



Charter School Annual Site Visit Report  
Charter Schools Office  
2009-2010

JOHN V. LINDSAY WILDCAT  
CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

APRIL 2010

# Part 1: Executive Summary

## **School Overview and History:**

John V. Lindsay Wildcat Charter School is a high school serving approximately 430 students from grade 9 through grade 12 in the 2009-2010 school year.<sup>1</sup> The school opened in 2000 with grade 9 and has no further growth plans.<sup>2</sup> It is currently housed in a leased commercial space in District 2.<sup>3</sup>

The school population comprises 53% Black, 46% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0% Asian students. 61% of students are designated at Title I.<sup>4</sup> The student body includes 4.4% English language learners and 23.2% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%.<sup>5</sup>

The school earned a B on its progress report for 2008-09. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 55%.<sup>6</sup>

## **Annual Review Process Overview:**

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office conducts an annual site visit of New York City Department of Education authorized charter schools in order to assess three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a viable organization; and is the school in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The visits are conducted by representatives of the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Office Accountability Team and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the principal and school leadership team. Subsequently, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. Areas of evaluation include, but are not limited to: academic goals and mission; curriculum and instruction; school culture and learning environment; assessment utilization; parent engagement; government structures and organizational design; community support; special populations; and safety and security.

The following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Sylvia Rabiner, Education Consultant

---

<sup>1</sup> NYC DOE ATS system

<sup>2</sup> NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

<sup>3</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

<sup>4</sup> Demographic Data drawn from NYC DOE ATS System; Title I percentage from 2008 NY State Report Cards

<sup>5</sup> Student Demographic data is inputted by school staff into the ATS enrollment database and summarized by NYC DOE staff.

<sup>6</sup> NYC DOE School Progress Report. This document is posted on the NYC DOE website at <http://www.schools.nyc.gov> and is also included in Part 7 of this report.

## Part 2: Findings

### What the school does well

- The school employs strategies for the full range of students served, including special needs and English Language Learners.
  - Very small class sizes enable teachers to provide all students with personal attention.
  - The flexible schedule and extended school day (9am to 5pm) allow students with special needs to have a daily resource room, with additional support offered daily during 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> periods.
  - Core classes in English are offered at different levels determined by student ability. Students are able to progress through these levels based on internal assessments.
  - Classrooms are structured to promote individual, paired and group instruction.
- The school employs a rigorous assessment system and strong data-tracking tools to monitor student performance and inform teaching and learning.
  - The school is utilizing PICCS data warehouse to track student data to set growth targets and monitor progress towards meeting those targets.
  - The school is developing a portfolio system to document student progress in reading and writing across the curriculum.
  - The school SMART team is mapping all subject courses and assessments to the State Standards and conducting a gap analysis for further curriculum development.
- The school fosters a safe and comfortable learning environment which encourages both student academic progress and teacher professional development.
  - Teachers are provided with professional development every Friday from 3:30 to 5:00 for a variety of instructional issues.
  - Classrooms and hallways display an abundance of student work indicating a schoolwide celebration of achievement.
  - Morning entry and transitions between classes and lunch period were calm and orderly.
- The school has created a school culture which is strong, intentional, supportive, and sustainable, and which promotes student learning.
  - The Internship Program serves 70% of students in a variety of sites. Students are placed in internships according to preference.
  - Each student is assigned a counselor who follows student progress. Seniors have a counselor designated to work with them on college admission or transition to employment.
  - Students in all classes observed were comfortable asking questions, sharing information, and stating their opinions with the teacher and one another.

### What the school needs to improve

- The school could consider further integrating its internship program into the business community that surrounds the Manhattan location.
- The school is encouraged to extend to all the students it serves the reading/ writing portfolios which are now in effect only for students transferring from the Bronx campus.
- The school is encouraged to pursue its plan to better align writing for the internship experience with targeted classes for more effective follow up.

## Part 3: Framing Questions

### FRAMING QUESTIONS:

Throughout the Renewal Process and the life of each school's charter, the NYCDOE Charter Schools Office uses the following framing questions to monitor Charter School success:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
2. Has the School Been a Viable Organization?
3. Has the School Been in Compliance with All Applicable Laws and Regulations?

### Annual Site Visit Rubric:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
  - Academic Goals and Mission
    - School components and curriculum align together and holistically support the mission
    - School has high academic expectations and employs strategies for the full range of students served by the school, including those at risk and those with special needs
  - Curriculum and Instruction
    - The educational plan is flexible and is adjusted to meet the performance levels and learning needs of all enrolled students
    - School implements programming to address the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs
    - Teachers demonstrate the use of differentiated instructional techniques to support the varying ways by which students learn
    - School has implemented programming for students who need remediation or acceleration
  - School Culture
    - The culture is strong, intentional, supportive and sustainable and promotes student learning
    - The school motivates all students and respects the diversity of learners and cultures in the community
    - School offers programs, activities or support services beyond academics to address students' social and emotional needs
    - School calendar and day are set to provide extra supports to ensure that students are able to meet and exceed academic goals
    - Schedule for communication to parents/students is timely and allows for due process, includes strategies to prepare students for transitions and strategies for those students who are not on schedule, presents a clear and fair system that complies with students' due process rights
    - Structures that foster the development of authentic, sustained, caring, respectful relationships among all stakeholders within school
    - Behavioral expectations and social supports that reflect the school's mission and comply with all applicable laws and regulations
  - Assessment
    - Establishes a culture of continuous improvement and accountability for student learning
    - Develops assessments that shape and inform instruction on an ongoing basis and develop data that's used to gauge student, teacher and school progress through formative and summative assessment
    - Student learning measured with multiple forms of assessments/metrics
    - Develops educational goals and performance metrics that are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission and Time-Specific

- Develops assessments that are appropriately aligned with curriculum, instruction, and adopted standards
  - Provides evidence of how data will influence instruction, professional development and curricular adjustments
  - Parent Engagement
    - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
    - Capacity to communicate effectively with parents and families
    - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
2. Is the School a Viable Organization
- Governance Structures and Organizational Design
    - School has articulated appropriate roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structure for school community members (including Board of Trustees and school leadership)
    - An accountability structure that provides effective oversight of the educational program and fiscal components of the school is in place and utilized
    - Board regularly reviews a data dashboard of student achievement and fiscal management that forms the basis for Board discussions and decisions
    - Board has diverse skill set that lends itself to strong educational / operational oversight
    - Board has an articulated process for ongoing policy development, Board member development and self-evaluation
    - Organizational charts are aligned with mission; roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
    - Board has developed essential strategic partnerships with organizations that support the mission of the school
  - Community Support
    - School Leadership demonstrated responsiveness to the unique needs and interests of the community to be served
    - School has established a presence in the community and has buy in from community members
3. Is the School in Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations
- Special Populations
    - Well-defined plan and sufficient capacity to service the learning needs of Special Education students, English Language Learners
    - School adequately addresses the academic and non academic needs of students in need of remediation, students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and gifted students
    - There is a coherent plan for meeting the non-academic needs of students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and other populations
    - School employs a process to identify students at risk of not meeting expectations and creates intervention plans and follow up
    - School demonstrates a comprehensive recruitment, enrollment and retention approach that is sensitive to the diverse needs of students
    - School admission policy and lottery preferences serve to create a student body that reflects community demographics and give a preference to community school district residents
  - Safety and Security
    - School is well maintained
    - Transitions and student gatherings are orderly and well supervised
    - Expectations for student behavior are well known and are enforced fairly
    - School is current with all safety recruitments and drills.
    - AED machines are in operation and school staff is trained in CPR