt in excess of $50,000	Within 5 business days of occurrence
Receipt of a summons and/or complaint in which either the school or any member of the board of trustees (acting in his or her capacity as a member of the board of trustees) is named a party to the action or matter	Within 5 business days of occurrence

Monitoring Visits

The Charter Authorizing Team has developed a comprehensive monitoring plan for ongoing oversight of schools and to provide feedback on their progress toward meeting goals and standards, and thus, on their progress toward renewal. This section contains information and protocol for each type of visit and the potential outcomes of the visits.

Visit Type	Timing	Duration	Additional Notes
Annual Comprehensive Review (ACR) Visit[7]	Any (may occur in addition to or in place of a pop-in visit; typically does not occur during a renewal year)	0.5-1 day with potential for follow-up	All Chancellor-authorized charter schools are eligible for this visit.
Renewal Visit[8]	During school year of charter expiration date	2-3 days	All schools that are up for renewal receive an evaluative visit from the Charter Authorizing Team and/or NYC DOE staff.
Superintendent Visit[9]	By invitation of the school, any year except renewal year	1-3 hours	All Chancellor-authorized charter schools may invite their Community School District or High School Superintendent (or a deputy) to visit, observe, and share insights.
Pop-In Visits	Any (may occur in addition to or in place of an ACR Visit)	1-3 hours	The Charter Authorizing Team and/or NYC DOE staff reserves the right to "pop-in" visit any school over the course of the year (this includes visits to regularly scheduled board meetings). These visits may be "social" pop-ins or "oversight" pop-ins.

[7] For detail on Annual Comprehensive Review visits, please see Appendix B.
[8] For detail on renewal visits, please see Appendix C.
[9] Superintendent visits are by school invitation only and are not used for accountability purposes by the Charter Authorizing Team.

Pop-In Visit Protocol

The Charter Authorizing Team reserves the right to conduct multiple types of pop-in visits over the course of the school year. These may include social pop-ins (including visits to NYC charter schools that are not authorized by the NYC DOE), oversight pop-ins to Chancellor-authorized charter schools, or additional visits to follow up on parent complaints, probationary status, or other areas of concern. Wherever possible, school leaders will be informed of visit times in advance.

Pop-In Visit Type	Pop-In Visit Protocol
Social Pop-Ins	For NYC charter schools not authorized by the NYC DOE, social pop-ins are opportunities for the Charter Authorizing Team to check in with school leaders regarding operational support and co-location or facility issues and to learn more about educational programming for NYC public school students. For Chancellor-authorized charter schools, these visits are opportunities for the Charter Authorizing Team and school leadership to discuss successes and challenges for the school, to preliminarily observe the school's educational environment and academics, and for school leadership to share the school's plans. The Charter Authorizing Team will not request any pre-visit documentation before social pop-ins, and generally will not follow up with any formal or informal communication.
Oversight Pop-Ins	Oversight pop-in visits generally consist of a meeting with school leadership, short classroom observations with an instructional leader, and conclude with a brief summary conversation. Questions for the pop-in visit will be framed around the framework and may include questions about other documentation that the school has submitted to the Charter Authorizing Team. The Charter Authorizing Team may request input from a school regarding "black-out dates," during which the school will be unable to host a visit due to testing, field trips, or absence of school leaders. Except in exceptional circumstances or when following up with a school on probation, a formal report will not be generated in response to these visits.

Notices and Revocation

Chancellor-authorized charter schools may be placed on notice of official concern based on the outcomes of routine oversight activities including school visits or other data points (e.g., documentation, audits, complaints, and investigations). Reasons may be related to the school's academic performance, compliance with its charter and applicable laws, and/or fiscal and operational viability. The status of oversight will be posted publicly and the associated notices may also be made publicly available.

The table below outlines notices that the Charter Authorizing Team may issue to schools and the possible outcomes of each type of notice. The NYC DOE reserves the right to place schools on any notice type at any time. The NYC DOE also reserves the right to determine what steps schools need to take in order to resolve the identified issue.

Notice Type	Possible Reasons	Possible Outcomes
Notice of Concern	Evidence of weak academic performance or lack of appropriate fiscal or operational oversight	Letter to the board and school leader detailing areas of concern and expected action(s)
Notice of Deficiency	Failure to meet performance targets; Failure to meet enrollment and retention targets at the end of charter term; Failure to comply with applicable laws; Failure to comply with conditions of the charter	Letter to the board chair and school leader detailing areas of deficiency (the NYC DOE may require a response letter outlining steps and timeline for expected actions for correcting identified deficiencies)
Notice of Probation	Serious violation of the law; Material and substantial violation of the charter, including fiscal mismanagement; Academic performance has violated or risks violating the standards set forth in section N.Y. Educ. Law § 2855(1)	Letter to the board and school leader to serve as notification of probationary status and terms of probation; Creation of a Remedial Action Plan (RAP), as per Article 56 (with specific improvement objectives and timelines); board and school leader to monitor and report on progress of RAP objectives
Notice of Extended Probation	Failure to fully meet the terms outlined in the primary probation notice and/or RAP; Extra time frame needed to evaluate the effect of changes made	Letter to the board and school leader to serve as notification of extended probationary status and terms of extended probation; the NYC DOE reviews and modifies RAP when necessary
Notice of Intent to Revoke	Serious violation of the law; Material and substantial violation of the charter, including fiscal mismanagement; Academic performance has violated or risks violating the standards set forth in section N.Y. Educ. Law §2855(1); Finding by the NYC DOE that probationary status would not be the appropriate intervention for the school; Violation of the terms and conditions of probation or RAP	Notice stating reasons for proposed revocation to board and school leader at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the proposed revocation; Opportunity for the school to be heard in response to the notice and at least 30 days to correct the problems associated with the proposed revocation
Notice of Revocation	NYC DOE recommendation to the Chancellor to revoke based on information in Notice of Intent to Revoke, any response from the charter school, and information regarding school's action plan to correct	Chancellor's decision to revoke charter; Letter stating reasons for revocation to board and school leader

Statutory Basis for Revocation

The New York State Charter Schools Act ("the Act") states the following regarding the revocation of a school's charter:

> **§ 2855(1) Causes for revocation or termination**
> 1. The charter entity, or the board of regents, may terminate a charter upon any of the following grounds:
>
> (a) When a charter school's outcome on student assessment measures adopted by the board of regents falls below the level that would allow the commissioner to revoke the registration of another public school, and student achievement on such measures has not shown improvement over the preceding three school years;
> (b) Serious violations of law;
> (c) Material and substantial violation of the charter, including fiscal mismanagement; or
> (d) When the public employment relations board makes a determination that the charter school demonstrates a practice and pattern of egregious and intentional violations of subdivision one of section two hundred nine-a of the civil service law involving interference with or discrimination against employee rights under article fourteen of the civil service law; or
> (e) Repeated failure to comply with the requirement to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program pursuant to targets established by the board of regents or the board of trustees of the state university of New York, as applicable. Provided, however, if no grounds for terminating a charter are established pursuant to this section other than pursuant to this paragraph, and the charter school demonstrates that it has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students, including outreach to parents and families in the surrounding communities, widely publicizing the lottery for such school, and efforts to academically support such students in such charter school, then the charter entity or board of regents may retain such charter.

Conclusion

The Act granted charter schools more autonomy than traditional public schools over their instructional and operational programs in exchange for increased accountability. The Charter Authorizing Team is dedicated to respecting charters' autonomy while simultaneously holding Chancellor-authorized charter schools to meet the high standards defined in charter law and outlined in school charters.

Chancellor-authorized charter schools should commit to meeting the purposes of the Act, including improving student learning and achievement, increasing learning opportunities for all students (especially those students at risk of academic failure), encouraging the use of different and innovative teaching methods, creating new professional opportunities, providing parents and students with expanded choice, and developing a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding themselves accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results. The Charter Authorizing Team takes these responsibilities seriously. The NYC DOE believes that the renewal process officially begins as soon as a school is granted its charter and that schools should always work to build a strong track record of success by reflecting on past successes and failures and striving to continuously improve. Through a comprehensive monitoring system that includes regular visits and documentation review, the Charter Authorizing Team provides Chancellor-authorized charter schools with feedback to help them stay on the road toward renewal.

Appendix A: Board Member Approval Process

Once a prospective board member has been voted on by a Chancellor-authorized school's board, the school must provide the following four documents to charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov:

1. Prospective board member's resume
2. Board minutes recording the prospective board member's approval vote by the school's board
3. NYC DOE Board of Trustees Questionnaire (use NYC DOE template) completed and signed by the prospective board member
4. NYSED Financial Disclosure Form filled out and hand-signed by the prospective board member

The Charter Authorizing Team will approve or reject the proposed trustee in writing within 45 days of submission (if the NYC DOE takes no action within the 45-day period the person may be seated as a school trustee). Once a board member has been approved, an official approval letter will be sent to the board chair and school leader (and any additional staff members involved in submitting the approval request). Please note that prospective board members may not vote at board meetings until they receive final approval from OSDCP.

Once a board member has been approved, the charter school is required to submit an updated NYC DOE Charter School Board of Trustees Roster (use NYC DOE template), including the new member's contact information.

Appendix B: Annual Comprehensive Review Guide

Each year, the Charter Authorizing Team conducts an ACR of all Chancellor-authorized charter schools other than those up for renewal. The ACR may include a monitoring visit. Schools must submit required ACR self-evaluation documentation no later than February 1, 2017.

Annual Comprehensive Review Documentation

Schools must submit the 2016-17 ACR Self Evaluation and Data Collection Form (use NYC DOE template) to the Charter Authorizing Team, via charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov, by February 1, 2017 (required regardless of whether or not a school will receive a related visit).

Annual Comprehensive Review Visit Protocol

The Charter Authorizing Team may schedule and conduct a one-day visit to schools as part of the ACR process. The purpose of these visits is to assess the quality and performance of the school as measured by the framework through classroom observations, interviews with school leadership, teachers and other staff, students and families, and document review. Additionally, the visit is meant to supplement and verify the information presented in the school's ACR submission and to observe the school's daily practices, implementation, processes, and routines. The Charter Authorizing Team may also attend scheduled board meetings or request interviews with board members. The Charter Authorizing Team may decide to conduct an oversight pop-in rather than a formal ACR visit if the school has recently been visited for renewal and/or if the school demonstrates consistent high levels of performance.

Before the Charter Authorizing Team convenes at the school, the school's point of contact conducts a phone conference with the school leader to review a proposed visit schedule, discuss required documentation, and address any questions about the visit. The school's Charter Authorizing Team point of contact will review expectations with the school leader prior to the visit. The visit schedule is dependent individual school schedules, availability of school staff, and other school-specific variables.

After the ACR visit, OSDCP will issue a report containing the findings of the documentation reviewed, desk audit and school visit, if applicable. In addition, OSDCP may include additional evidence from documentation or observations in the final report. All schools will be given the opportunity to review the report for factual errors and submit requested technical corrections. Once OSDCP has incorporated the appropriate revisions, it will finalize the reports and post these to the DOE official website. These reports will be used as evidence for renewal decision-making.

Visit Documentation

Prior to the visit, school's Charter Authorizing Team point of contact will request an organizational chart, master staff list with titles, and master class schedule to plan for the visit. The Charter Authorizing Team reserves the right to request specific updated or additional documentation as necessary.

The following is a list of possible documentation to be reviewed during the ACR visit. While the team will be looking at various documents, the school should not prepare any additional binders of information specifically for the visit. If the team reviews documents other than those listed, they will do so where the documents reside within the school site, whether online or in print.

- Student performance data
- Attendance, attrition, and waitlist data
- Curricular maps/pacing guides/explanation of academic program(s)
- Lesson plans
- Professional development plans and schedules
- Explanation of internal assessment program and any relevant samples
- Staff evaluation tools and documents

- Program information for special needs students
- ELL program information
- Admission and attendance policies
- Discipline policy
- Faculty meeting minutes
- Staff and/or Student/Family Handbooks
- Recent parent newsletters
- Board minutes
- Audited financial statements
- Current building safety documents

Appendix C: Charter Renewal Guide and Application

In the final year of its charter, a Chancellor-authorized charter school seeking renewal must demonstrate its success during its most recent charter term and establish goals and objectives for its next charter term. The renewal process offers an opportunity for the school to reflect on its experiences during its current term; to make a compelling, evidence-based case that it deserves an additional charter term; and, if renewed, to build an ambitious plan that will positively impact future students. Schools up for renewal must submit a complete renewal application no later than September 30, 2016.

The NYC DOE Chancellor-Authorized Charter School Accountability Framework (framework), developed by the Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP), is aligned with the New York State Charter Schools Act [Ed.L. §§2851(4)] and is used to evaluate a charter school's renewal application. A school must be able to demonstrate, supported by the school's renewal application and other data, that it can satisfy the three essential questions of the framework:

1. Is the school an academic success?
2. Is the school effective and well run?
3. Is the school financially viable?

Schools are asked to present a compelling, evidence-based case that they have, over the course of their charter term, been academically successful, effective and well run, and financially viable. Schools are also asked to detail their plans for the proposed charter term, including ambitious and measurable objectives as well as any requested revisions to the school's original charter application, and responses to any conditions set for the school previously.

The renewal application consists of the following parts: Executive Summary; Application Narrative; Required Attachments; Supporting Documents and Evidence; Revised Charter and Summary of Revisions; Required Exhibits for Revised Charter.

The OSDCP Charter Authorizing Team will review and may respond to a submitted renewal application with clarifying questions and requests for additional information. Each school's Charter Authorizing Team point of contact will work with the school to establish an appropriate timeframe for complying with these requests. If the school's application is incomplete, it will be returned to the school with feedback from the team. In addition to the school's renewal application, the Charter Authorizing Team will conduct a renewal visit at the school. Based on the school's application, the renewal site visit, review of documentation submitted to the NYC DOE and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) during the school's charter term, and previous oversight reports, the Charter Authorizing Team will prepare a draft of its findings to share with the school for factual corrections, and will ultimately submit a renewal recommendation to the Chancellor and the Board of Regents.

Schools are advised to carefully review the instructions and guidelines provided in this document, as well as the amended New York State Charter Schools Act, to prepare a renewal application for submission to Charter Authorizing Team.

Statutory Basis for Renewal

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

> **§ 2851(4)**: Charters may be renewed, upon application, for a term of up to five years in accordance with the provisions of this article for the issuance of such charters pursuant to section twenty-eight hundred fifty two of this article; provided, however, that a renewal application shall include:
>
> (a) A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in the charter.
> (b) A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private. Such statement shall be in a form prescribed by the board of regents.
> (c) Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school required by subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty-seven of this article, including the charter school report cards and the certified financial statements.
> (d) Indications of parent and student satisfaction.
> (e) The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the board of regents or the board of trustees of the state university of New York, as applicable, of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program which shall be considered by the charter entity prior to approving such charter school's application for renewal. When developing such targets, the board of regents and the board of trustees of the state university of New York shall ensure (1) that such enrollment targets are comparable to the enrollment figures of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the charter school is located; and (2) that such retention targets are comparable to the rate of retention of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the proposed charter school would be located.
>
> Such renewal application shall be submitted to the charter entity no later than six months prior to the expiration of the charter; provided, however, that the charter entity may waive such deadline for good cause shown.

Renewal Outcomes

After the NYC DOE's review of the school's renewal application, and completion of the renewal site visit, the Charter Authorizing Team will release a draft report of their findings. The report will align to the framework and may include assessment results, evidence from classroom observations, leadership interviews, NYC DOE School Survey results, public hearings and other community feedback, as well as a variety of other data. Schools will be given the opportunity to correct factual errors in the report. If the Charter Authorizing Team approves the renewal application and the Chancellor recommends renewal for the school, prior to the school's charter expiration date, the Charter Authorizing Team will send the renewal report and recommendation along with the school's renewal application and other supporting evidence to the Board of Regents for its approval. If the Charter Authorizing Team determines that renewal is not warranted, the school will be informed in writing of the reasons for the non-renewal.

The Charter Authorizing Team may recommend three potential outcomes for charter schools applying for renewal: full-term renewal (with or without conditions), short-term renewal (with or without conditions), or non-renewal. More information on each type of renewal is below.

Full-Term Renewal

In cases where a school has clearly and consistently demonstrated high academic performance, a compliant environment that supports the health, safety, and well-being of all students, operational stability, and financial viability, a five-year renewal may be recommended (with or without conditions).

Short Term Renewal

In cases where a school has demonstrated mixed academic results or uncertain organizational or financial viability, a short-term renewal may be recommended (with or without conditions).

Non-Renewal

Renewal is not automatic. In cases where a school has failed to demonstrate significant progress, has low levels of student achievement, is in severe financial distress, or is in violation of its charter, non-renewal may result.

Charter schools that receive non-renewal decisions are provided with due process, including an opportunity to submit a written response and an opportunity to make an oral presentation, whereby these schools may challengel the non-renewal decision.

Renewal Process Timeline

The table below outlines a general sequence of events for charter renewal. It is intended only to show the general structure of the renewal process; a specific timeline will be determined for the renewal process with each individual school.

Renewal Component	Component Description	Timeline
Renewal Application Due	School submits renewal application to charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov	September 30, 2016
Renewal Kickoff Phone Call	The school's Charter Authorizing Team point of contact discusses the renewal process and conducts preliminary school visit	Late September-Early October
NYC DOE Review and Clarification	Charter Authorizing Team members review application and, if necessary, request clarifying information from the school	TBD
Pre-Visit Documentation Due	School submits documentation to prepare Charter Authorizing Team for site visit	TBD
Renewal Site Visit	Charter Authorizing Team visits school and attends board meeting to verify, augment, and synthesize the information presented by the school in its written application	TBD
Public Hearing	Per the New York State Charter Schools Act, a public hearing is held to solicit comment on the possibility of the charter renewal	TBD
Chancellor's Decision/Report of Findings	Based on a recommendation from the Charter Authorizing Team, the Chancellor makes a renewal decision and determines term of the new charter and any conditions	TBD
NYC DOE Submission to NYSED	If the Chancellor recommends renewal, Charter Authorizing Team submits renewal report and charter agreement to NYSED for review	TBD (prior to charter expiration date)
Renewal Decision by Board of Regents	NYSED considers the Chancellor's recommendation for the proposed renewed charter and decides to reject or to recommend the proposed charter to the Board of Regents; the Board of Regents can approve and issue the charter as proposed by the charter entity, return the proposed charter to the charter entity for reconsideration, or may fail to act on the proposed charter within 90 days of its submission.[10] If the charter is approved or if the Board of Regents fails to act, the Board of Regents will issue a charter for the term specified.	TBD (prior to charter expiration date)

Public Hearing

The public hearing is an important part of the renewal process; the Charter Authorizing Team will consider community feedback from the renewal hearing as one piece of evidence in making its renewal recommendation.

[10] Per N.Y. Educ. Law § 2852(5-a) and (5-b), if the Board of Regents fails to act on a proposed charter within 90 days of submission by the charter entity, the proposed charter shall be deemed to have been approved and issued by the Board of Regents at the expiration of such period.

Renewal Visit Protocol

The Charter Authorizing Team schedules and conducts comprehensive visits to schools as part of the process that leads to a renewal determination. The purpose of these visits is to assess the quality and performance of the school in relationship to the framework through classroom observations, interviews with school leadership, teachers and other staff, students and families, and document review. Additionally, the visit is meant to supplement and verify the information presented in the school's renewal application and to observe the school's daily practices, implementation, processes, and routines. The Charter Authorizing Team may also attend scheduled board meetings or request interviews with board members.

The main focus of the renewal visit is to assess the school's success in meeting the standards within Essential Question 1 ("Is the School an Academic Success?") During the visit, the Charter Authorizing Team also conducts an on-site review and discussion of elements related to standards for Essential Questions 2 and 3, especially in the key area of Supportive Environment.

The first day of these visits usually occurs prior to the renewal application deadline and follow up visit(s) occur after the submission of the renewal application. All members of the Charter Authorizing Team visit each school up for renewal by attending at least one day of the visit.

The NYC DOE requires that all school staff and parents be made aware of the renewal process and of the importance of this milestone in the life of a charter school. The NYC DOE sends notification to families explaining the renewal process and inviting them to submit feedback on the proposed renewal of the school. The Charter Authorizing Team may also contact a random selection of parents in order to gauge parents' perspectives on the school.

Before the Charter Authorizing Team convenes at the school, the school's point of contact conducts a phone conference with the school leader to review a proposed visit schedule, discuss required documentation, and address any questions about the visit. The school's Charter Authorizing Team point of contact reviews expectations with the school leader prior to the visit. The visit schedule is dependent upon individual school schedules, availability of school staff, and other school-specific variables. In general, schools should expect the following visit components:

Visit Component	Component Description	Notes
Classroom Observations	The Charter Authorizing Team may review student work, lesson plans, rubrics, and classroom materials during observations. Teachers should continue teaching during classroom observations; Charter Authorizing Team members may speak to and interact with students while they are observing a lesson. Classroom observations are generally 15 minutes in duration and may extend through the conclusion of a task or assessment. The Charter Authorizing Team does not provide feedback to teachers.	A member of the school's instructional leadership team should be available to accompany the Charter Authorizing Team during classroom observations and to debrief observations. The school leader should make teachers aware that the renewal visit is an evaluation of the school, not of individuals or individual teachers' practices.
Leadership Team Interviews	The Charter Authorizing Team may interview members of the school's leadership team, addressing questions about the school's renewal application and submitted documentation, student data as it relates to standards in the framework, previous ACR reports	Schools should include all members of the formal leadership team in the interview, including the school leader.

	and/or renewal reports.	
Teacher and Other Staff Interviews	The Charter Authorizing Team may interview teachers from varying grade levels, subject areas, and ranges of experience or years at the school. The Charter Authorizing Team may also interview other staff including members of the school's operations team, special education coordinator, and/or dean of students.	Teachers should be made available to meet individually with the Charter Authorizing Team.
Parent Interviews	The Charter Authorizing Team may interview parents representing varying grade levels.	If necessary, translators should be made available.
Student Interviews	The Charter Authorizing Team may interview students from varying grade levels and years at the school.	Student interviews should occur during lunch/recess periods or at another time of day that is least disruptive for students.
Debrief Meeting with School Leadership Team	At the conclusion of each day of a school visit, the Charter Authorizing Team may reconvene with members of the school leadership team for a debrief meeting. Debriefs may consist of a summary of observations (including alignment observations to the framework's standards), requests for additional documentation for follow up visits, and/or discussion of next steps in the renewal process.	The school may identify individual members of the school leadership team for debrief meetings.

Renewal Visit Documentation

Prior to the visit, school's Charter Authorizing Team point of contact requests an organizational chart, master staff list with titles, and master class schedule to plan for the visit. The Charter Authorizing Team reserves the right to request specific updated or additional documentation as necessary.

The following is a list of possible documentation to be reviewed during the renewal visit. While the team looks at various documents, the school should not prepare any additional binders of information specifically for the visit. If the team reviews documents other than those listed, they will do so where the documents reside within the school site, whether online or in print.

- Student performance data
- Attendance, attrition, and waitlist data
- Curricular maps/pacing guides/explanation of academic program(s)
- Lesson plans
- Professional development plans and schedules
- Explanation of internal assessment program and any relevant samples
- Staff evaluation tools and documents
- Program information for special needs students
- ELL program information
- Admission and attendance policies
- Discipline policy
- Faculty meeting minutes
- Staff and/or Student/Family Handbooks
- Recent parent newsletters
- Board minutes
- Audited financial statements
- Current building safety documents

Renewal Application

A Chancellor-authorized charter school seeking renewal is responsible for completing and submitting the school's complete renewal application to the Charter Authorizing Team via charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov no later than September 30, 2016.

Required Renewal Application Documents:

To submit a complete renewal application, include the following requirements:

1) Executive Summary (2 pages maximum)
2) Renewal Application Narrative (30 pages maximum, not including required attachments)
3) Revised Charter and Summary of Revisions
    - Required Attachments of Revised Charter to include:
        - Five-Year Operating Budget and Budget Narrative
        - Board Resumes and Questionnaires
        - Board By-Laws
        - Code of Ethics
        - Curriculum and Instructional Model
        - Evaluation Tools for Staff
        - School Calendar
        - Organizational Chart
        - Job Descriptions
        - Family and Staff Handbook
        - Discipline Policy
4) Renewal Data Collection Form
    - Please complete and submit the 2016-17 Renewal Data Collection Form (use NYC DOE template).
    - Please do not password-protect this Excel file or change its format in any way.
5) NYSED Annual Reports
    - Please submit links to, or copies of, each of the annual reports of the charter school from the current charter term including the charter school report cards (NYSED School Report Card) and certified financial statements, as mandated by charter law [N.Y. Educ. Law §§ 2851(4)(a-c)] (the Charter Authorizing Team will accept links to these documents to meet this requirement if they are posted in secure locations online).
6) Indications of Parent and Student Satisfaction
    - Please submit indications of parent and student satisfaction, as mandated by charter law [N.Y. Educ. Law §§ 2851(4)(d)].
    - For relevant years of the NYC DOE School Survey, school should submit links in lieu of copies.
7) Board Meeting Minutes
8) Audit and Management Letter (as soon as it becomes available)
9) Current Year (2015-16) Budget and Statement of Cash Position
    - Schools should include First Quarter (July 1, 2016 – September 30, 2016) Statement of Cash Position, Statement of Activities, Statement of Financial Position, a budget and statement of cash position for the current year.
10) Executive Director/Head of School/Principal Evaluations
11) Staff list with years of experience, subject taught, grade level, certification status and UFT designation (if applicable), as well as documentation of fingerprinting clearance
12) Enrollment & Retention Efforts
13) For schools contracting with an institutional partner
    1) Evaluation Tools for Institutional Partner
    2) Institutional Partnership Agreement
    3) Evidence of Value-Added Achievement (for new or revised partnerships)

Please note: the "Progress Toward Charter Goals" table is no longer required; the Charter Authorizing Team will reference this information from schools' annual reports to NYSED.

Please note:

- All pages must be numbered and single spaced, using at least an 11 point font.
- Responses in the renewal application narrative should be labeled according to the checklist.
- The school may cite data provided by the NYC DOE or NYSED, either directly or via the organizations' websites (all sources must be cited; any data generated by the school should include citations of the sources of that data).
- Attachments should be saved as separate documents from the application and revised charter narrative.
- If exhibits from the original charter are unchanged, they are to be submitted again with the renewal application.

Schools must submit complete renewal applications electronically, including attachments and exhibits as above. Acceptable electronic formats for the narrative, exhibits, and attachments are Word and Excel; PDF may be used for signed letters of support and other documents where scanning of images is necessary. If the application is incomplete or insufficient, it may be returned, thereby prolonging the renewal process. Please note that the charteroversight@schools.nyc.gov inbox cannot accept individual emails from a non-NYC DOE email address that are over 10 MB; files should be condensed into a zip folder.

Schools are encouraged to contact their Charter Authorizing Team point of contact with any questions about the renewal process, clarification regarding the renewal application, accessing or organizing NYC DOE data, or the presentation of any internal data.

Executive Summary

Provide a concise and concrete overview of the renewal application, summarizing the school's mission, educational goals, defining characteristics, and major challenges and successes over the term of the school's charter. While the Executive Summary should reflect the emphasis of the application itself, especially the school's record of improving student achievement, the school should also summarize its progress in each of the three essential questions that comprise the framework. **The Executive Summary must not exceed two pages.**

Narrative

Consistent with the requirements of Section 2851(4) of the New York State Charter Schools Act, a school applying for renewal of its charter must use data and other credible evidence to prove its success, a case that can be segmented into the three questions that comprise the framework. A school answers these overarching questions by demonstrating that its students have made significant academic progress and that the school has met the goals and objectives pledged in its most recent charter term. In addition, at all points appropriate in the narrative, the school will describe challenges it has faced during its charter term, the strategies that were used to address those challenges, and the lessons learned. **The Narrative must not exceed 30 pages.**

Essential Question 1: Is the school an academic success?

The academic success of students is the clearest indicator of a school's efficacy. The Charter Schools Act requires that a school applying for renewal must report academic success based on achievement of the educational objectives set forth in the charter [Ed.L.§2851(4)(a)]. Therefore, this section of the narrative should include an honest and detailed discussion of the school's progress toward meeting its charter goals. If a goal was not met, explain what action the school took to address this goal, the school's explanation of why the goal was not met, and what the school has learned about how to best reach this goal.

The school may wish to include notable evidence of student achievement and progress outside the goals established in the school's charter. Schools are encouraged to present additional evidence of student accomplishments; please include only those accomplishments that would impact the renewal decision. The evidence presented should be meaningful, validly measurable, reliable, and a clear indicator of student achievement as aligned to the framework.

In preparing responses to this question, the school should focus only on past and current successes and challenges. In constructing a response to this section, please address each of the corresponding key areas of the framework:

- Absolute academic performance
- Academic growth
- Closing the achievement gap
- College and career readiness (grades 9-12 only)

Elementary and middle schools should describe their progress toward increasing (or maintaining) proficiency levels while high schools should address their progress in increasing Regents pass rates and graduation rates. All schools should include information about how their curriculum and instructional choices have impacted current levels of proficiency/pass rates. Schools serving students in grades 9 through 12 should describe their progress towards meeting the framework standards for college and career readiness; schools should describe various opportunities provided to students that help prepare them for college and the workforce.

Schools should describe their progress toward supporting all students reaching proficiency/passing Regents exams/graduating. Schools should describe how successful their core curriculum and instructional programs

have proved to be in meeting the needs of all students. Schools should explain how they have met the instructional needs of all learners.

Please rely on evidence from New York State Assessments (such as the NYS exams for grades 3-8 and/or the Regents exams) and charter school academic goals. For high schools, please rely on graduation rates and post-secondary enrollment data. Schools may also choose to include additional academic performance results, where applicable. Schools should also share their progress toward meeting the academic goals delineated in the charter.

Please note that the Charter Authorizing Team places emphasis on schools' capacity for self-reflection and ability to adapt. Be sure to include:

- An explanation of up to three significant academic challenges that the school has faced over the term of its charter and the steps the school has taken to address those challenges.
- An explanation of those academic characteristics which the school considers "best practices" and how they have led to greater student achievement

Essential Question 2: Is the School Effective and Well Run?

Charter schools, apart from being accountable for the educational achievement of their students, are also expected to be effective organizations. Evidence of a well-functioning school includes its students' and staff's performance on non-academic indicators as well as effective board governance and organizational practices. Although not all regulations that apply to district schools apply to charter schools, charter schools are still expected to adhere to all applicable state and federal laws. Schools are also expected to comply fully with the terms of their charter, charter agreements, and any subsequently approved revisions.

In addition, the Charter Schools Act mandates that a school provide evidence of student and parent satisfaction to indicate the school's educational and administrative effectiveness [Ed.L.§2851(4)(d)]. To satisfy this requirement and to enable the Charter Authorizing Team to provide summative and comparative data on satisfaction levels in Chancellor-authorized charter schools, there is an expectation that schools monitor the satisfaction of their students, parents, and staff with, at a minimum, the annual NYC DOE School Survey, and to describe the results in this renewal application. If a school uses additional tools and/or surveys to track satisfaction rates, these may also be included as supplemental information. It is important to recognize that surveys are only reliable inasmuch as they have high response rates, so schools should disclose participation rates along with satisfaction results. The evidence presented should be meaningful, validly measurable, reliable, and a clear indicator of school effectiveness as aligned to the framework.

In preparing responses to this question, the school should focus only on past and current successes and challenges. In constructing a response to this section, please address each of the corresponding key areas of the framework:

- Supportive environment
- Operational stability
- Compliance with all applicable laws and regulations

Schools should articulate how they have created and sustained a supportive environment that is responsive to the needs of students and families, and how this has positively impacted the school's environment. Please be sure to include a description of how the school measures teacher, student, staff, and family satisfaction, what feedback the school has received from these key constituents, and how the school has reacted to this feedback.

The school should share how it has codified operational policies and procedures to ensure smooth functioning. Schools should also detail how the board of trustees has been involved in the life of the school,

how the composition of the board has changed over the charter term, and how this has impacted board governance. Lastly, schools should also discuss their teacher evaluation policies and professional development choices.

The school should also describe the internal controls employed by the school and how the school ensures that it is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

The school's narrative should include references to relevant data submitted in the data attachments with the renewal application. Please include primary evidence, such as results from the NYC DOE School Survey, attendance data, student retention data, student discipline data, complaints and other feedback, board of trustees by-laws and meeting minutes, operational policies and procedures, school records pertaining to health, safety, and civil rights, the school's charter and charter agreement, NYSED BEDS data and NYSED TEACH system data. Secondary evidence includes Student/Family and Staff Handbooks, Parents' Association meeting calendar and minutes, school visit observations, operational organizational chart, school-wide and teacher-specific professional development plans and resources.

Please note that the Charter Authorizing Team places emphasis on schools' capacity for self-reflection and ability to adapt. Be sure to include:

- An explanation of up to three significant challenges related to the school's ability to be effective and/or well run.
- The steps the school has taken to address these issues.
- "Best practices" of the school and how these practices have increased the day-to-day effectiveness of the school.
- Ways in which the school works to meet enrollment and retention targets[11]

Essential Question 3: Is the School Financially Viable?

Charter schools are charged with being responsible stewards of public funds and must employ internal financial controls and fiscal policies to ensure the school runs smoothly. The evidence presented should be meaningful, validly measurable, reliable, and a clear indicator of financial viability as aligned to the framework.

In preparing responses to this question, the school should focus only on past and current successes and challenges. In constructing a response to this section, please address each of the corresponding key areas of the framework:

- Short-term financial viability
- Long-term financial sustainability

Please note that the Charter Authorizing Team places emphasis on schools' capacity for self-reflection and ability to adapt. Be sure to include:

- An explanation of at least one significant challenge related to finance that the school has faced over the term of its charter.
- The steps the school has taken to address this issue.
- An explanation of finance-related "best practices" and how these have helped improve the school.

Plans for the Next Charter Term

Please briefly describe any proposed changes to the academic and/or operational programs of the school, including rationale for changes. Please answer the following questions, which address plans for the next charter term. **This section must not exceed two pages.**

[11] For the New York State Enrollment and Retention Target Policy for Chancellor-Authorized Charter Schools (August 2015), please see Appendix E.

- What are, if any, the school's plans for grade expansion? If so, why?
- Does the school wish to have an enrollment expansion? If so, why?
- Is the school planning to move districts? If so, why?
- Is the school planning to truncate existing grades? If so, why?
- Does the school plan to move to another facility or building? If so, why?
- Are there significant changes to the school's model (i.e., moving from a single-gender school to a co-ed school)? If so, why?
- Does the school plan to make any other changes that would result in a material charter revision? These include, but are not limited to:
    - Changes in the organizational structure
    - Joining or separating from a charter management organization
    - Changes to the school's name

Charter Revision

As part of the renewal application, the Charter Authorizing Team asks schools to submit a revised, updated copy of their charter, including proposed changes for the new charter term. Once any clarifying questions are resolved and the renewal application is approved, schools will submit a final "clean" version of their new charter which will become part of the renewal package that is sent to NYSED.

Additionally, schools are asked to submit a chart summarizing (1) changes made to their charter during the course of the expiring charter term, and (2) proposed changes for the upcoming term. The submitted chart should include page references for each change identified in the submitted chart, as well as rationale for the revisions and the date when each revision was approved (or when the revision is proposed to be implemented). The charter application should reflect past revisions that have been approved by the NYC DOE as well as proposed revisions that the school is making to its instructional or operational programs or to its organizational structure.

Guidelines for Charter Revision

- Please carefully review the charter application that was submitted to the NYC DOE upon initial authorization. Where revisions to the charter have been previously approved, they must be incorporated into the text of the charter. Where there are proposed revisions for the next charter term, be sure to incorporate them into the text of the charter, as appropriate.
- When making a revision to a charter, please update all other sections that may be affected. For example, if a proposed revision affects the school leadership structure, you should review and consider revising the sections on staffing accountability, supervision, evaluation, etc. so that they accurately reflect the proposed new leadership structure.
- In some sections of the original charter, schools were asked to present relevant information as a separate exhibit. Please continue to provide updated versions of these exhibits; do not include this information in the narrative of the application.
    - All exhibits should be updated, as applicable. If there are documents that have not changed since the original charter and do not require any updates, please re-submit the original versions. If the application is approved, these exhibits will be incorporated into the renewal charter.
    - All exhibits described as "proposed" in the original charter, such as by-laws and codes of ethics, should be updated with the current and board-approved versions.
    - All figures described as "projected" in the original charter, such as those found in projected enrollment charts, should be updated for the proposed charter term.
- Please submit a new five-year budget and budget narrative.
- Schools are responsible for using original information in the revised charter unless otherwise indicated. Any information excerpted or paraphrased from other sources that is not appropriately cited may invalidate the application.
- Content must be consistent with applicable federal, state, and local laws governing New York State charter schools, including but not limited to the revised New York Charter Schools Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and Open Meetings Law. Cite these and other applicable laws where appropriate.
- Please paginate all sections of your revised charter, including the narrative and all exhibits.
- The version submitted to the Charter Authorizing Team should be "clean" – schools should not use "track changes." Schools are required to note all changes, whether material or non-material, in the summary of revisions chart.

Summary of Revisions Chart

Please include two tables in your summary of revisions chart, (1) noting the nature of all revisions that have been made to the charter during its current charter term, where the revised language is located in the application, and when the revision was made and approved by the NYC DOE during the charter period; and (2) noting the nature of all proposed revisions, where the revised language is located in the application, and the proposed date for the revision to be implemented in the upcoming charter period. For example:

Revision	Section	Rationale	Proposed Date
Admissions/lottery preference policy: adding preference for ELLs	Admissions – page 16	We have had success with our ELL program; to date have moved 22 students of 56 total to "proficient" status on the NYSESLAT. We want to add an admissions/lottery preference for ELLs to serve a representative sample of students from our community school district.	To take effect Sept 2016

Appendix D:

The Chancellor's Due Process Procedures Regarding the Non-renewal of Charter Schools

A charter school seeking renewal of its charter agreement must submit an application for renewal to the New York City Department of Education's Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP). After reviewing a charter school's renewal application, OSDCP issues a draft Renewal Report and provides a copy of such report to the charter school. The charter school may provide OSDCP with additional factual information relevant to the report. OSDCP will consider such information and has the discretion to amend the Renewal Report based on such information. Thereafter, OSDCP will issue a final Renewal Report, which shall contain the Chancellor's decision as to renewal or non-renewal.

(A) In the event that the Chancellor decides not to renew a charter school's charter agreement:

(1) Notice of nonrenewal of a charter school's charter agreement shall be provided to the charter school.

(2) The charter school shall be provided 30 calendar days to submit a written response to the notice of nonrenewal and is required to inform the DOE if they will be doing so, or not, within 5 calendar days of receipt of the initial non-renewal notification letter. Such response may include supporting affidavits, exhibits and other documentary evidence, as well as written legal argument.

(3) The charter school shall, upon request, be provided an opportunity for oral argument during this 30 calendar day period before a panel consisting of the Chancellor's designee, the Deputy Chancellor who oversees OSDCP or his/her designee, and a representative from OSDCP. The school is required to inform the DOE if they will be presenting oral arguments, or not, within 5 calendar days of receipt of the non-renewal notification letter.

(4) The charter school shall, upon request, be provided an opportunity for the panel, or a subset of the panel at the DOE's discretion, and a representative from OSDCP, to make an in-person site visit to the charter school at a date and time mutually agreeable by the charter school and the panel. This visit may take place before or after the presentation of oral or written arguments at the discretion of the DOE The school is required to inform the DOE if they will be requesting a site-visit, or not, within 5 calendar days of receipt of the initial non-renewal notification letter.

(5) After its consideration of the charter school's written response, any oral argument, and any information gathered from the site visit, if applicable, the panel may, at its discretion, request a response from OSDCP. Thereafter, the panel shall make a recommendation to the Chancellor as to whether the nonrenewal decision should be reversed.

(6) The Chancellor may accept or reject, in whole or in part, the panel's recommendation. The Chancellor shall thereafter make a final determination regarding renewal or non-renewal.

(B) Upon the Chancellor's final determination to not renew the charter school's charter agreement, notice of such non-renewal shall be provided to the New York State Board of Regents.

Appendix E: New York State Enrollment and Retention Target Policy for Chancellor-Authorized Charter Schools (August 2015)

Executive Summary

Under the New York State Charter Schools Act of 1998 ("the Act"), one of the objectives of charter schools is to "increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure."[12] In an effort to satisfy this objective, charter schools are required to meet or exceed enrollment and retention (E&R) targets for students with disabilities (SWD), English language learners (ELLs), and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program (FRPL) (collectively "special populations").[13] Charter schools are also required to demonstrate efforts towards meeting these targets as part of their annual report and at the time of renewal in addition to compliance being a factor considered at the time of a revision, including mergers.

This document comprises the New York City Department of Education's (NYC DOE) policy regarding E&R targets for Chancellor-authorized charter schools, including repercussions for not demonstrating efforts towards and meeting E&R targets. Best practice efforts to enroll and retain special populations are also provided.

E&R Target Policy for Chancellor-Authorized Charter Schools

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (SUNY) have prescribed an E&R target methodology to generate the applicable E&R targets for each charter school.[14] Pursuant to the Act, charter schools are required to meet or exceed these E&R targets[15] and demonstrate efforts towards doing so as part of the NYSED annual report and at the time of renewal.[16] The NYC DOE will also review efforts towards meeting E&R targets should a charter revision be requested, including mergers. Efforts to attract and retain special populations at rates equal to, or greater than, a school's E&R targets should be continuous and ongoing. Efforts towards meeting E&R targets are not substitutes for failing to meet or exceed the targets themselves.[17]

E&R Target Methodology

The NYC DOE applies the E&R target methodology developed by NYSED and SUNY to all Chancellor-authorized charter schools. E&R targets are derived from the enrollment figures of the primary Community School District (CSD) of location for each charter school, as well as the individual charter school's enrollment and grades served at the end of the school's charter term. This target methodology uses a school's E&R data as reported to the NYC DOE through the Automate the School (ATS) database.[18]

For charter schools that are located in more than one CSD, the primary location of a Chancellor-authorized charter school is the CSD in which the earliest intake grade is located.

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[12] N.Y. Educ. Law § 2850(2)(b).
[13] N.Y. Educ. Law § 2855(1)(e).
[14] http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/enrollment-retention-targets.html.
[15] N.Y. Educ. Law § 2855(1)(e).
[16] N.Y. Educ. Law §§ 2851(4)(e) and 2857(2)(d).
[17] N.Y. Educ. Law §§ 2851(4)(e) and 2857(2)(d).
[18] Please note: If a school uses a private vendor for school food services at any grade level (i.e., is its own school food authority), and that school is below the enrollment and/or retention targets for students eligible for FRPL, the school may remit its student-level FRPL data, with student OSIS numbers, to charterschools@schools.nyc.gov for further review. If the school chooses to send the NYC DOE student-level FRPL data, they must include student-level data for the current school year and the four prior school years, to the extent applicable.

To ensure that schools are not "penalized" for declassifying students over time, a student in a special population category who is subsequently declassified will count towards that category for three additional years after declassification, as per the approved methodology.
It is a best practice to compare the demographics of the students enrolled to E&R targets at the start of each school year and when any changes to a school's charter are being contemplated. All charter schools should review the E&R methodology and utilize the target calculator provided on NYSED's web site.

Demonstrating Efforts to Enroll and Retain Special Populations
At the time of renewal, enrollment related revisions, including mergers, and as part of the NYSED annual report, schools are required to demonstrate the efforts they have undertaken to meet or exceed E&R targets and their anticipated future plans towards meeting this requirement. In order to demonstrate these efforts, charter schools must maintain detailed records of the means taken to enroll and retain special populations. Such evidence will be submitted by the school at the time of renewal and for any enrollment related charter revision, including mergers. The NYSED annual report requires all charter schools to describe their efforts towards meeting E&R targets but does not require charter schools to submit evidence of such efforts.

A non-exhaustive list of efforts that a school may take to enroll and retain special populations can be found below. E&R efforts are not limited to the items outlined below, nor does the demonstration of one or more of those items automatically constitute sufficient efforts to meet E&R targets. If a Chancellor-authorized charter school does not meet its E&R targets, the NYC DOE will consider the school's self-reported efforts towards meeting the target(s) and any extenuating circumstances that may apply.

Holding Schools Accountable for meeting E&R Targets
All Chancellor-authorized charter schools are required to meet the standard relating to E&R targets set forth in this policy, their charter agreement, and charter.

Chancellor-authorized charter schools will be held accountable to meeting or exceeding E&R targets at the time of renewal.

The demonstration of efforts towards meeting E&R targets is not a substitute for failure to meet the targets themselves. Failure to demonstrate efforts that were, or will be, made by the school towards meeting or exceeding E&R targets[19], or at the time of renewal, may result in a shortened charter renewal term, non-renewal, or other authorizer action as per the *Accountability Handbook for NYC DOE Chancellor-Authorized Charter Schools*. Failure to meet or exceed E&R targets, or the failure to demonstrate efforts towards doing so, will also be evaluated when an enrollment related charter revision or charter merger is requested. Schools that fail to meet their E&R targets in consecutive charter terms will be required to demonstrate "extensive efforts."[20]

When evaluating enrollment related charter revisions for Chancellor-authorized charter schools, the DOE will strongly consider E&R targets.

Best Practices for E&R Target Efforts
At the time of renewal, enrollment related charter revisions, mergers, and as part of the annual accountability cycle, the NYC DOE requires charter schools to describe past efforts and future plans to recruit and retain special populations.

The following list of enrollment "best practices" are examples of efforts that schools can take to meet or exceed E&R targets, or demonstrate efforts towards doing so. The NYC DOE recognizes that this list is not exhaustive and encourages schools to develop further practices. The best practices are divided into high and low impact efforts. High impact best practices are expected to have a greater impact on enrollment

[19] As reported in the NYSED annual report.
[20] N.Y. Educ. Law § 2855(1)(e).

outcomes as compared to low impact practices. As with the NYC DOE's accountability framework, the NYC DOE focuses on the outputs of each school's efforts, and so each school should determine which efforts to employ in order to meet or exceed E&R targets. These efforts are only provided as a guide. Schools may have more or less success using these best practices depending on their community and the resources committed.

Enrollment Best Practice Examples

High Impact Best Practices
• Implementation of authorizer-approved lottery preferences for SWD, ELLs, and/or students eligible for FRPL. • Demonstrated efforts to work collaboratively with the local district Committees on Special Education to educate them about the services, settings, and special program features available at the school. • Demonstration that the school has provided and disseminated outreach materials including, but not limited to, information about the school, information on how to apply to the school, and contact information for the school for stakeholders to reach out to with further questions, that are accessible to all parents. • Direct targeted mailings, radio, and newspaper advertising in languages prevalent in the area. • Outreach by multi-lingual staff to parents, stakeholders, and community members. Demonstration that the school has provided and disseminated outreach materials including, but not limited to, information about the school, information on how to apply to the school, and contact information for the school for stakeholders to reach out to with further questions, that are accessible to all parents. • Outreach to specialized feeder schools and programs and a demonstration that the school has provided with disseminated outreach materials including, but not limited to, information about the school, information on how to apply to the school, and contact information for the school for stakeholders to reach out to with further questions that are accessible to all parents. • Developing ongoing relationships with programs that serve high-needs populations. • Targeted in-person recruitment methods including in-person meetings with CBOs and parents, and canvasing communities with a demonstration that the school has provided and disseminated outreach materials including, but not limited to, information about the school, information on how to apply to the school, and contact information for the school for stakeholders to reach out to with further questions, that are accessible to all parents. • Ongoing partnerships with community based and social service agencies. • Material revision to add district parents and community members to the board.

Low Impact Best Practices
• Outreach to students, families, and other stakeholders that does not involve a demonstration that the school has provided and disseminated outreach materials including, but not limited to, information about the school, information on how to apply to the school, and contact information for the school for stakeholders to reach out to with further questions, that are accessible to all parents. • Announcing during Open House events that the school welcomes students with special needs. • Special education personnel available to all interested special education enrollees to clearly explain how the school delivers at-risk and special education services. • Google language translator dropdown added to school's website. • Translators available during open houses and other school events. • All materials explain the ELL and SWD programming and supports available at the school. • Translation of all school materials, including enrollment materials, into the predominant language of the communities served. • Authorizer-approved charter lottery admissions preferences.

Retention Efforts

Schools normally describe their retention efforts through the programming and services offered to special populations. Some examples of retention efforts are:

• Creating positive family relationships through consistent communication and events • Student/family orientation • Offering free/reduced price meals/snack • ELL, special education, and at-risk student programming and support • Academic and behavioral supports • High quality staff training and development • Disaggregating data by student group and looking for positive gains or reductions in classification • Efforts to close the achievement gap for special populations of students, as evidenced by state accountability data • Developing new programs that support special populations • Hiring staff with appropriate licensure and expertise • Parent/community outreach • Vigilant monitoring of disciplinary practices • Having an inclusive school culture and environment that is reflective of and welcoming to the population the school serves