

**DEMOCRACY PREP CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

**2012- 2013 SCHOOL YEAR**

## Part 1: School Overview & History

### School Overview and History

Democracy Prep Charter School (DPCS) is a middle and high school serving approximately 659 students<sup>1</sup> in grades 6-12 during the 2012-13 school year.<sup>2</sup> It opened in 2006-2007, and is under the terms of its second charter. The school's projected full grade span is 6-12, which it reached in 2012-2013.<sup>3</sup> The school is located in public<sup>4</sup> facilities in Manhattan within CSD 5.<sup>5</sup> The middle school is located at 2230 5th Avenue and the high school is located at 222 West 134th Street.

The table below details the school's performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report.<sup>6</sup>

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall	A	A	A	A
Progress	A	A	B	A
Performance	A	B	B	A
Environment	A	A	A	A
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	7.5	5.3	7.5	4

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

Democracy Prep Charter School enrolls new students in grades 6 and 9. There were 2,362 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2013 lottery.<sup>7</sup>

The average attendance rate for the 2012-13 school year to date is 96.3%.<sup>8</sup>

On the 2011-12 NYC DOE School Survey, the school scored Above Average on the Safety & Respect section, Above Average on the Communication section, Above Average on the Engagement section, and Above Average on the Academic Expectations section. Seventy-two percent of the school's parents, 100.0% of the school's teachers, and 91.0% of the school's eligible students responded to the survey.<sup>9</sup>

Tanya Nunez is the school leader of DPCS for grades 6-8. The 2012-2013 school year is the first year Ms. Nunez has served as leader of the middle school. Lisa Friscia is the school leader of Democracy Prep Charter School for grades 9-12.

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

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

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

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

<sup>5</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

<sup>6</sup> NYC DOE Progress Report – <http://schools.nyc.gov/progressreport>

<sup>7</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form.

<sup>8</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form.

<sup>9</sup> NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

Democracy Prep Charter School is part of the Democracy Prep Public Schools (DPPS) network, a Charter Management Organization (CMO). The CMO provides an overarching Superintendent, back office support, institutional goals aligned to network goals; student assessment data gathering, and school policies (e.g. HR) among other support services. The fee structure is based on an initial 15% of public non-competitive revenues with an annual reduction of ½%.

## Part 2: Annual Review Process Overview

### Rating Framework

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

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

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

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

### Essential Questions

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

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

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

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

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

To assess whether a school is a fiscally sound, viable organization, CSAS focuses on three areas: Governance Structure & Organizational Design, School Climate & Community Engagement, and Financial Health. This includes an analysis of the school's audited financial statements, based on the NACSA (National Association of Charter School Authorizers) Financial Framework<sup>10</sup>.

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

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

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<sup>10</sup>[http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance\\_Framework\\_Fall\\_2012\\_Draft.pdf](http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance_Framework_Fall_2012_Draft.pdf), page 38-59

- Authorized enrollment numbers, and
- Annual financial audits.

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

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

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

**Staff Representatives**

The following staff representatives participated in the review of this school's documents as detailed above:

- Andrea McLean DOE
- Keisha Womack, DOE

## Part 3: Findings

### Summary of Findings

Based on CSAS review, the findings are as follows. To date, Democracy Prep Charter School:

- has demonstrated academic achievement and progress (p. 7-10).
- has a developed governance structure and organizational design (p. 11).
- has partially developed a stable school culture (p. 11).
- is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices (p. 12).
- is compliant with some applicable laws and regulations (p. 13).
- will continue to add grades until it reaches K-12 (p. 14).

This review included a desk audit, a self-evaluation completed by the school, and follow up communication via phone and email.

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

To date, Democracy Preparatory Charter School has demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

- The school received an Overall grade of A on its 2011-2012 NYC DOE Progress Report, with an A in Student Progress and an A in the Student Performance.
- The school received an Overall Grade of A on its 2011-12 NYC DOE Progress Report. The school has scored an Overall grade of A on all progress reports to date. (See page 2.)
- In 2011-2012, the percentage of students in its tested grades scoring greater than a level 3 was:
  - 38.5% on the NYS ELA assessment
  - 81.7% on the NYS Math assessment.
- The school's overall percentage of students proficient in ELA increased from 30.9% in 2010-2011 to 38.5% in 2011-2012.
- The school's overall percentage of students proficient in Math has increased from 81.5% in 2010-2011 to 81.7% in 2011-2012.
- The school's overall proficiency scores were above its district location, CSD 5, by 10.2 percentage points in ELA and 42.9 percentage points in Math.
- In 2011-2012, the school earned 4.0 'Closing the Achievement Gap' points of extra credit on the Progress Report.

To date, the high school grades for DPCS, which has three years of ungraded NYC DOE High School (HS) Progress Reports, has demonstrated academic achievement and progress as per evidence below.

- DPCS has not yet received a graded HS Progress Report because its first graduating cohort does not graduate until the end of the 2012-13 school year. Its first graded progress report will be released in the fall of 2013 for the 201C 2-13 school year.
- As reported in its 2011-12 HS Progress Report (ungraded), DPCS high school students took 9 Regents exams, in English, Math, Science and History with the following test-taker results:
  - Integrated Algebra, 94% passing
  - Geometry, 96% passing
  - Algebra 2/Trigonometry, 83% passing
  - Comprehensive English, 99% passing
  - U.S. History, 95% passing
  - Global History, 89% passing
  - Chemistry, 88% passing
  - Physics, 60% passing
  - Living Environment, 94% passing.
- According to the 2011-12 HS Progress Report among Comprehensive English Regents exam takers 84% achieved the CUNY-identified college-ready threshold; among Math Regents exams takers 47% of Integrated Algebra, 56% of Geometry and 30% of Algebra 2/Trigonometry achieved the college-ready threshold.
- According to the 2011-12 HS Progress Report 89.1% of first year students, 89.2% of second year students at DPCS earned 10+ credits and 89.6% of third year students earned 10+ credits.

Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals.<sup>11</sup>

- The school, according to its 2011-12 Annual Report to New York State Department of Education (NYSED), met or partially met 5 of 8 of its charter-identified Progress Toward Attainment of Academic Goals that applied to it elementary/middle school grades.
- The school, according to its 2011-12 Annual Report to NYSED, met all of its applicable charter-identified Progress Toward Attainment of Academic Goals that applied to its high school grades.

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<sup>11</sup> Goal analysis is considered a neutral point and is not used as part of the evaluation.

**Democracy Prep Charter School**

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

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Democracy Prep Charter School	70.5	34.7	30.9	38.5
CSD 5*	60.6	28.0	27.1	28.3
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Democracy Prep Charter School	90.4	76.5	81.5	81.7
CSD 5*	69.1	37.3	40.2	38.8

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

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

Grade 6

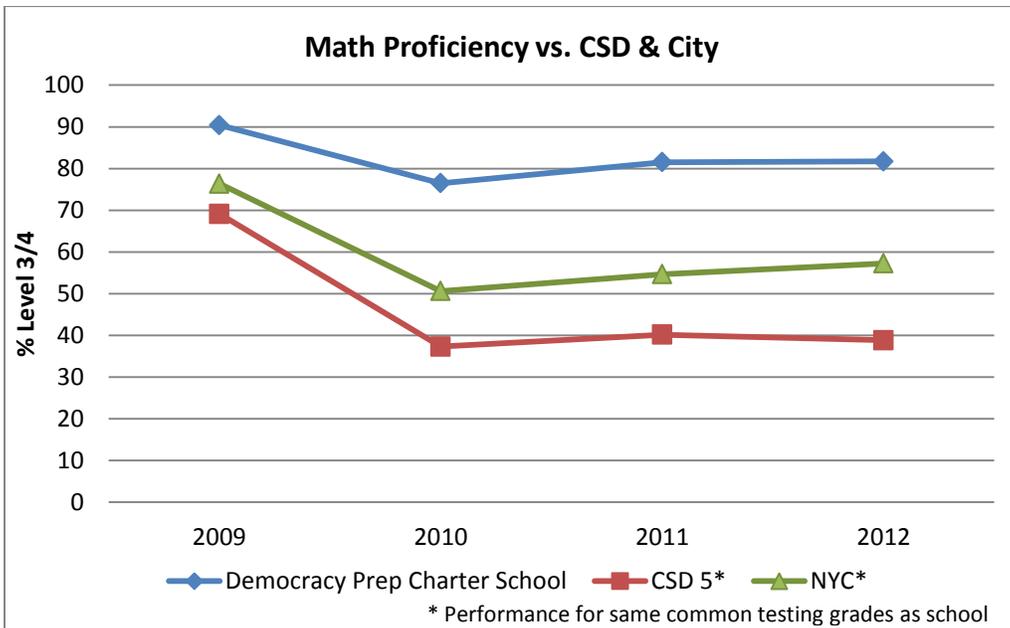
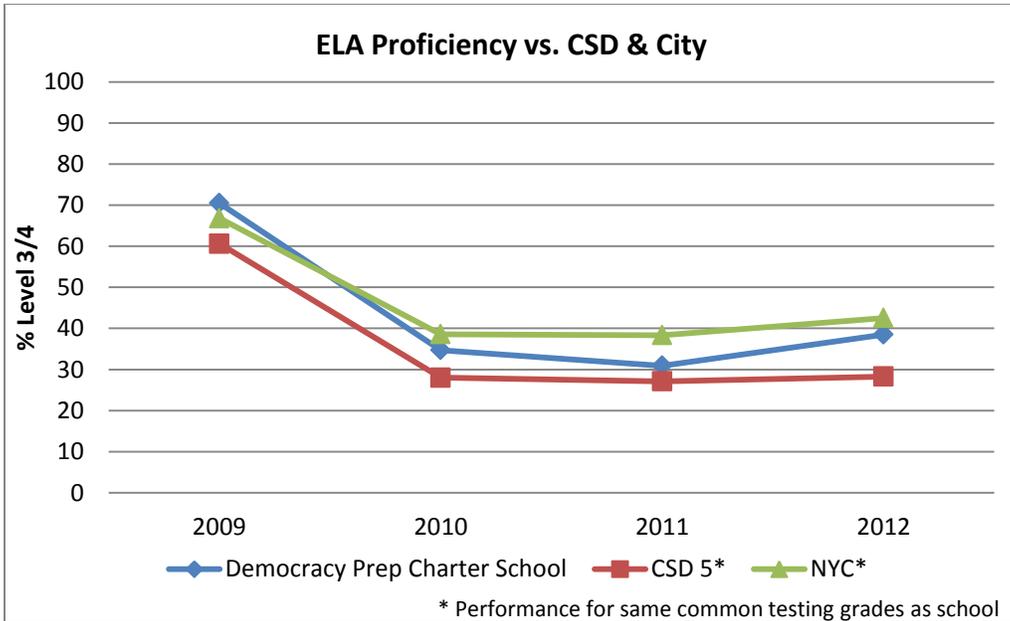
<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Democracy Prep Charter School	64.8	32.7	32.7	43.2
CSD 5*	71.3	31.2	30.1	31.6
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Democracy Prep Charter School	77.6	62.6	70.4	74.8
CSD 5*	72.7	38.6	39.7	39.5

Grade 7

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Democracy Prep Charter School	74.5	33.3	29.0	34.3
CSD 5*	64.9	28.7	24.0	26.5
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Democracy Prep Charter School	98.0	86.7	82.8	80.4
CSD 5*	73.8	37.7	38.3	37.9

Grade 8

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Democracy Prep Charter School	72.4	37.8	31.1	37.6
CSD 5*	45.7	24.1	27.3	26.8
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Democracy Prep Charter School	96.1	79.3	90.6	89.9
CSD 5*	60.9	35.7	42.5	39.1



<b>2011-2012 High School Regents Performance Results</b>			
<b>Democracy Preparatory Charter School</b>			
<b>Regents Exams</b>	<b>Average Score</b>	<b>% Passing</b>	<b>% at college ready threshold</b>
<b>Mathematics</b>			
Integrated Algebra	77	94%	47%
Geometry	80	96%	56%
Algebra 2/Trig	72	83%	30%
<b>ELA</b>			
English	83	99%	84%
<b>Social Studies</b>			
US History	86	95%	
Global History	77	89%	
<b>Science</b>			
Chemistry	76	88%	
Physics	67	60%	
Earth Science	.	.	
Living Environment	80	94%	
<b>Languages</b>			
Languages Other Than English	.	.	

**Source:** 2011-12 NYC DOE Progress Reports

\* College-Ready thresholds only apply to Math and ELA results; if less than 15 students take a particular Regents exam the results are not included on the PR.

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

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

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

- The Board has eleven voting members which are in accordance with the Board's by laws which states there can be no fewer than five trustees and no more than fifteen board members. There was no Board turnover during the school year.
- The Board has clear lines of accountability from school leadership to the Board as evidenced by distribution and presentation of Principal's Report, and as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Board minutes indicate the Board meetings achieve quorum.
- The Board bylaws state that there must be standing Executive, Finance, Development, Governance, Academic Accountability and Community and Family Life Communications Committees. Through meeting minutes, it is evident that these committees are active and functioning.
- In accordance with the Board's bylaws, the Board is required to hold at least nine regular meetings during the school year. The Board has submitted only four meeting minutes to CSAS.
- The Board has been consistent with reporting requirements.

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

The school has partially developed a stable school culture.

- School leadership, as defined by the school, has experienced turnover. The 2012-2013 school year is the first year Ms. Nunez has served as leader of the middle school. Ms. Nunez served as the Assistant Campus Director in previous years. The previous middle school leader departed to work at another Charter Management Organization.
- The school's student turnover is 7.99%<sup>12</sup>.
- The school's staff turnover is 30.61%. Fifteen staff members did not return from the previous school year<sup>13</sup>.
- On the 2011-12 NYC DOE School Survey, the school scored Above Average on the Safety & Respect section, Above Average on the Communication section, Above Average on the Engagement section, and Above Average on the Academic Expectations section.
- The school's staff response rate on the 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey was higher than the citywide response rate of 82 %, at 100%.
- The parent response rate on the 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey was higher than the citywide response rate of 53%, at 72%.
- The student response rate on the 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey was higher than the citywide response rate of 82%, at 91%.
- The school's attendance rate is 96.3%.

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<sup>12</sup> ACR Data Collection From, February 2013

<sup>13</sup> ACR Data Collection From, February 2013

## Financial Health

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

- The school is in a strong position to meet all its liabilities over the next 12 months.
- The school is currently meeting its debt obligations.
- The school has a good debt to asset ratio and is currently operating within its means.
- The school has a strong cash flow, which has trended upward.
- The school can cover nearly 2 months of operating expenses without the infusion of cash.
- The school is operating at a surplus indicating an ability to create a strong reserve to support ongoing growth.
- The school is meeting its enrollment target.
- DPCS is located at two different sites and both sites are co-located in public space. The high school was formerly located in private space. As a result, the facilities expenses is expected to decrease over the next few years.
- Democracy Prep Charter School is part of the Democracy Prep Public Schools (DPPS) network. The CMO provides an overarching Superintendent, back office support, institutional goals aligned to network goals; student assessment data gathering, and school policies (e.g. HR) among other support services. The fee structure is based on an initial 15% of public non-competitive revenues with an annual reduction of ½%.
  - For the year ended June 30, 2012, the annual fee changed to 12.5%.
  - For the years ended June 30, 2012 and 2011, the School incurred \$1,090,675 and \$956,453 in management fees, respectively. DPPS shares operational expenses with the school.
  - For the years ended June 30, 2012 and 2011, the School billed DPPS for net shared operational expenses amounting to \$347,604 and \$296,019, respectively.
- On fiscal year 2012, the auditors did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that are considered to be material weaknesses. The auditors did cite a corrective action not taken by the school for the year ended June 30, 2012 on the prior year's observation.
  - During the FY 2011 audit, the auditors reviewed four monthly statements issued to authorized school personnel. The auditors noted that a substantial portion of credit card payments were not adequately supported by receipts, invoices, and other documentation.
  - During the 2012 audit, the auditors reviewed five monthly credit card statements issues to authorized school personnel. The auditors noted that the school improved in maintaining adequate support for credit card receipts, but there remains a significant portion that was not adequately supported by receipts, invoices, and other documentation. The auditors suggested that in order to strengthen controls over disbursements it is recommended that appropriate support be provided and maintained for all disbursements. The school management was in agreement with this finding. School management says they will continue to increase their enforcement of credit card receipt and documentation policy.

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

The school is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations.

- To date, the Board is in compliance with:
  - Board membership size falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws.
  - The Board votes demonstrates quorum.
  - There are clear lines of accountability between the Board, the network leadership, school leadership, and school staff as evidenced by the school's organizational chart and school/network leadership's regular updates on academic, financial, and operation performance to the Board, as recorded in Board meeting minutes, and the school has met all reporting requirements.
  
- To date, the school is in compliance with the below:
  - The school has submitted required documentation for staff-fingerprint clearance and all staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.
  - The school has submitted a school safety plan which has been shared with the entire school community.
  - The school is in compliance with NYS Section 917 law in regards to AED/ CPR certification.
  - The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents.
  
- To date, the school is not in compliance with the below:
  - The school's immunization rate is below the 98.8% threshold established by the NYC Department of Health. The immunization rate is currently 98.59%.
  - Based on the last submitted documentation, there are eight teachers listed as not being certified or highly qualified which is above the minimum amount permissible under the Charter Schools Act.

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

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

- According to the school's Self-Evaluation, DPCS, during its next charter term, will create a full K-12 continuum that will allow it to provide vital continuity to its scholars and their families. The DOE recently approved the school's request to expand its charter to include grades K-5.

## Part 4: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

### The CSAS Accountability Framework

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<p>Schools with successful governance and organizational design structures have many of the characteristics below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operate with a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations</li> <li>• Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate blend of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter</li> <li>• Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly but not limited to open-meeting laws and conflict of interest regulations</li> <li>• Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time and despite circumstance</li> <li>• Implements a school leadership structure that is aligned with charter and that is sufficient to fulfill school's mission and achieve its accountability goals; it also has clear lines of accountability for leadership roles, accountability to Board, and, if applicable, relationship with a charter management organization</li> <li>• Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel</li> <li>• Implemented a process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's organization and leadership structure</li> <li>• Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers</li> </ul>
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<p>Evidence for school governance and organizational design may include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School charter</li> <li>• Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, meeting agenda and minutes</li> <li>• Annual conflict of interest forms</li> <li>• Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual</li> <li>• School calendar, professional development plan</li> </ul>
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**2b. School Climate and Community Engagement**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

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

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

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

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

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have:

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

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

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

#### 3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Successful schools generally have processes for:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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