



Charter Schools Accountability and Support
2012-2013

**ACHIEVEMENT FIRST EAST NEW YORK CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: School Overview & History

School Overview and History

Achievement First East New York Charter School (AFENY) is an elementary and middle school serving approximately 722 students¹ in grades K-8 during the 2012-2013 school year. It opened in 2005-2006, and is under the terms of its second charter. The school's projected full grade span upon renewal and approval is K-12, which it's expected to reach in 2016-2017.² The school is located in public³ facilities in Brooklyn within CSD 19.⁴ Grades K-4 are located at 557 Pennsylvania Ave, Brooklyn, and Grades 5-8 at 158 Richmond St., Brooklyn.

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

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall	A	C	A	B
Progress	A	F	B	D
Performance	A	B	B	A
Closing Achievement Gap	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.27

Achievement First East New York Charter School enrolls new students in grades K through 8. There were 71 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2012 lottery.⁶

The average attendance rate for the 2012-2013 school year to date is 97.75%.⁷ The average attendance rate for the 2012-2013 school year to date is 97.8% for the elementary school (grades K-4) and 97.7% for the middle school (grades 5-8).

On the 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey, the school scored Average on the Safety & Respect section, Below Average on the Communication section, Below Average on the Engagement section, and Average on the Academic Expectations section. Forty-three percent (43.0%) of the school's parents, 69.0% of the school's teachers, and 83.0% of the school's eligible students responded to the survey.⁸

AFENY was renewed in 2009-2010 for a period of 5 years consistent with the terms of its renewal application.

The current school leadership has changed over the past school year. The changes have been as follows:

- Deans of School Culture: In July, the lower school (Grades K/1) Dean moved to the upper school (Grades 2, 3, 4). A 1st grade teacher became the lower school Dean of School Culture.
- Academic Deans: During the summer, the upper school Academic Dean left in order to start a new AF Charter School. The upper school Dean of School Culture became the upper school Academic Dean. The lower school Academic Dean remained.
- Dean of Special Services: The Intervention Coordinator became the Dean of Special Services.
- The former Principal of the Elementary School left mid-year and the former Academic Dean, Injy Carpenter, was hired to take on the role of Principal. The upper school Academic Dean roles and responsibilities were divided among the team.

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

² NYC DOE internal data.

³ NYC DOE internal data.

⁴ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

⁵ NYC DOE Progress Report – <http://schools.nyc.gov/progressreport>

⁶ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/13/13.

⁷ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/13/13.

⁸ NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

- The Middle School is led by Fatimah Barker.

The Achievement First East New York Charter School is part of the Achievement First (AF) Network, a Charter Management Organization (CMO). The CMO provides an overarching Chief Academic Officer and a Regional Superintendent, school support, teacher and staff recruitment, talent development, back office support, curriculum and assessment, among other services. The school pays a management fee of 10% of its public revenue to the CMO for these services.

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 Framework⁹.

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,

⁹http://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 non-compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Staff Representatives

The following staff representatives participated in the review of this school's documents as detailed above and conducted an academics-based visit to the school on May 14, 2013:

- Laurie Price, DOE
- Maria Campo, DOE
- Carrie Marlin, DOE

Part 3: Findings

Summary of Findings

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

- has partially demonstrated academic achievement and progress (pp. 7-11),
- has a developed governance structure and organizational design (p.12),
- has partially developed a stable school culture (pp.12-13),
- is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on current practices (p.14),
- is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others (p.15),
- has plans for the next charter term that include upgrades to the electrical system at the middle school and changes to the instructional program at the elementary school (p.16).

This review included a desk audit, a self-evaluation completed by the school, a visit, and follow up communication via phone and email. CSAS visited the school on May 14, 2013.

Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?

The school has partially demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

- The school has received an A and B on the overall Progress Report grade with a B and A on Performance in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, respectively (see page 2).
- Fifty-six percent of the students achieved proficiency on state ELA assessments in 2012, with 81% of students achieving proficiency on state Math assessments.
- These numbers reflect steady increases from year to year (see page 7-8).
- These numbers also represent significant and consistent out-performance of CSD 19 (by over 20 percentage points in ELA and over 35 percentage points in Math).
- One area where the school has not consistently shown progress is on the “Progress” section of the NYC DOE Progress Report. The school most recently received a D in this area. The school previously received a B and an F in the “Progress” section, (in 2010-2011 and 2009-2010, respectively).
- In 2011-2012, the school earned 1.27 points for the ‘Closing the Achievement Gap’ section on its NYC DOE Progress Report.

Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals¹⁰

- According to its 2011-2012 Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), out of 8 academic goals set forth in the charter, the school has met 4, partially met 2 and not met 2.

Representatives of the CSAS team visited the school on May 14, 2013. Based on discussion, document review, and interviews with teachers:

- School leadership and teachers report use of Interim Assessments every 6-8 weeks, with corresponding data days to follow. This data is used to identify small reading groups taught by intervention and grade-level teachers, identify who classroom teachers should pull for small groups as a 2nd intervention .
 - The middle school grades have implemented an additional reading block where students will have independent reading time if on grade level or will receive additional intervention if below grade level.
- School leadership reports that alignment with the Common Core has led to increased rigor, more time with non-fiction text, and changes to the types of questioning that the teachers use in the classroom, along with a focus on teachers being able to give constructive feedback on rigorous writing assignments.
- Upon visiting AFENY, the team observed a total of 13 classes; 9 at the elementary school site (grades K-4) and 4 at the middle school site (grades 5-8). At the elementary school, the following was observed:
 - Most classrooms were teacher-centered, with 1 adult leading, and 1 adult assisting. One classroom was observed where students were participating in centers-based learning.
 - Most questioning consisted of basic recall questions, with few pushing for deeper understanding.
 - In most classes, checks for understanding were observed in the form of exit tickets, polling and questioning and most predominantly in worksheets.
 - In no classrooms observed, was differentiation (in the form of differentiated materials, modalities, tasks, products or assessments) noted.
 - In most classrooms, transitions were observed to be appropriately paced.
 - In most classrooms, a majority of students were on task.
 - Leadership commented that all classrooms observed, instruction and culture was aligned with the school model and priorities.
- At the middle school, the following was observed:

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

- Most classrooms were teacher centered, with 1 adult leading, and 1 adult assisting. ICT teachers were observed pushing in to work with students with IEPs in several classrooms.
- Questioning techniques ranged from basic recall to analysis, comparison, explaining, and supporting with evidence.
- In most classes, checks for understanding were observed in the form of turn and talks. Teachers and leadership spoke of the use of exit tickets, but use of these was not observed due to not observing the entire lesson cycle.
- In no classrooms observed, was differentiation (in the form of differentiated materials, modalities, tasks, products or assessments) noted.
- In all classrooms, transitions were observed to be appropriately paced.
- In most classrooms, a majority of students were on task.
- Leadership commented that all classrooms observed, instruction and culture was aligned with the school model and priorities.
- The CSAS team conducted group interviews with 11 teachers at the middle school level and individual and one on one interviews with 10 teachers and other instructional staff at the elementary school level, which represents approximately 40% of the academic faculty. At both the middle school and elementary school:
 - All teachers reporting using a variety of data sources for both the delivery and planning of instruction, including use of exit tickets daily, Interim Assessments every 6 weeks, Fountas & Pinnell at the early grades and for older grade students below grade level, data days every 6 weeks, creation of a Data Driven Plan reviewed with coaches every 6 weeks.
 - All teachers reported that analysis of data was used to create SGI (Small Group Instruction), book clubs, intervention groups, conference groups, and help in planning concepts to be retaught in future units.
 - Most teachers reported aligning planning time on grade levels; no teachers reported vertical planning time across grades.
 - At the elementary school level, all teachers reported that weekly professional development is differentiated and relevant to their practice; all elementary teachers reported that formal and informal feedback from coaches, rubrics and goal setting was helpful in their professional development.

Achievement First East New York Charter School
Percent of Students Scoring Level 3/4 - Whole School

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First East New York Charter School	87.4	46.0	54.4	56.2
CSD 19*	61.0	35.1	36.3	34.6
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First East New York Charter School	98.0	74.2	80.3	81.6
CSD 19*	84.5	45.6	45.4	45.4

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

Percent of Students Scoring Level 3/4 - By Grade

Grade 3

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First East New York Charter School	87.2	51.1	48.1	59.5
CSD 19*	62.5	39.3	36.3	33.7
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First East New York Charter School	98.7	73.6	79.7	72.2
CSD 19*	90.2	44.5	41.7	42.2

Grade 4

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First East New York Charter School	87.7	36.6	61.3	60.3
CSD 19*	59.4	32.1	40.2	39.2
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First East New York Charter School	97.3	75.0	81.5	80.8
CSD 19*	78.8	47.7	49.8	51.2

Grade 5

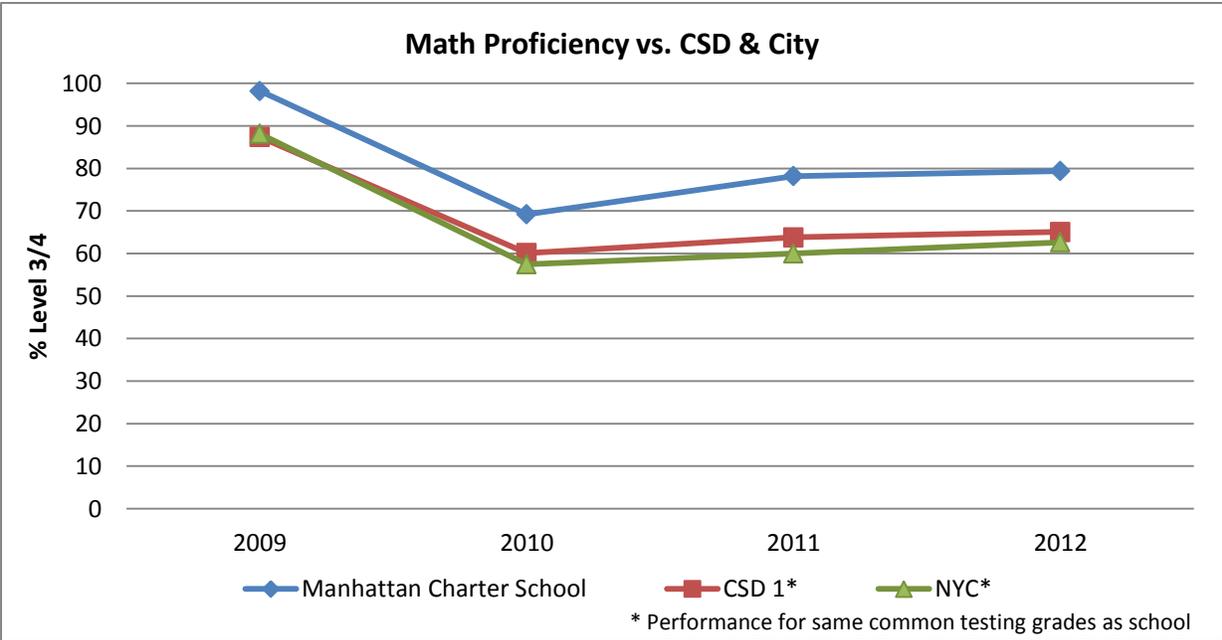
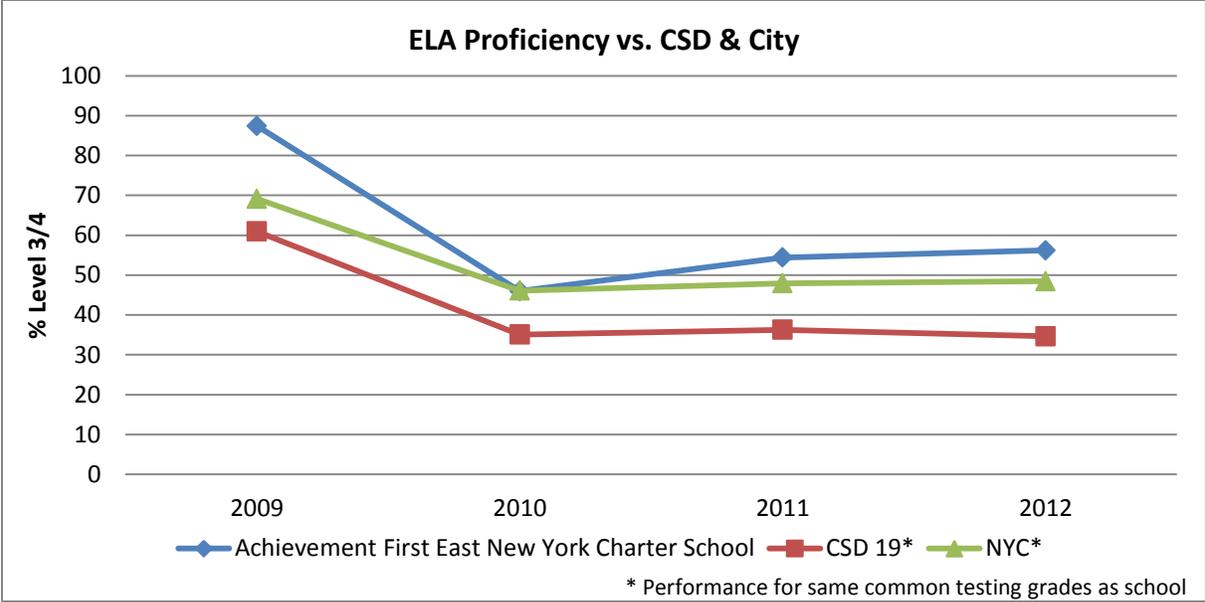
<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First East New York Charter School		48.3	50.0	48.2
CSD 19*		33.8	34.8	38.8
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Achievement First East New York Charter School		74.2	81.8	66.7
CSD 19*		44.7	45.3	52.9

Grade 6

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
<u>ELA</u>				
Achievement First East New York Charter School			58.0	50.0
CSD 19*			33.9	30.3
<u>Math</u>				
Achievement First East New York Charter School			78.0	98.8
CSD 19*			44.8	42.9

Grade 7

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
<u>ELA</u>				
Achievement First East New York Charter School				64.9
CSD 19*				31.2
<u>Math</u>				
Achievement First East New York Charter School				89.2
CSD 19*				37.6



2011-2012 High School Regents Performance Results			
Achievement First HS			
Regents Exams	Average Score	% Passing	% at college ready threshold
Mathematics			
Integrated Algebra	79	96%	50%
Geometry	77	97%	34%
Algebra 2/Trig	.	.	.
ELA			
English	84	100%	86%
Social Studies			
US History	90	100%	
Global History	84	94%	
Science			
Chemistry	68	67%	
Physics	78	94%	
Earth Science	.	.	
Living Environment	.	.	
Languages			
Languages Other Than English	.	.	

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

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

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

- The Board has 6 voting members, higher than the number required in the bylaws.
- The Board has submitted all required board minutes due to date.
- The Board has held 6 meetings per year, as specified in the charter and bylaws.
- The Board has had 3 members leave in the past year, some leaving due to geographic relocation.
- The Board has clear lines of accountability as evidenced by minutes, organizational charts and staff rosters. For example, as evidenced by meeting minutes, the Board reviews the school's academic results, financial position and interviews and approves of school leadership.
- The Board has provided CSAS with timely submission of accountability reporting documents, including its annual report and financial audits, as well as Board minutes.
- The Board consistently achieved quorum at each meeting, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The Board's finance committee is active, as per board minutes. As per the school, the Education & Accountability and Principal Evaluation committees are active, but activities and reports are not documented in the minutes.

School Climate & Community Engagement

The school has partially developed a stable school culture.

- Student enrollment is maintained at projections; the student population is stable. In the elementary grades, there was approximately 3% attrition from school year 2011-2012 to school year 2012-2013, and 3% of the student body left since the beginning of the current school year. In the middle school grades, there was approximately 6% attrition from school year 2011-2012 to school year 2012-2013, and 8% of the student body left since the beginning of the current school year.¹¹
- School leadership is now stable, after transitions late last year. The former Principal of the Elementary School left mid-year and the former Academic Dean, Injy Carpenter, was hired to take on the role of Principal. The Middle School is led by Fatimah Barker.
- Staff turnover was 25%, by choice or request at the start of the 2012-2013 school year¹². School leadership is aware of this as a problem and reports that they, along with the network, are working to address it.
- The school's 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey Results were Average for Academic Expectations, and Safety & Respect; the results were Below Average on the Communication and Engagement sections.
 - The school reports that internal surveys are showing an increase in morale and adult culture.
 - The elementary school grades also report that the introduction of a new school-wide behavior system in the 2011-2012 school year, and continuation of the system this year has led to fewer behavior referrals to deans.
- Participation in this school's School Survey was lower than the citywide averages for Parents (43% versus 53% citywide) and Staff (69% versus 82% citywide). Student survey response rates to the NYCDOE School Survey are comparable to response rates citywide (83% of students at Achievement First East New York versus 82% citywide).¹³

¹¹ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/13/13.

¹² Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/13/13.

¹³ NYC DOE School Survey, <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

Progress Towards Attainment of Accountability Goals¹⁴

- Student daily attendance as of Feb 2013 is 97.8% for the elementary grades and 97.7% for the middle school grades¹⁵, both of which are higher than the CSD average, as well as higher than the stated charter goal.

¹⁴ Goal analysis is considered a neutral point and is not used as part of the evaluation.

¹⁵ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/13/13.

Financial Health

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

Based on the school's 2011-2012 Audited Financial Statements:

- The school is in a strong position to meet all of its liabilities in the next 12 months.
- The school can cover four months of operating expenses without an infusion of cash.
- The school is meeting its enrollment target, indicating a stable budget.
- The school is meeting its debt obligations.
- The school is operating with a 6% surplus in FY2012.
- The school has a good debt to asset ratio, indicating that the school has more assets than it has liabilities.
- The school does not have any debt or lease payments, and has not defaulted on any debt.
- The school's most recent annual cash flow was negative (from FY2011 to FY2012).
- According to the independent auditors, material weaknesses were found in the FY2012 audited statements, but were not considered to be significant deficiencies.

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

The school is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

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 has provided timely submission of accountability reporting documents on time.
- The Board has held the required number of board meetings, as per the Board's bylaws.
- The Board makes board minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to and at Board meetings by posting them temporarily on the school website.

The Board is out of compliance with:

- Not all Board members have submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms.

The school is in compliance with:

- School safety plans were submitted for both sites.
- Both school sites are in compliance with state law on AED/ CPR certification.
- The school has all appropriate and required insurance documents.
- All staff has the required fingerprint clearance.
- Staff is either certified or highly qualified, and those not fall under the amount permitted by the Charter Schools Act.

The school is out of compliance with:

- The school's current immunization rate is below the required threshold established by the NYC Department of Health of 98.8%.

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

As reported by school leadership, the following is noted about the school's plan for its next charter term:

- The middle school plans to make some significant and necessary electrical upgrades to the building.
- The elementary school does not have any plans for growth, nor is the school expecting any facility changes.
- However, the elementary school reports that major changes will take place to the instructional program, upon approval, including the following:
 - Moving grades K-2 to the Common Core.
 - Restructuring the intervention program.
 - Increasing the amounts of time spent in history and science.
 - An additional 30 minute block of "Book Club" with grouping differentiated by need.

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 & Support (CSAS) has developed an Accountability Framework built around four essential questions for charter school renewal:

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

1. Is the School an Academic Success?

1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

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

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

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

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

1b. Mission and Academic Goals

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

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

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

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

1c. Responsive Education Program

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

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

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

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

1d. Learning Environment

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

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

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

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

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

2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

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

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

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

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

2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

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

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

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

2c. Financial and Operational Health

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

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

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

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

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

3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

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

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

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

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have:

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

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

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

3c. Applicable Regulations

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

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