



Charter School Renewal Report  
Charter Schools Accountability and Support  
2012-2013

# THE ETHICAL COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL REPORT

2012-13 SCHOOL YEAR

## Part 1: Executive Summary

### **School Overview and History:**

The Ethical Community Charter School (TECCS) was chartered in 2008 and opened in 2009 after taking a planning year. TECCS is an elementary school serving approximately 240 students from kindergarten through grade four in the 2012-2013 school year.<sup>1</sup> The school is under the terms of its first charter and has expanded to K-4 during its current term, which expires in January 2013.<sup>2</sup> The school plans to ultimately grow through to grade 12. It is currently housed in a New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) facility at 700 Park Avenue in Brooklyn, NY in CSD 14.

The student body is comprised of 80% students who receive Free and Reduced Lunch, compared to 67% in the district; 11.7% students with IEP's, compared to the 17.5% in the district; and 7.9% English language learners (ELL), compared to the 11.6% in the district.<sup>3</sup> The average attendance rate for the school year 2011-2012 was reported as 93.2%.<sup>4</sup>

The Ethical Community Charter School, in 2011-2012, earned their first Progress Report grade receiving a C.<sup>5</sup> The school scored Average on all sections of the NYC DOE School Survey in 2011-2012; Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety & Respect. For each section of the School Survey, TECCS was comparable to citywide averages with fifty-nine percent of the school's parents and 40% of the school's teachers responded to the survey.

	2011-12 PR overall grade	2012 ELA, 3+%	2012 Math, 3+%	FRL %	SWD %	ELL %
School <sup>6</sup>	C	30.8	36.5	80	11.7	7.9
CSD 14 <sup>7</sup>		50.6	55.4	67	17.5	11.6

In order for a charter school to be renewed it must demonstrate that it has earned renewal and is worthy of continuing the privilege of educating New York City students. While the academic performance of students is the foremost determining factor of a school's success, a school's ability to demonstrate an effective educational program, a financially and operationally viable organization, and a strong learning community with support from stakeholders are important factors that inform a renewal decision.

Based on the evaluation of the renewal application, renewal visit, historical annual reports and visits, performance on Progress Reports, comparisons to the CSD, and other factors, the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Accountability & Support team (NYC DOE

<sup>1</sup> ATS data pull 11/20/12

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

<sup>3</sup> School Demographics from ATS 11/20/12. CSD data from 11/26/12 ATS pull.

<sup>4</sup> Self-reported in School Renewal Application

<sup>5</sup> NYC DOE website [www.schools.nyc.gov](http://www.schools.nyc.gov)

<sup>6</sup> Proficiency rates from <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>.

Demographics from ATS 11/20/12.

<sup>7</sup> CSD ELA and Math data from NYC DOE website and measures average performance of common grades only. Demographics from ATS 11/26/12 data pull.

CSAS) recommends a **Two-Year Renewal with Conditions** of the charter for The Ethical Community Charter School. If the school does not meet all specified conditions future renewal is in jeopardy. The conditions are as follows:

- 1) Score C or better in each of the years of the new charter on the Overall Progress Report grade, Student Progress and Student Performance grades on the Progress Report.
- 2) Equal or surpass CSD proficiency levels in Math and ELA in testing grades of grade to grade comparisons (i.e., 3rd grade to 3rd grade) during new charter term.
- 3) If above goals are met during the term, the school can apply to move forward with middle school expansion.

## Part 2: Renewal Decisions and Findings

### **Renewal Framework:**

The New York State Charter Schools Act (“the Act”) states the following regarding the renewal of a school’s charter:

**§2851.4:** Charters may be renewed, upon application, for a term of up to five years in accordance with the provisions of this article for the issuance of such charters pursuant to section twenty-eight hundred fifty-two of this article; provided, however, that a renewal application shall [also] include:

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

The Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team may recommend four potential outcomes for charter schools applying for renewal: full-term renewal, renewal with conditions, short-term renewal, or non-renewal.

***Full-Term Renewal***

In cases where a school has demonstrated exceptional results with its students, a five-year renewal will be granted. A school must show that its program has yielded strong student performance and progress, has met the majority of its charter goals, has demonstrated financial stability, has attained sufficient board capacity, and has an educationally sound learning environment in order to gain this type of renewal.

***Renewal with Conditions***

In cases where a school has demonstrated mixed academic results or concerns about organizational viability, renewal is contingent upon changes to the prospective application or new charter, new performance measures, or both. These may include changes to curriculum, leadership, or board governance structure that are intended to yield improved academic outcomes during the next chartering period.

***Short-Term Renewal***

In cases where a school is up for renewal of its initial charter and has fewer than two years of state-assessment results, a renewal of three-years or fewer may be considered. In very limited circumstances, a school not in its initial charter or in its initial charter with more than three years of state assessment data, may be considered for a short-term renewal *if* the school’s most recent year results are good (for example, an A or B on the NYC DOE Progress Report) while the previous year’s results may have been poor (D or F).

***Non-Renewal***

Schools that have not demonstrated significant progress or high levels of student achievement and/or are in violation of their charter will not be renewed.

**NYC DOE CSAS Renewal Recommendation:**

Based on the evaluation of the renewal application, renewal visit, historical annual reports and visits, performance on Progress Reports, comparisons to the CSD, and other factors, the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Accountability & Support team (NYC DOE CSAS) recommends a **Two-Year Renewal with Conditions** of the charter for The Ethical Community Charter School. If the school does not meet all specified conditions future renewal is in jeopardy. The conditions are as follows:

- 1) Score C or better in each of the years of the new charter on the Overall Progress Report grade, Student Progress and Student Performance grades on the Progress Report.
- 2) Equal or surpass CSD proficiency levels in Math and ELA in testing grades of grade to grade comparisons (i.e., 3rd grade to 3rd grade) during new charter term.
- 3) If above goals are met during the term, the school can apply to move forward with middle school expansion.

This recommendation is made for reasons that include the following:

1. The first listed objective of charter schools, in accordance with the NY Charter Schools Act of 1998, is to improve student learning and achievement (Education Law Section 2850(2)(a)).  
TECCS has not yet demonstrated student progress and achievement for the following reasons:

- i. TECCS is only in its third operational year, and has only one year of testing data and one Progress Report available.
- ii. TECCS received an Overall C grade on the 2011-12 Progress Report, but scored an F grade on the Student Progress and Student Performance sections.<sup>8</sup>
- iii. TECCS underperformed the city and district proficiency rates on both the NYS Math and ELA exam by roughly 20 percentage points.<sup>9</sup>

2. In accordance with Education Law Section 2852(2)(b), a charter applicant must demonstrate the ability to operate the school in a educationally and fiscally sound manner.

TECCS has proven to be an effective and viable organization:

- i. TECCS has clear fiscal policies and procedures in place.
- ii. School's administration provides a monthly dashboard and Principal's report that provides updates on the academic program and culture at the school.
- iii. The school's Finance Director also prepares a monthly dashboard that includes information about the school's financial health.
- iv. The school has ended the last two years with a surplus.
- v. The school has a clear safety plan and is AED and CPR compliant.
- vi. Teacher certification is up to date.

3. In accordance with Education Law Section 2853(1)(f), the board of trustees of the charter school shall have final authority for policy and operational decisions of the school.

The board of TECCS has proven to be effective for the following reasons:

- i. TECCS's leadership has taken a thoughtful approach to implement key strategies designed to increase student achievement.
- ii. TECCS's Board of Trustees members are supportive, reflective and invested in the school's success.

4. In accordance with Education Law Section 2855(1)(b) and Education Law Section 2855(1)(c), a charter may be terminated or revoked in the event of serious violations of law, and/or material and substantial violations of the charter.

TECCS has been in compliance with its charter and applicable laws and regulations.

5. As defined by Part 4 of the NYC DOE CSAS Accountability Framework, a school is to be assessed on its plan for its next charter term.

TECCS has demonstrated viable plans for its next term for the following reasons:

- i. TECCS plans on investing in instructional staffing. The school has hired an Assistant Principal with curricular expertise and teaching experience and an Assessment Coordinator who will support the implementation of interim assessment and school-wide assessment/data-analysis.
- ii. TECCS will begin an extracurricular program designed for fourth graders, which is being piloted in the 2012-2013 school year.
- iii. The school has plans to roll out a peer observation program for teachers to enhance TECCS's teachers' understanding of their own practice and to build faculty community.
- iv. TECCS's administration will begin leading weekly grade level team (GLT) meetings with classroom teachers and teaching assistants in K-4. Meetings will alternatively focus on literacy and mathematics.

---

<sup>8</sup> 2011-12 Progress Report.

<sup>9</sup> <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>.

- v. TECCS is planning to implement interim assessments in grades served. Quarterly assessments will assess students' mastery of material recently taught in the core curriculum and the CCSS.
- vi. TECCS has demonstrated forward thinking in planning for their middle school. They have hired an assistant principal and assessment coordinator this year to focus on improving elementary performance, and assure continued attention toward the elementary grades. In addition, TECCS has indicated and budgeted plans for hiring a Middle School principal to begin in August 2013 to formalize implementation plans for its first 6<sup>th</sup> grade cohort in September 2014. That being said, with the limited available data and student performance to date, attention and focus must be directed at the elementary grades to assure improvement. Only when that improvement is underway and demonstrated via student performance data, will they be able to apply to implement a viable, sustainable plan for incorporating a middle school program.

### Part 3: Charter School Goals

TECCS has made some progress toward the goals set forth in its charter agreement. Please see the table of Charter Goals.

Please note that information in this section is provided by the school, and may vary from data reported by the NYC DOE because, among other reasons, the NYC DOE reports on all students, while certain school goals may only apply to students falling under a given criteria. All data errors, discrepancies, or omissions in this section are not the responsibility of the NYC DOE.

TECCS Charter School - Progress Towards Charter Goals				
Goals	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	
<b>GOAL 1: ELA Absolute Measure 1</b>  Each year, 75 percent of those students in the 3rd to 5th grades will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State ELA examination. This analysis will only include those students in the two year cohort (students enrolled on the day of the current exam and on BEDS day the prior school year). This analysis will start with the first 3rd grade class during the 2011-2012 school year.	N/A	N/A	Percent of TECCS third graders at Level 3 & 4 on 2012 NYS ELA Exam: Grade 3- Cohort 30%	Met? TECCS is still making progress towards this goal
			TECCS has learned that higher level reading and writing skills must be infused into every aspect of classroom life in grades 3 and 4. This includes thinking critically about how the rules and routines of the classroom foster independence and stamina as well as the actual tasks and assignments the students are expected to complete. Our units of study in reading and writing were revised to align with the CCSS in the 2011-12 academic year, but have gone through further revisions this summer. Units must be extremely rigorous in their planning and implementation in order for students to achieve the CCSS and beyond. Teachers need time to study each unit before it is implemented and the professional development tools and resources necessary to deeply understand the big ideas and essential understandings of a unit before they are expected to implement it in the classroom. An instructional leader has been hired to provide this kind of support to teachers in the upcoming school year. TECCS has also learned that it is impossible to evaluate or improve upon a grade level (such as grade 3) without evaluating and improving upon the earlier grade levels.	
<b>GOAL 1: ELA Value Added Measure 1</b>  Starting in the 2012-13 school year, those students in the two year cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State ELA exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's State ELA exam.	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>GOAL 1: ELA Comparative Measure 1</b>  Each year starting with the 2011-2012 school year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the State ELA exam in each tested grade will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools.	N/A	N/A	Results Pending Reports have not been released.	
<b>GOAL 2: Mathematics Absolute Measure 1</b>  Each year, 75 percent of those students in the 3rd to 5th grades will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Mathematics examination. This analysis will only include those students in the two year cohort (students enrolled on the day of the current exam and on BEDS day the prior school year). This analysis will start with the first 3rd grade class during the 2011-2012 school year.	N/A	N/A	Percent of TECCS third graders at Level 3 & 4 on the 2012 NYS Math exam: Grade 3- Cohort 45%	Met? TECCS is still making progress towards this goal
			In the 2011-12 school year, grade classroom integrated new content aligned to the CCSS by using the companion materials to TERC Investigations and the Common Core Standards. Teachers completed revised unit plans that included this new content. TECCS has learned that it needs to supplement the TERC Investigations programs with resources and professional development for teachers to make each unit as rigorous as possible. Going forward, the math block will more closely resemble our literacy block with times designated for rote practice/memorization (similar to word study in the literacy block) as well as small-group guided math instruction based on student data. A system of Tier 2 and Tier 3 math intervention will be established in the younger grades so students are "caught" before they fall too significantly behind in mathematics learning.	
<b>GOAL 2: Mathematics Value Added Measure 1</b>  Starting in the 2012-13 school year, those students in the two year cohort will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State Mathematics exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's State Mathematics exam.	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>GOAL 2: Mathematics Comparative Measure 1</b>  Each year starting with the 2011-2012 school year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the State Mathematics exam in each tested grade will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools.	N/A	N/A	Results Pending Reports have not been released.	

<p><b>GOAL 3: Science Absolute Measure 1</b></p>	<p>Each year, 75 percent of those students in the 4th grade will perform at or above Level 3 on the New York State Science examination. This analysis will only include those students in the two year cohort (students enrolled on the day of the current exam and on BEDG day the prior school year). This analysis will start with the first 4th grade class during the 2012-2013 school year.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>GOAL 3: Science Comparative Measure 1</b></p>	<p>Each year starting with the 2012-2013 school year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the New York State 4th Grade Science exam will place the school in the top quartile of all similar schools.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>ANNUAL YEARLY PROGRESS GOAL</b></p>	<p>Each year starting with the 2013-2014 school year, the School will make Annual Yearly Progress based on the results of the State ELA, math, and science exams as set forth under the State's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability system</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Organizational GOAL 1</b></p>	<p>Each year, the school will have an average student attendance rate of at least 95 percent.</p>	<p>91% Average Student Attendance Met? TECCS is still making progress towards this goal We will continue to monitor the students who are frequently tardy and absent from school to determine if the reason is illness or other. A plan for habitually absent students will be developed and agreed upon by the family and TECCS.</p>	<p>92% Average Student Attendance Met? TECCS is still making progress towards this goal Going forward, TECCS is developing a parent education program that stresses the importance of parent involvement in a child's education. This includes regular attendance.</p>	<p>93% Average Student Attendance Met? TECCS is still making progress towards this goal Going forward, TECCS will continue to utilize the parent education program that stresses the importance of parent involvement in a child's education. This includes regular attendance.</p>
<p><b>Organizational GOAL 2</b></p>	<p>Each year, 95 percent of all students enrolled (excluding those students whose families moved) during the course of the year return the following September.</p>	<p>93% of students who were enrolled during the year returned to TECCS the following September. Also, 93% of the students who were enrolled at the conclusion of the school year returned in September. TECCS is making progress towards this goal. We worked to conduct exit interviews with each of the families of students who chose not to send their child back to TECCS. We then incorporate feedback and lessons learned from these exit interviews into our program as appropriate.</p>	<p>At year's end, 99% of students indicated that they intend to return in the fall based on a survey that was completed by all families. TECCS met this goal</p>	<p>At year's end, 95% of students indicated that they intend to return in the fall based on a survey that was completed by all families. TECCS met this goal</p>
<p><b>Organizational GOAL 3</b></p>	<p>Each year TECCS will comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations and contract terms, including but not limited to the New York Charter Schools Act, the Freedom of Information Law, the New York Open Meetings Law, the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Act, and federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.</p>	<p>TECCS has generally and substantially complied with all applicable laws, rules and regulations. The school's staff has been trained with respect to all applicable procedures and systems. The staff is empowered to identify and address any possible legal or compliance issues and report these matters to the Board or its counsel. TECCS has met this goal</p>	<p>TECCS has been in compliance with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and contract terms. TECCS has met this goal</p>	<p>TECCS has generally and substantially complied with all applicable laws, rules and regulations. The Board takes legal compliance matters very seriously and has retained outside counsel to ensure compliance with all relevant laws. TECCS-NY has in place and maintains effective systems, policies, procedures and other controls for ensuring that legal and charter requirements are met. TECCS' staff has been trained with respect to all applicable procedures and systems. The staff is empowered to identify and address possible legal or compliance issues and report these matters to the Board or its counsel. TECCS has met this goal</p>
<p><b>Organizational GOAL 4</b></p>	<p>Each year student enrollment will be within 15% of full enrollment as defined by TECCS's contract.</p>	<p>Year 1 Full Enrollment = 120 Actual Enrollment = 120 TECCS met this goal</p>	<p>Our year end enrollment number was 158, which was 99% of planned capacity of 160. TECCS met this goal</p>	<p>Our year end enrollment number was 158, which was 99% of planned capacity of 160. TECCS met this goal</p>
<p><b>Organizational GOAL 5</b></p>	<p>Each year, parents will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the school's Parent Survey in which at least 80% of all parents provide a positive response to each of the survey items.</p>	<p>Response Rate: 45% Academic Expectations: 8.0 Communication: 7.5 Engagement: 7.8 Safety &amp; Respect: 8.1 TECCS is making progress toward this goal. The parents who responded to the survey averaged scores greater than 7.5 in each of the four categories. Unfortunately, only 45% of our parents responded. In the future, we will monitor the response rate and provide the opportunity to complete the survey at school when parents attend events.</p>	<p>Response Rate: 37% Academic Expectations: 8.9 Communication: 9.0 Engagement: 8.6 Safety &amp; Respect: 9.2 TECCS is making progress toward this goal. TECCS-NY's parent response rate was only 37%, which is unacceptable to us as we very much want to receive feedback from all our parents on a regular basis. Although the parents who did participate in the survey responded quite favorably, we will offer more opportunities for parents to complete the survey to increase the parent response rate in 2011-12. We will provide access to computers at a school event.</p>	<p>Response Rate: 59% Academic Expectations: 9.1 Communication: 8.8 Engagement: 8.7 Safety &amp; Respect: 8.8 TECCS is making progress toward this goal. TECCS' parent response rate was 59% on the 2012 NYCDOE School Survey. Although it fell short of the 80% requirement, it is up significantly from 37% in 2011. We very much want to receive feedback from all our parents on a regular basis. Although the parents who did participate in the survey responded quite favorably, we will offer more opportunities for parents to complete the survey to increase the parent response rate in 2012-13. We will continue to provide access to computers at school events.</p>

Financial GOAL 1	Upon completion of the school's first year of operation and every year thereafter, the school will undergo an independent financial audit that will result in an unqualified opinion and no major findings.	The auditor's report found no instances of non-compliance.	The auditor's report found no instances of non-compliance.	The auditor's report found no instances of non-compliance.
		TECCS met this goal	TECCS met this goal	TECCS met this goal
Financial GOAL 2	Each year, the school will operate on a balanced budget and maintain a stable cash flow.	The school maintained a positive operating and cash surplus throughout the year and kept within the limits of the budget of operating expenses throughout the school year.	The school maintained a positive operating and cash surplus throughout the year and kept within the limits of the budget of operating expenses throughout the school year.	The school maintained a positive operating and cash surplus throughout the year and kept within the limits of the budget of operating expenses throughout the school year.
		TECCS met this goal	TECCS met this goal	TECCS met this goal
Charter-Specific Goal 1	Each year, parents will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the school's Parent Survey in which at least 80% of all parents provide a positive response to each of the survey items.	<p>Response Rate: 45%</p> <p>Academic Expectations: 8.0 Communication: 7.5 Engagement: 7.8 Safety &amp; Respect: 8.1</p> <p>TECCS is making progress toward this goal.</p> <p>The parents who responded to the survey averaged scores greater than 7.5 in each of the four categories. Unfortunately, only 45% of our parents responded. In the future, we will monitor the response rate and provide the opportunity to complete the survey at school when parents attend events.</p>	<p>Response Rate: 37%</p> <p>Academic Expectations: 8.9 Communication: 9.0 Engagement: 8.8 Safety &amp; Respect: 9.2</p> <p>TECCS is making progress toward this goal.</p> <p>TECCS-NY's parent response rate was only 37%, which is unacceptable to us as we very much want to receive feedback from all our parents on a regular basis. Although the parents who did participate in the survey responded quite favorably, we will offer more opportunities for parents to complete the survey to increase the parent response rate in 2011-12. We will provide access to computers at a school event.</p>	<p>Response Rate: 59%</p> <p>Academic Expectations: 9.1 Communication: 8.8 Engagement: 8.7 Safety &amp; Respect: 8.8</p> <p>TECCS is making progress toward this goal.</p> <p>TECCS' parent response rate was 59% on the 2012 NYCDOE School Survey. Although it fell short of the 80% requirement, it is up significantly from 37% in 2011. We very much want to receive feedback from all our parents on a regular basis. Although the parents who did participate in the survey responded quite favorably, we will offer more opportunities for parents to complete the survey to increase the parent response rate in 2012-13. We will continue to provide access to computers at school events.</p>

## Part 4: Charter School Performance Data

The tables presents the percentage of students at the school scoring at or above grade level (performance level 3 or greater) on the New York State ELA and Math exams as well as a comparison to the percentage of students at or above grade level in District 14 and New York City.

### Percent of Students Scoring at or above Level 3 - Whole School<sup>10</sup>

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
The Ethical Community Charter School (TECCS)				30.8
CSD 14*				50.6
NYC*				49.0
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
The Ethical Community Charter School (TECCS)				36.5
CSD 14*				55.4
NYC*				57.0

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

#### Grade 3

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
The Ethical Community Charter School (TECCS)				30.8
CSD 14				50.6
NYC				49.0
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
The Ethical Community Charter School (TECCS)				36.5
CSD 14				55.4
NYC				57.0

<sup>10</sup> All data from NYC DOE website.

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>.

\*CSD and City data represent the average performance of the same testing grades of the school.



**Charter School Renewal Visit Report  
Charter Schools Accountability and Support  
2012-2013**

**THE ETHICAL COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL  
RENEWAL VISIT REPORT**

**SEPTEMBER 2012**

## Part A: Executive Summary

### Renewal Review Process Overview:

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team conducts renewal visits of charter schools authorized by the NYC DOE. The renewal visit is designed to address four questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization; is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations; and what are the school's plans for its next charter term? The visits are conducted by representatives of CSAS and may also include the district superintendent and other DOE staff or consultants. The visits last the duration of two to three school days. The renewal visit begins with a meeting with the school leadership team. Afterward, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. They also review academic and operational documents. Additionally, reviewers meet with one or more of the school's Board representatives and speak to a sampling of the school's parents. 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 renewal visit is intended to provide a snapshot of the school and reflects what was observed at the time of the visit.

The following experts participated in the review of this school on September 24-25, 2012:

- Sonia Park, Executive Director, NYC DOE CSAS (Day One)
- Sonya Hooks, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSAS
- Richard Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSAS (Day One)
- Andrea McLean, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE CSAS
- Keisha Womack, Director of Operations, NYC DOE CSAS
- Laurie Pendleton, Consultant to NYC DOE CSAS

## Part B: Renewal Visit Observations

### Areas of Strength

- TECCS's has established a positive culture.
  - On the day of the visit, the ethical theme was evident in the way teachers and students work together. Teachers were observed quietly redirecting student behavior and students were observed to be mostly responsive to this approach. In most classrooms, student-to-student interactions were positive and students were respectful of each other. The tone in the classrooms was one of mutual respect and caring.
  - Students interviewed could recite the student belief statement and explain the role it plays in the school. Another student mentioned that the school, "Teaches you to be respectful and kind."
  - The school is reported to provide Character Education classes that provide students with opportunities to discuss the role of character in the community.

- The school's implementation of the Responsive Classroom approach was in evidence during class visits. On the day of the visit, classroom schedules reflected Morning Meeting, procedures and routines were being taught and reinforced in a thoughtful way. Teachers used "Time Out" and "Buddy Classrooms" to manage student behavior.
- TECCS's leadership has taken a thoughtful approach to implement key strategies designed to increase student achievement.
  - The school added an Assistant Principal whose focus is on instruction and assessment in the upper grades. On the day of the visit, both the Principal, and the Assistant Principal were able to provide thoughtful and reflective feedback on the quality of instruction observed.
  - The school's leadership reported the school has begun to use the Danielson Framework to observe teachers and establish goals for improvement. The administrators also use this tool to tailor feedback and support. Teachers interviewed shared that this type of specific feedback was helpful in their development.
  - To meet the needs of students, Teaching Assistants have been added to grades 3 and 4.
  - As reported by the school's leadership, an analysis of the data showed the students were not able to transfer the knowledge they were gaining in class to the state assessment. In response to this finding, the school is integrating test practice into each unit of study using "Test Talk" strategies.
  - The school reports an increased focus on providing targeted interventions to meet the needs of their struggling students. This includes the additional use of data to identify students in need of support and more clarity around what the intervention teachers are doing during the intervention period.
- Adults in the building collaborate in various ways to meet student needs.
  - Weekly grade level meetings are facilitated by the Assistant Principal and are focused on improving instruction. The grade level team observed on the day of the visit was focused on clarifying the instructional objective and increasing the rigor of instruction. The Assistant Principal modeled a lesson while the teachers observed and took notes. After the mini lesson, the Assistant Principal and teachers discussed the lesson, what learning was evident, and strategies for improving the instruction.
  - The school's Child Student Team, consisting of the School Psychologist, Special Education Coordinator, Family Coordinator, and Assistant principal, meets regularly with each teacher to identify student needs and to create an intervention plan based on these needs. These plans clearly identify the strategy, the driver and due date for each intervention. The team members report this structure holds all team members accountable.
- TECCS's Board of Trustees' are supportive, reflective and invested in the school's success.

- It is reported that the school's administration provides a monthly dashboard and Principal's report that provides updates on the academic program and culture at the school.
- The school's Operations Manager also prepares a monthly dashboard that includes information about the school's financial health.
- TECCS was observed to have effective operational structures in place.
  - On the day of the visit, the school has available a clear safety plan and is AED and CPR compliant.
  - Teacher certification is up to date.
  - Classes are well resourced.

### **Areas of Growth**

- TECCS did not meet their goals for student achievement and has not shown adequate growth on student achievement measures.
  - 30% of TECCS' third graders scored at a Level 3 or higher on the 2012 New York State English Language Arts exam.
  - 45% of TECCS third graders scored proficient on the 2012 NYS Math Exam.
  - The school has also reported minimal progress on the Terra Nova assessment. In mathematics, the current Grade 3 Cohort scored a Mean NCE of 32.1% in 2010, a Mean NCE of 36.3 in 2011, and a Mean NCE of 47.6 in 2012. In English Language Arts the scores Mean NCE's by year were 37.45 in 2010, 46.97 in 2011, and 49.50 in 2012.
  - TECCS did not meet or exceed the averages for New York City and CD14 in their first year of New York State Assessments.
- TECCS's focus on improving student academic achievement is observed to lack a sense of urgency with all stakeholders.
  - During teacher interviews, inconsistencies were noticed with the school's reports of administering a variety of interim assessments and teachers ability to articulate how they used the data collected to inform instruction beyond the identification of students in need of intervention.
  - Communication between administration, faculty and parents was not observed to be deliberate as it pertains to academic success. A strong and supportive community has been established, however, during interviews, parents and teachers did not demonstrate advocacy for academic success. Both parties focused on the aspect of not being a "teaching to the test" school rather than exhibiting an understanding of the importance of academic rigor, success, and growth for students. There was no evidence that parents are knowledgeable about the urgency around low student achievement.
- Classroom instruction is lacking rigor and pacing was inefficient.

- In many classrooms observed, there was a general lack of rigor with teachers asking lower level questions and many students observed were not cognitively engaged.
  - In general, teacher talk outweighed student talk and student-to-student interaction.
  - In many classrooms, the time it took to prepare students for the tasks was much longer than the time actually spent on the task.
  - In many classrooms observed, pacing was slow and opportunities to improve efficiency through the use of the Teaching Assistant or student helpers were missed.
  - It appears that grade level expectations for student work have not been established and made clear to students, teachers, and families. The level of student work exhibited did not contain evidence of teacher feedback and, for the most part, was below work expected at the grade level of the student.
- The recorded immunization rate is below New York State Department of Health Recommendations.
    - At the time of visit, the school’s immunization rate was 92.1%, compared to the recommended 98.6%<sup>11</sup>

## Part 6: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

### I. PROCESS BACKGROUND

#### A. Statutory Basis for Renewal

The Charter Schools Act of 1998 (“the Act”) authorizes the creation of charter schools to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently of existing schools and school districts in order to accomplish the following objectives:

- Improve student learning and achievement;
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;

---

<sup>11</sup> New York City Department of Health

- Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems by holding the schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.<sup>12</sup>

When granted, a charter is valid for up to five years. For a school chartered under the Act to operate beyond the initial charter term, the school must seek and obtain renewal of its charter.<sup>13</sup>

A school seeking renewal of its charter must submit a renewal application to the charter entity to which the original charter application was submitted.<sup>14</sup> As one such charter entity, the New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”) institutes a renewal application process that adheres to the Act’s renewal standards:

- A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in its charter;
- A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private;
- Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school including the charter school report cards and certified financial statements;
- Indications of parent and student satisfaction.

Where the NYCDOE approves a renewal application, it is required under the Act to submit the application and a proposed charter to the Board of Regents for its review and approval.<sup>15</sup>

#### B. NYCDOE’s Charter Renewal Process

The expiration of charters and their renewal based on a compelling record of success is the linchpin of charter school accountability. The NYCDOE’s processes and procedures reflect this philosophy and therefore meet the objectives of the Act.<sup>16</sup>

In the final year of its charter, a Chancellor-authorized charter school seeking renewal must demonstrate its success during the initial charter term and establish goals and objectives for the next charter term. Ultimately, the renewal process offers an opportunity for the school community to reflect on its experiences during its first term, to make a compelling, evidence-

---

<sup>12</sup> See § 2850 of the Charter Schools Act of 1998.

<sup>13</sup> See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

<sup>14</sup> See generally §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4).

<sup>15</sup> § 2852(5)

<sup>16</sup> The NYCDOE charter renewal application is available on the Office of Charter Schools website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/charters/default.htm>

based case that it has earned the privilege of an additional charter term, and, if renewed, to build an ambitious plan for the future.

Consistent with the requirements of § 2851(4) of the Act, a school applying for renewal of its charter must use data and other credible evidence to prove its success, a case that can be organized into three questions:

1. Has your school been an academic success?
2. Has your school been a viable organization?
3. Has your school complied with applicable laws and regulations?

A school will answer these overarching questions by demonstrating that its students have made significant academic progress and that the school has met the goals and objectives pledged in its initial charter. In addition, the school will describe challenges it has faced during its charter term, the strategies that were used to address those challenges, and the lessons learned.

This report contains the findings and recommendations of the NYCDOE regarding a school's application for charter renewal. This report is based on a cumulative record of the school's progress during its charter term, including but not limited to oversight visits, annual reports, and formal correspondence between the school and its authorizing entities, all of which are conducted in order to identify areas of weakness and to help the school to address them. Additionally, the NYCDOE incorporates into this report its findings from the renewal application process, which includes a written application, completion of student achievement data templates, and a school visit by the Charter Schools Accountability and Support team of the NYCDOE ("NYCDOE CSAS").

The NYCDOE CSAS then prepares a draft report and provides a copy to the school for its review and comment. The draft contains the findings, discussion, and the evidence base for those findings. Upon receiving a school's comment, the NYCDOE CSAS reviews its draft, makes any appropriate changes, and reviews the amended findings to make a recommendation to the Chancellor. The Chancellor's final decision, and the findings on which that decision is based, is submitted to the Board of Regents for a final decision.

## **Part 7: The CSAS Accountability Framework**

Throughout the Renewal Process and the life of each school's charter, NYCDOE Charter Schools Accountability and Support uses the following Accountability Framework to monitor Charter School success:

To help NYC DOE authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the CSAS team 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 laws and regulations?

#### 4. What are the school’s plans for its next charter term?

There is no strict, number-driven point scale for applying the framework to a school’s overall performance record. Although academic performance is primary, the NYC DOE takes into account a wide variety of factors (as indicated by the framework strands and available evidence detail) when evaluating a school. Further detail about the application of the framework to school reflection and evaluation is provided on pages 15-18.

What follows is a framework that outlines strands, indicators, and potential evidence for each of the four essential questions. The framework identifies what CSAS looks at in determining whether a school is successful enough to earn a new charter term, with or without conditions. As schools use the Accountability Framework, they should remember that charter schools exist to deliver improved student achievement for the students they serve, particularly at-risk students, so they can be high-quality choices for families. This reminder should help a school apply this framework to its own performance analysis, underscoring the state and city’s commitment to superior academic performance as the most important factor in a school’s performance.

## 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 established in school charter
- Meet student progress goals established in school charter
- 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
- Parent association meeting agendas and minutes
- Participation at parent-teacher conferences, school advocacy events, participation in academic goal related programs
- Stakeholder (board, parents, staff, students, etc.) interviews

## 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
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- 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
- Use a defined process for evaluating curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals
- Have school calendars and day schedules that provide the time necessary to deliver on the school's mission and academic 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
- Special Education/ELL progress monitoring documentation
- Interim assessment results
- Student and teacher portfolios
- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation
- Professional development plans and resources
- School calendar and daily schedules
- DOE School Surveys and internal school satisfaction surveys
- Instructional leader and staff interviews

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

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

- Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best efforts
- 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 plan with formal or informal structures or programs in place that provide students opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens (for example: a character education, citizenship, or community involvement or service program)

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

- School mission and articulated values
- School calendar and class schedules
- Student management plan (code of conduct, school values, discipline policy, positive incentive system, etc.)
- Student attendance and retention rates
- Student discipline data (referral, suspension, expulsion)
- DOE School Survey student results
- DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results
- Parent complaint/concern information
- Internal 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:

- Have a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations, with clear lines of accountability for the Board, school leadership and all staff
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate officers, committees, and a purposeful 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, and is fully compliant with its Board approved by-laws (number of meetings, quorum, posting of calendar, agenda and minutes)
- Have a defined process for Board reflection on effectiveness, assessing developing needs, and plan for professional growth
- 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 and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization is identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implements a process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's staff that is clearly defined in staff handbook
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers, including both formal and informal observations

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

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, calendar of meetings, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Board resources for evaluating school leadership and staff, including rubric/performance metrics
- Board resources for self-reflection and professional growth
- Board development plan
- Board interviews
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar
- Professional development plan for leadership staff
- School leadership and staff interviews

### 2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

- Create and maintain a healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered, and aligned with school mission and values

- Implement flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- Encourage professional conversations about effective performance and quality instruction among staff, through, for example, such means as regular and periodic teaming (grade level teams, data days, etc.) and peer observations
- Have systems in place to evaluate professional development effectiveness and provide ongoing support for school-wide and individual initiatives
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Engage parents actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- Develop strong community-based partnerships who support and advocate for the school
- Have a clear procedure for parents and staff to express concerns to school leadership and the Board, as appropriate, including a clearly articulated escalation path to authorizer

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
- Internal satisfaction surveys
- Staff handbook
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- School Professional Development Plan and staff feedback on professional development events
- Resources for evaluations and observations, scheduled opportunities for professional collaboration, staff feedback on professional development events
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent/Student Handbook
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)

## **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 student enrollment and retention targets
- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, as school leadership and Board levels, in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to short- and long-term decision-making
- Have clearly established policies and procedures for overall fiscal and operational health of the school (onboarding of all new staff, record-keeping, processing requests of HR services, application and enrollment calls, visitors, volunteers, etc.)
- Maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Receive consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, have strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school design and academic program
- Ensure a safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage

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
- Financial leader(s) job description, resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Financial audits
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships
- Operational policies and procedures, including training resources
- Staff turnover and retention records
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- School safety plan
- Appropriate insurance documents

### **3. Is the School in Compliance with its Charter and All Applicable Laws 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, if appropriate, 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 up-to-date charter is available on request 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
- Annual Site Visit reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership, Board, staff and community interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

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

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location<sup>17</sup> or are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages for enrollment and retention
- Implement 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
- Conduct an independently verified fair and open lottery and manage with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employ 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
- Family/Student handbook
- Student discipline records
- Parent complaint/grievance records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Demographic data (school, district, and other as appropriate)
- Staff roster, fingerprint clearance for all staff, certification status of all instructional staff

<sup>17</sup> School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

### 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 NYC DOE 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 with Board, staff, parents, students or others, as appropriate

## 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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Charter (replication) Application
- 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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- 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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) with partners or important vendors

## **Part 8: NYC DOE School Progress Reports**

Please see the attached progress reports for this school.

**The Ethical Community Charter School (TECCS)**

PRINCIPAL: Ann Mooney

DBN: 84K734

ENROLLMENT: 205

SCHOOL TYPE: Early Childhood

PEER INDEX\*: 53.62

\*See p. 6 for more details on Peer Index.

**PROGRESS REPORT**

<b>C</b>	OVERALL SCORE:	23.9	out of 70	OVERALL RANK:	34	This school's overall score was higher than 4 of 38 Early Childhood schools.
	For early childhood, the percent of schools receiving top grades was set in advance. Schools in their first year, in phase out, or which have fewer than 25 students with progress results receive a report with no grade or score.					

**Progress Report Grades - Early Childhood**

GRADE	SCORE RANGE	% OF SCHOOLS
A	55.8 or higher	27% of schools
B	39.3 - 55.7	35% of schools
C	23.9 - 39.2	30% of schools
D	22.5 - 23.8	5% of schools
F	22.4 or lower	3% of schools

**Overview** Each school's Progress Report (1) measures student year-to-year progress, (2) compares the school to peer schools, and (3) rewards success in moving all children forward, especially children with the greatest needs.

CATEGORY	SCORE	GRADE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Student Progress</b>	<b>6.2</b> out of 30	<b>F</b>	Student Progress measures the results of students on 2011 3rd grade state tests in English and Math, with extra weight given to students who scored higher than expected.
<b>Student Performance</b>	<b>7.7</b> out of 25	<b>F</b>	Student Performance measures the results of students on 2011 3rd grade state tests in English and Math.
<b>School Environment</b>	<b>8.9</b> out of 15	<b>B</b>	School Environment measures student attendance and a survey of the school community rating academic expectations, safety and respect, communication, and engagement.
<b>Closing the Achievement Gap</b>	<b>1.1</b> (15 max)		Schools receive additional credit for exceptional graduation and college/career readiness outcomes of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who enter high school at a low performance level.
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>23.9</b> out of 70	<b>C</b>	The overall grade is based on the total of all scores above. Category scores may not add up to total score because of rounding.

**Progress Report Implications**

Strong Progress Report results are the basis for recognition and potential rewards for school leaders, and poor results are an important factor in determining whether schools require intensive support or intervention. For more information, see:  
<http://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/Support+and+Intervention.htm>

**State Accountability**

The school's current status: **In Good Standing**

This designation is determined by the New York State Department of Education under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver. More information on New York State accountability can be found here:  
<http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/accountability/default.htm>

GRADE	<b>F</b>	GRADE	SCORE RANGE
		A	23.9 or higher
		B	16.8 - 23.8
		C	10.2 - 16.7
		D	9.6 - 10.1
SCORE	6.2	F	9.5 or lower

(out of 30)

Student Progress accounts for 30 of the total 70 points. The grade is based on the results of students who attended the school on the 2011 3rd grade state tests in English and Math, and evaluates the extent to which the early childhood school helped students exceed their expected performance.

THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	COMPARISON TO CITY SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 25%)	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
-----------------------	---	-----------------------	---	-----------------------	-----------------	---------------

**English**



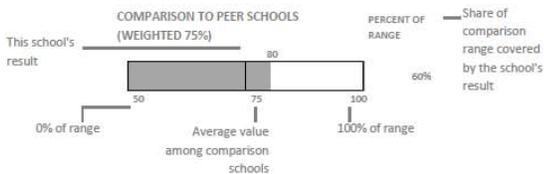
**Mathematics**



TOTAL POINTS	30.00	6.18
--------------	-------	------

**How To Interpret These Charts**

To determine the number of points earned, this school's 2011-12 results on each metric are compared to the historical results of third graders at peer schools and all third graders citywide. The comparison to peer schools is worth 75% of the points for each metric and the comparison to all third graders citywide is worth 25% of the points. The bars represent the range of results for the peer and city comparison schools for 2009-10 and 2010-11 that are within two standard deviations of the average. The percent of the range that is shaded is the school's share of possible points. The share is multiplied by the weight (75% or 25%) and the possible points for the metric to determine the points earned.



**Score Calculation Example**

FORMULA	(	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	x	0.75	+	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	x	0.25	)	x	POINTS POSSIBLE	=	POINTS EARNED
EXAMPLE	(	60%	x	0.75	+	80%	x	0.25	)	x	15	=	9.75

GRADE	<b>F</b>	GRADE	SCORE RANGE
		A	19.9 or higher
		B	14.0 - 19.8
		C	8.5 - 13.9
SCORE	<b>7.7</b>	D	8.0 - 8.4
	(out of 25)	F	7.9 or lower

Student Performance accounts for 25 of the total 70 points. The Student Performance grade is based on results on the 2011 state tests in English and Math. The section evaluates the percent of third grade students who reach or exceed proficiency (Level 3 and 4).

THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	COMPARISON TO CITY SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 25%)	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
-----------------------	---	-----------------------	---	-----------------------	-----------------	---------------

**English**

Percentage of Students at Level 3 or 4 (n=52)	32.7%		27.6%		30.1%	6.25	1.76
Average Student Proficiency (n=52)	2.68		32.4%		35.0%	6.25	2.07

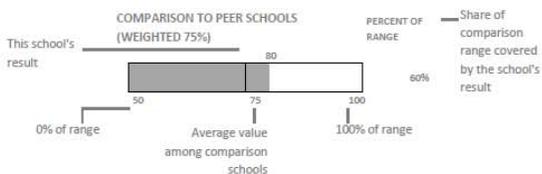
**Mathematics**

Percentage of Students at Level 3 or 4 (n=52)	36.5%		28.8%		27.1%	6.25	1.77
Average Student Proficiency (n=52)	2.84		34.5%		33.6%	6.25	2.14

TOTAL POINTS 25.00 7.74

**How To Interpret These Charts**

To determine the number of points earned, this school's 2011-12 results on each metric are compared to the historical results of third graders at peer schools and all third graders citywide. The comparison to peer schools is worth 75% of the points for each metric and the comparison to all third graders citywide is worth 25% of the points. The bars represent the range of results for the peer and city comparison schools for 2009-10 and 2010-11 that are within two standard deviations of the average. The percent of the range that is shaded is the school's share of possible points. The share is multiplied by the weight (75% or 25%) and the possible points for the metric to determine the points earned.



**Score Calculation Example**

FORMULA	( PERCENT OF PEER RANGE x 0.75 + PERCENT OF CITY RANGE x 0.25 ) x POINTS POSSIBLE = POINTS EARNED
EXAMPLE	( 60% x 0.75 + 80% x 0.25 ) x 6.25 = 4.06

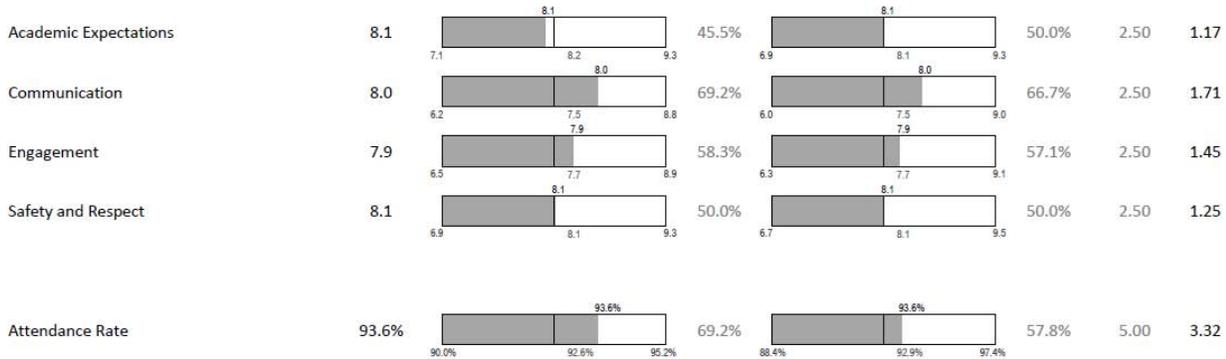
GRADE **B**  
 SCORE **8.9**  
 (out of 15)

GRADE	SCORE RANGE
A	11.9 or higher
B	8.4 - 11.8
C	5.1 - 8.3
D	4.8 - 5.0
F	4.7 or lower

School Environment accounts for 15 of the total 70 points. The School Environment grade is based on student attendance and results of the NYC School Survey, on which parents and teachers rate academic expectations, safety and respect, communication, and engagement.

THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	COMPARISON TO PEER SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 75%)	PERCENT OF PEER RANGE	COMPARISON TO CITY SCHOOLS (WEIGHTED 25%)	PERCENT OF CITY RANGE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
-----------------------	---	-----------------------	---	-----------------------	-----------------	---------------

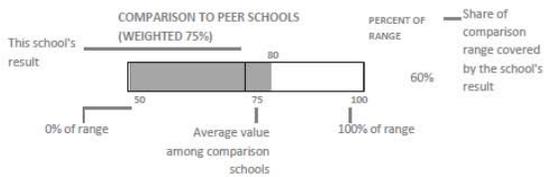
School Survey Results



TOTAL POINTS 15.00 8.90

How To Interpret These Charts

To determine the number of points earned, this school's 2011-12 results on each metric are compared to the historical results of third graders at peer schools and all third graders citywide. The comparison to peer schools is worth 75% of the points for each metric and the comparison to all third graders citywide is worth 25% of the points. The bars represent the range of results for the peer and city comparison schools for 2009-10 and 2010-11 that are within two standard deviations of the average. The percent of the range that is shaded is the school's share of possible points. The share is multiplied by the weight (75% or 25%) and the possible points for the metric to determine the points earned.



Score Calculation Example

FORMULA	( PERCENT OF PEER RANGE x 0.75 + PERCENT OF CITY RANGE x 0.25 ) x POINTS POSSIBLE	=	POINTS EARNED
EXAMPLE	( 60% x 0.75 + 80% x 0.25 ) x 2.5	=	1.63

Schools receive additional credit for exceptional gains by students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students starting with the lowest proficiency citywide. A school earns additional credit when each high-need student meets the success criteria for an eligible metric. The number of points will depend on the percentage of the school's population that is in the high-need group, the percentage of that group that is successful, and a "fixed point value" based on how difficult it is to achieve the success criteria. Additional Credit can only improve a school's Progress Report score. It cannot lower a school's score. Early childhood schools are eligible for points on 8 additional credit metrics, each of which is worth up to 2 points. (In the table below, "." in "This School's Results" indicates that a school has fewer than 5 eligible students in one of the categories.)

CATEGORY	THIS SCHOOL'S RESULTS	POPULATION PERCENTAGE	FIXED POINT VALUE	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS EARNED
<b>Early Grade Progress</b>					
<b>English</b>					
English Language Learners (n=1)	.	.	0.005	0.00	.
Self-Contained/ICT/SETSS (n=4)	.	.	0.013	0.00	.
Black/Hispanic Male Students (n=29)	1.20	55.8%	0.006	5.33	0.40
<b>Mathematics</b>					
English Language Learners (n=1)	.	.	0.005	0.00	.
Self-Contained/ICT/SETSS (n=4)	.	.	0.013	0.00	.
Black/Hispanic Male Students (n=29)	1.41	55.8%	0.005	5.33	0.39
Movement from SC/ICT/SETSS to Less Restrictive Environments (n=3)	.	.	0.200	0.00	.
English Language Learner Progress (n=20)	55.0%	9.9%	0.052	5.33	0.28

TOTAL POINTS 1.07

PEER INDEX CALCULATION

The Peer Index is used to sort schools on the basis of demographics. A higher Peer Index indicates a higher need population. The Peer Index operates on a 1-100 scale and is calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{FORMULA} \quad ( \text{Economic Need Index} \times 30 ) + ( \% \text{ Students with Disabilities} \times 30 ) + ( \% \text{ Black/Hispanic} \times 30 ) + ( \% \text{ English Language Learners} \times 10 ) = \text{PEER INDEX}$$

$$\text{FOR THIS SCHOOL} \quad ( 0.73 \times 30 ) + ( 11.2\% \times 30 ) + ( 91.2\% \times 30 ) + ( 9.3\% \times 10 ) = 53.62$$

Note: the Economic Need Index is calculated as follows:  $(1.0 \times \text{Percent Temporary Housing}) + (0.5 \times \text{Percent HRA-eligible}) + (0.5 \times \text{Percent Free Lunch Eligible})$

PEER GROUP FOR: The Ethical Community Charter School (TECCS)

Each school's performance is compared to the performance of schools in its peer group. Peer schools are those New York City public schools with a student population most like this school's population, according to the Peer Index. Each school has up to 40 peer schools. An early childhood school's peer group can include elementary, K-8, and early childhood schools, though only the third grade test results are included in the metrics.

DBN	SCHOOL	PEER INDEX	ECONOMIC NEED INDEX	% IEP	% BLACK or HISPANIC	% ELL
84K797	New Hope Academy Charter School	52.66	0.66	9.1%	100.0%	1.2%
84K737	Brownsville Ascend Charter School	52.68	0.74	8.0%	93.7%	0.5%
08X072	P.S. 072 Dr. William Dorney	52.77	0.69	16.9%	88.6%	5.0%
18K276	P.S. 276 Louis Marshall	52.78	0.64	14.4%	95.3%	7.0%
29Q181	P.S. 181 Brookfield	52.79	0.64	13.2%	97.4%	3.5%
21K238	P.S. 238 Anne Sullivan	52.84	0.82	26.3%	56.6%	33.5%
22K315	P.S. K315	52.89	0.69	15.4%	87.1%	14.6%
22K194	P.S. 194 Raoul Wallenberg	52.97	0.76	22.7%	74.0%	12.3%
15K032	P.S. 032 Samuels Mills Spole	52.99	0.69	37.0%	66.9%	9.9%
06M311	Amistad Dual Language School	53.00	0.66	14.4%	85.1%	33.2%
24Q068	P.S. 068 Cambridge	53.25	0.68	15.0%	85.8%	25.7%
84M702	The Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem	53.28	0.68	6.7%	99.4%	10.4%
27Q223	P.S. 223 Lyndon B. Johnson	53.30	0.77	12.0%	87.1%	5.0%
84X422	Icahn Charter School 3	53.37	0.66	14.5%	93.8%	10.3%
84M384	Harlem Success Academy 2 Charter School	53.38	0.67	10.9%	97.7%	7.0%
11X160	P.S. 160 Walt Disney	53.40	0.49	30.8%	95.6%	7.6%
04M171	P.S. 171 Patrick Henry	53.46	0.74	14.0%	89.4%	3.8%
84M385	Harlem Success Academy 3 Charter School	53.58	0.65	16.3%	95.0%	6.8%
11X016	P.S. 016 Wakefield	53.60	0.79	14.7%	82.7%	5.8%
84M705	Amber Charter School	53.61	0.72	8.4%	97.3%	4.2%
<b>84K734</b>	<b>The Ethical Community Charter School (TECCS)</b>	<b>53.62</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>11.2%</b>	<b>91.2%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>
18K233	P.S. 233 Langston Hughes	53.67	0.68	12.3%	98.1%	2.7%
18K114	P.S. 114 Ryder Elementary	53.76	0.69	12.3%	94.2%	12.3%
29Q037	Cynthia Jenkins School	53.85	0.68	13.4%	97.3%	3.0%
84K742	Explore Empower Charter School	53.86	0.68	11.3%	99.6%	1.3%
29Q038	P.S. 038 Rosedale	53.94	0.63	19.7%	96.4%	2.2%
30Q127	P.S. 127 Aerospace Science Magne	54.02	0.67	11.9%	87.6%	41.8%
11X105	P.S. 105 Sen Abraham Bernstein	54.03	0.77	17.7%	78.0%	21.8%
11X169	BAYCHESTER ACADEMY	54.07	0.70	13.1%	96.4%	1.6%
29Q134	P.S. 134 Hollis	54.19	0.62	20.7%	92.8%	14.1%
84K538	Achievement First Bushwick Charter School	54.24	0.64	13.8%	98.8%	11.5%
84X345	Hyde Leadership Charter School	54.26	0.73	12.8%	92.4%	7.9%
29Q036	P.S. 036 Saint Albans School	54.31	0.63	18.9%	98.2%	3.6%
17K394	M.S. K394	54.34	0.78	5.9%	96.2%	4.6%
24Q014	P.S. 014 Fairview	54.35	0.69	12.9%	88.8%	31.8%
24Q239	P.S. 239	54.43	0.75	15.8%	80.0%	32.3%
84M386	Harlem Success Academy 4 Charter School	54.48	0.67	18.0%	93.6%	8.4%
17K399	P.S. 399 Stanley Eugene Clark	54.59	0.79	6.5%	93.3%	8.5%
84X496	Icahn Charter School 4	54.69	0.74	6.8%	96.6%	16.2%
31R021	P.S. 21 Margaret Emery-Elm Park	54.69	0.73	19.8%	82.1%	21.9%
22K152	School of Science & Technology	54.71	0.79	11.3%	88.2%	13.1%
PEER GROUP AVERAGES		53.68	0.70	14.8%	90.4%	11.6%



**Department of  
Education**

*Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor*

**Charter School Annual Site Visit Report  
Charter Schools Office  
2011-2012**

**THE ETHICAL COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT**

**MARCH 2012**

## Part 1: Executive Summary

### **School Overview and History:**

The Ethical Community Charter School (TECCS) is an elementary school serving approximately 200 students from kindergarten through grade three in the 2011-2012 school year.<sup>18</sup> It has plans to grow to serve students kindergarten through grade 4 during its first charter period.<sup>19</sup> The school plans to ultimately grow through to grade 12. It is currently housed in a New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) facility at 700 Park Avenue in Brooklyn in CSD 14.

The school population comprises approximately 80% of students receive free or reduced lunch (FRL), 8.9% English language learners (ELL) and 9.9% are students with disabilities (SWD).<sup>20</sup>

The school is in its second year and has not yet earned a Progress Report grade or state/federal accountability designation.<sup>21</sup> In March 2012, the average attendance rate for the school year 2011–2012 was reported by the school as 93.73%.<sup>22</sup>

### **Annual Review Process Overview:**

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Office (CSO) conducts an annual site visit of charter schools authorized by the NYC DOE. The site visit is designed to address 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, we also ask about the school's plans for its next charter term. The visits are conducted by representatives of the CSO and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the school leadership team. Afterward, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators and teachers. 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 site visit is intended to provide a snapshot of the school and reflects what was observed at the time of the visit.

The following experts participated in the review of this school on March 30, 2012:

- Etzer Botes, NYC DOE CSO, Director of Oversight
- Laurie Pendleton, NYC DOE CSO Consultant

---

<sup>18</sup> TECCS self reported School Evaluation Visit Data Collection Form, (3/6/12)

<sup>19</sup> NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

<sup>20</sup> NYC DOE ATS system, April 2012

<sup>21</sup> New York State Education Department - [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov)

<sup>22</sup> TECCS self reported School Evaluation Visit Data Collection Form, (3/6/12)

## Part 2: Findings

### Areas of Strength

- TECCS has enacted measures in order to be in full compliance with the 2010 amended Charter School Act. Targeted populations for enrollment and retention, specifically for students receiving Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) is higher than the school's community school district, CSD 14.
  - TECCS has a population of 80.2% FRL<sup>23</sup>, higher than CSD 14's FRL rate of 63.75%<sup>24</sup>.
- TECCS provides a positive school atmosphere that promotes a sense of community and teaches respect.
  - Classrooms observed had strong evidence of the implementation of the Responsive Classroom approach throughout the school. The daily schedule in each classroom observed began the day with a "Morning Meeting"; classrooms had shout-outs and other forms of positive reinforcement; teachers and other adults often used the term "friends" when interacting with students; and there was strong evidence of classroom routines including turn-and-tell-a-friend and attention getting signals.
  - Teachers interviewed reported the provision of professional development and feedback needed to use Responsive Classroom effectively.
  - On the day of the visit observed interactions between teachers and students were positive and respectful.
  - When students failed to follow teacher directions the teacher quietly redirected the student or directed them to a quiet chair. All redirections observed were done privately, respectfully, and with a calm tone of voice.
  - On the day of the visit, students were observed respectfully agreeing and disagreeing with classmates.
  - Throughout the building teachers used a positive tone of conversation with students and students modeled this tone with each other.
  - The classroom environment was neat, organized, and focused on learning. Classrooms observed had a rich print environment, student work posted, and evidence of the learning in progress.
- TECCS is developing a data-driven culture and is working to promote the use of data.
  - The school has made progress in the use of assessment protocols and the resulting interventions for students in the area of literacy. The school has benchmarked their students twice this year using DIBELS Next, as well as text reading and comprehension levels. The grade level teams, under the direction of the school's leadership, ELL Coordinator, and Literacy Specialist, use this information to create small groups for a 4-6 week intervention cycle at which point they reassess and re-group the students.
  - Teachers were observed gathering data on student learning through observation.
- The school is using an intervention approach to managing student discipline and supporting students with additional academic needs.
  - The school is using various grouping techniques to support students who are in need of additional supports.
  - The school is leveling students (grouping students) based on performance, test scores, and diagnostic data.
  - The school's Child Study Team provides teachers with the additional support needed to serve students with greater behavioral and disciplinary needs.
  - Each grade level has an intervention block to allow for small group literacy instruction.
  - In January the school began their Saturday Academy to provide additional support for third graders with 6 teachers and a mix of reading and math. The average attendance is 27-28 and although all third graders are welcome to attend, the school targeted students who, based on data, most needed to attend. The school leadership reports the board is very supportive of this initiative.
  - Teachers are encouraged to bring students whose academic progress concerns them to a Child Study Team. This team, consisting of the school leadership, special education coordinator, and

<sup>23</sup> NYC DOE ATS system, April 2012

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

school psychologist, review the strategies the teacher is currently employing and make suggestions for additional techniques or referral to Special Education.

- Leadership at the school appears responsive to the school's academic, operational, and human capital needs.
  - The school provides a coach for Language Arts who provides demonstration lessons and feedback to teachers. Teachers interviewed mentioned they find this support particularly helpful.
  - The school's Professional Development program begins with a two week summer institute with a focus on the Responsive Classroom methodology. Teachers interviewed shared that they feel all staff members try "hard to stick to the philosophy" and that it can be challenging for some students but they can see improvement in behavior.
  - The school reports they have joined a collaborative with Girls Preparatory Charter School to share resources during the transition to the Common Core.
  - The school's faculty was trained in Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching as the tool for observation, evaluation and professional development. During interviews teachers reported that they appreciated the detail of the observational notes and the rubric.
  - Teachers we spoke with praised the school's leadership for maintaining the school's positive culture and smooth operations during a leadership transition.
  - Teachers interviewed spoke highly of the development of the leadership team and feel that it has provided a venue for community-based decision making. The school is encouraged to continue its approach to distributing leadership by creating councils and pathways for teachers and parents to be involved in decision making such as the School Leadership Team and the FTA.

### **Areas for Growth**

- TECCS should enact corrective measures in order to be in full compliance with the 2010 amended Charter School Act.
- - The school should continue to refine and document its outreach strategies for recruitment and retention of targeted populations in order to be comparable to the district, CSD 14. Areas of concern regard meeting target rates for enrollment and retention for English Language Learners (ELL) and Students with Disabilities (SWD).
    - TECCS has a population of 8.9% ELLs<sup>25</sup>, which is lower than CSD 14's ELL rate of 11.40%<sup>26</sup>.
    - TECCS has a SWD population of 9.9%<sup>27</sup>, which is lower than CSD 14's rate 17.24%.<sup>28</sup>
  - TECCS has a Family-Teacher Association (FTA) that meets for weekly meetings in the morning and monthly meetings in the evening. Both meetings are open to the public. The FTA is led by the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The association has its own bank account.
- The school should continue to increase the overall instructional rigor.
  - In some observed classes there was a great deal of questioning, however, the questioning could have benefited from being more open-ended and could have called upon students to use higher orders of thinking.
  - Inconsistent use of objectives and aims for student assignments was observed.
  - Student work was posted widely throughout the school, however, in some cases the grading rubric was unclear in defining what distinguished excellent work from average work.
  - TECCS is encouraged to consider earlier student preparation for state standardized tests.
- The school should continue to find ways to use data to inform instruction in more meaningful ways.
  - TECCS is encouraged to identify a single, clear, process for data analysis to be rolled out across

---

<sup>25</sup> NYC DOE ATS system, April 2012

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

the school.

- The school should continue to review the assessments currently in use as teachers interviewed reported the need for stronger assessments.
- The use of data for ELA interventions is intensive and the school is encouraged to identify an approach for monitoring math performance and progress as well.
- The school should continue to develop innovative ways to engage parents and community members.
  - Though the school has improved the structure of the FTA which has led to an increase in the number of parents who participate in the school's office hours and parent and family participation in such events as publishing parties, field trips, and class parties, teachers interviewed felt that parent outreach could be more organized.
  - Teachers do home visits before the start of the school year to establish a working relationship. The school should continue with their plans to provide professional development for these visits.
- The school is encouraged to continue cross-training and knowledge sharing across functions to provide for succession planning from human talent management perspective.
  - Teachers report a positive school culture that is partially maintained with outside activities like bowling and family movie nights. As the school grows and the staff changes, the school should consider how they will continue to maintain staff cohesion.
- TECCS is encouraged to invest in greater levels of planning for operational issues regarding human capital and facilities.
  - As the school increases in size, the school is encouraged to solidify plans for expansion in order to continue a stable relationship with its co-location partner. Leadership reports growth for next year will not involve a move to another floor.

## Part 3: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

### The CSO 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 Office (CSO) 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 established in school charter
- Meet student progress goals established in school charter
- 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
- Parent association meeting agendas and minutes
- Participation at parent-teacher conferences, school advocacy events, participation in academic goal related programs
- Stakeholder (board, parents, staff, students, etc.) interviews

## 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
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- 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
- Use a defined process for evaluating curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals
- Have school calendars and day schedules that provide the time necessary to deliver on the school's mission and academic 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
- Special Education/ELL progress monitoring documentation

- Interim assessment results
- Student and teacher portfolios
- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation
- Professional development plans and resources
- School calendar and daily schedules
- DOE School Surveys and internal school satisfaction surveys
- Instructional leader and staff interviews

## 1d. Learning Environment

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

- Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best efforts
- 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 plan with formal or informal structures or programs in place that provide students opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens (for example: a character education, citizenship, or community involvement or service program)

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

- School mission and articulated values
- School calendar and class schedules
- Student management plan (code of conduct, school values, discipline policy, positive incentive system, etc.)
- Student attendance and retention rates
- Student discipline data (referral, suspension, expulsion)
- DOE School Survey student results
- DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results
- Parent complaint/concern information
- Internal 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:

- Have a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations, with clear lines of accountability for the Board, school leadership and all staff
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate officers, committees, and a purposeful 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, and is fully compliant with its Board approved by-laws (number of meetings, quorum, posting of calendar, agenda and minutes)
- Have a defined process for Board reflection on effectiveness, assessing developing needs, and plan for professional growth
- 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 and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization is identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implements a process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's staff that is clearly defined in staff handbook
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers, including both formal and informal observations

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

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, calendar of meetings, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Board resources for evaluating school leadership and staff, including rubric/performance metrics
- Board resources for self-reflection and professional growth
- Board development plan
- Board interviews
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar
- Professional development plan for leadership staff
- School leadership and staff interviews

## **2b. School Climate and Community Engagement**

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

- Create and maintain a healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered, and aligned with school mission and values
- Implement flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- Encourage professional conversations about effective performance and quality instruction among staff, through, for example, such means as regular and periodic teaming (grade level teams, data days, etc.) and peer observations
- Have systems in place to evaluate professional development effectiveness and provide ongoing support for school-wide and individual initiatives
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Engage parents actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- Develop strong community-based partnerships who support and advocate for the school
- Have a clear procedure for parents and staff to express concerns to school leadership and the Board, as appropriate, including a clearly articulated escalation path to authorizer

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
- Internal satisfaction surveys
- Staff handbook
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- School Professional Development Plan and staff feedback on professional development events
- Resources for evaluations and observations, scheduled opportunities for professional collaboration, staff feedback on professional development events
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent/Student Handbook
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)

## **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 student enrollment and retention targets
- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, as school leadership and Board levels, in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to short- and long-term decision-making

- Have clearly established policies and procedures for overall fiscal and operational health of the school (onboarding of all new staff, record-keeping, processing requests of HR services, application and enrollment calls, visitors, volunteers, etc.)
- Maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Receive consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, have strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school design and academic program
- Ensure a safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage

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
- Financial leader(s) job description, resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Financial audits
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships
- Operational policies and procedures, including training resources
- Staff turnover and retention records
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- School safety plan
- Appropriate insurance documents

### **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, if appropriate, 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 up-to-date charter is available on request 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
- Annual Site Visit reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership, Board, staff and community interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

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

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location<sup>29</sup> or are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages for enrollment and retention
- Implement 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
- Conduct an independently verified fair and open lottery and manage with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employ 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
- Family/Student handbook
- Student discipline records
- Parent complaint/grievance records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Demographic data (school, district, and other as appropriate)
- 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

<sup>29</sup> School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

- 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 NYC DOE 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 with Board, staff, parents, students or others, as appropriate

## **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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Charter (replication) Application
- 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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- 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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) with partners or important vendors

# THE ETHICAL COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

## ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

JUNE 2011

## Part 1: Executive Summary

### **School Overview and History:**

The Ethical Community Charter School (TECCS) is an elementary school serving approximately 157 students from kindergarten through grade two in the 2010-2011 school year.<sup>30</sup> It has plans to grow to serve students kindergarten through grade 5 during its first charter period.<sup>31</sup> The school plans to ultimately grow through to grade 12. It is currently housed in a New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) facility at 700 Park Avenue in Brooklyn in CSD 14.

The school population comprises 50% Black, 42% Hispanic, .5% White, 7.5% Other students. Eighty-four percent of students are designated as Title I.<sup>32</sup> The student body, as reported on the school data collection form completed by the school, includes 9.5% English language learners and 11.5% special education students.

The school is in its second year and has not yet earned a Progress Report grade or state/federal accountability designation.<sup>33</sup> The average attendance rate for the school year 2010–2011 was reported by the school as 92.3%, as of May 31, 2011.

### **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 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 on June 1, 2011:

- Sonia Park, NYC DOE CSO, Senior Director
- Karen Drezner, Consultant

---

<sup>30</sup> NYC DOE ATS system

<sup>31</sup> NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

<sup>32</sup> Demographic Data drawn from NYC DOE ATS System; data pulled June 2011 ; Title I percentage from 2008 NY State Report Cards

<sup>33</sup> New York State Education Department - [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov)

## Part 2: Findings

### Areas of Strength

- TECCS demonstrated an atmosphere which promotes learning and student achievement.
  - On the day of observation, classrooms were safe and orderly. Students appeared to feel comfortable with teachers and school leadership.
  - The school seemed to have a common culture, set of norms, and observed teachers maintained consistent behavioral expectations.
  - The use of common language such as “friends” and “problem-solving” was evident across campus.
  - On the day of the visit responsive classroom strategies were being actively employed by students (e.g., “take a break chair”).
- Strong foundational support systems were in place to support and develop teachers.
  - The Director of Curriculum & Assessment and the Director of School Culture provided frequent observations and feedback to teachers throughout the day of the visit.
  - According to school leadership, a LitLife consultant provides literacy instructional support to teachers every other week.
  - On the day of the visit, reviewers observed several peer observations, lesson studies and modeling activities. In addition, school leadership and an outside consultant observe classrooms twice a month.
  - Professional development was provided during a Summer Institute and throughout the year by consultants (LitLife, Ackerman Family Institute, Wireless Generation, VTS, and Relay Graduation School of Education).
  - Interviewed teachers reported feeling well supported and appeared to have positive working relationships with leadership team members. TECCS is also supporting two assistant teachers in their Master’s Program through Hunter University’s Relay program.
- Overall, students were engaged in classroom instruction.
  - On the day of the visit, teachers delivered well-planned, enthusiastic and engaging lessons.
  - Both independent and collaborative work was observed during instruction.
  - The reviewers observed small, literacy groups that were well managed and purposeful.
  - A range of supports appeared to be in place for at-risk students including teaching assistants, social workers, and interventionists.
- TECCS is self-reflective in terms of its operations management and has a conservative budgeting approach.
  - The school anticipates a budget surplus. The Ethical Community Charter School Foundation is conducting a capital campaign for a future school site. The school received a donation of \$1,000,000 from the school foundation over the first three years to support the successful start-up of the school.
  - The Family Teachers Association plans fundraisers to enhance the learning environments and enrichment activities.)
  - The school leader and a financial consultant work with the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees and report regularly to the Board.
- The school uses a range of practices to involve and communicate with parents.
  - School-wide events such as social teas, movie nights, and spirit week have been well attended.
  - The school’s formalized Family Teachers Association (FTA) meets regularly and has established by-laws, elected officers, and holds weekly office hours at the school.

### Areas of Growth

- TECCS should continue to enact corrective measures in order to be in full compliance with the 2010 amended Charter School Act. Areas of concern regard meeting target rates for enrollment and retention for ELL students and special education students. TECCS is encouraged to continue to market throughout District 14 and adjoining neighborhoods to attract a diverse community of students.
  - The school should continue to refine and document its outreach strategies for recruitment and retention of ELLs in order to be comparable to the district, CSD 14. The school reported using a variety of recruitment strategies such as targeted day care and head-start programs and notices placed in Spanish newspapers. TECCS has a population of 9.5%<sup>34</sup> ELLs, which is lower than CSD 14's ELL rate of 12.9%<sup>35</sup>.
  - TECCS should continue to refine and document its outreach strategies for recruitment and retention of special education students in order to be comparable to the CSD 14. The school reported using a variety of recruitment strategies. TECCS has a special education population of 11.5%<sup>36</sup>, which is lower than CSD 14's rate of 17.3%<sup>37</sup>.
  -
- The school is encouraged to increase academic rigor across all areas of instruction.
  - School leaders are encouraged to continue motivating teachers and all instructional staff to elevate the level of instruction to superior levels.
  - Authentic student work, particularly writing should be motivated to reflect a high level of rigor.
  - The school may increase the transparency of grading and assessment by posting checklists and rubrics alongside posted work. Grade level expectations for work products should be established and made clear to students, staff and families.
  - The school is encouraged to deepen instructional planning and strategies.
- TECCS should continue to formalize school-wide assessment protocol and targeted interventions.
  - The school reviews academic data and uses information to guide interventions along 6-week cycles and has made progress in utilizing DIBELS and STEP program data. TECCS is encouraged to formalize data usage, analysis and target interventions.
- The school is encouraged to continue to refine and improve the school's strategy for preventing and addressing disruptive behavior.
  - TECCS utilizes the Responsive Classroom approach yet implementation was not consistent across classrooms.
  - Teachers reported that the newly designed "behavior matrix" has been useful, they also expressed concerns about students who are in the "what now?" category.
- TECCS should school clarify its Child Study Team and policies for Promotion in Doubt.
  - Special education staff reported that they were not always included in formal decision-making processes and discussions for Child Study Team and student promotion decisions.
  - TECCS should strengthen communication alignment of the leadership team and staff.
    - The school is encouraged to consider ways to increase formalized transparency of decision-making processes. Teachers spoke of informal meetings and hallway conversations. Regular meetings have been calendared but are not always held because of scheduling conflicts.
- The school is encouraged to continue support and developing teachers.
  - TECCS should develop a more formal, evidence-based protocol for teacher evaluation and support plans. It appeared that individual goals were established for teachers, but it was

---

<sup>34</sup> TECCS self reported School Evaluation Visit Data Collection Form (5/31/11)

<sup>35</sup> ATS data, (June 30, 2011)

<sup>36</sup> TECCS self reported School Evaluation Visit Data Collection Form (5/31/11)

<sup>37</sup> ATS data, (June 30, 2011)

- unclear how often these are revisited or if goals were established for leadership team members.
- Though professional development was offered to staff, trainings that was focused on math and technology was not evident.

## Part 3: Framing Questions

### FRAMING QUESTIONS:

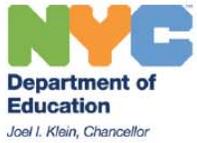
Throughout the Renewal Process and the life of each school's charter, the NYCDOE Charter Schools Office uses the following framing questions to monitor Charter School success:

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



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

THE ETHICAL COMMUNITY  
CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

MAY 2010

CHARTER SCHOOL OFFICE  
52 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007

## Part 1: Executive Summary

### School Overview and History:

The Ethical Community Charter School is a K-12 school serving approximately 120 students from kindergarten through grade 1 in the 2009-2010 school year.<sup>1</sup> The school opened in 2009 with kindergarten and grade 1 and will grow to serve students kindergarten to grade 12.<sup>2</sup> It is currently housed in a DOE facility in District 14.<sup>3</sup>

The school population comprises 53% Black, 35% Hispanic, 8% White, and 1% Asian students. 77% of students are designated at Title I.<sup>4</sup> The student body includes 2% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%.<sup>5</sup>

The school is in its first year of operation and has not yet received a Progress Report or state/federal accountability designation.

### Annual Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter School 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 School 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:

- Marian Mogulescu, Education Consultant
- Aquila Haynes, Associate Director of Community Engagement, Charter School Office, NYC DOE
- Aamir Raza, Charter School Office, NYC DOE

---

<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.

## Part 2: Findings

### What the school does well

- The school utilizes Differentiated Instruction and an Inquiry/Active Learning approach to deepen an integrated curriculum, aligned with state standards to promote content proficiency and actively engage students
  - Students were actively engaged in whole group lessons, class meetings, reading independently, working in “centers” groups on projects, in all content areas; there is much emphasis in literacy and numeracy in all the subjects
  - Students who need extra support receive intervention instruction in small groups or individually, in the classroom or with support personnel for specific needs
  - “Centers” Time includes Math, Reading, Big Books, Writing, Blocks, Science, Spanish, Legos, Geoblocks, Puzzles and games, Shoe tying, Play dough, Foundations, Dance, Listening, List making, etc. which implement daily lessons and study in the core subjects and additional areas depending on student needs
  - Different modalities are used to provide access points for different learning styles: art is integrated into the core subject work, music is part of the classrooms, and an additional class, PE is three times a week, as well as Ethics as an additional area of concentration
  - Discovery, Observations and Predictions support Inquiry learning
  - Some curriculum programs guide/shape the content areas, and the staff use, and adapt, the units in Lit Life Curriculum for LA, Foss Science Kits, the Investigating Math Series, readers and writers workshop models
- The school uses a variety of assessments to monitor student performance and inform teaching and learning
  - DIBELS and Mclass administered three times a year, pre and post tests in the Curriculum Guides for Math and ELA, Projects and Performance Assessments in Science and Social Studies
  - Student work is displayed in the classroom and the hallways to document (and celebrate) progress of each student
  - Teachers know each student well and have multiple forms of student work and evidence of learning for each child, in folders, in binders and through regular meetings to examine student work
  - Each student has at least one individual conference with his/her teacher each week; teachers have up to date information on each student
- The school fosters a safe learning environment that encourages student expression and ensures the security of students and faculty
  - The respectful and collaborative culture in each classroom is clear in the way staff and students interact with each other; the Ethics theme is prominent
  - Guidelines for positive focus on learning are posted in each room, developed by staff and students, in student friendly language- through the Responsive Classroom approach, classroom rules are strong parameters for the school environment
  - Bulletin Boards show writing, science projects, photos of classes and gym and trips, sharing and celebrating the academic efforts of the students
- The school has created a strong culture that encourages academic excellence and allows all students to interact in the supportive learning community
  - Each class has a morning meeting to welcome the students and begin the day that is connected to the academic agenda
  - Routines are clear and implemented in each of the classrooms

- Student voices, questions and understandings are prominent
- Trips help deepen the cultural curriculum supports, connected to the academic grade level units including: to the Metropolitan Museum, the Staten Island Ferry, the Transit Museum, the Queens Museum, the Top of the Rock, the Fire Station, a local Beauty Salon, the Train Exhibit at The Botanical Gardens, the Butterfly Exhibit at the Natural History Museum, etc
- The school is in good financial condition and maintains appropriate internal controls
  - As of June 14, 2010, the school possessed \$812,288 in current assets and \$1,149 in current liabilities. Therefore, for each outstanding dollar in current liability, the school possesses \$706.95 in current assets to meet its obligations. Please note that the ratio of \$706 in assets vs. each dollar in liability may be skewed due to the timing when the financial report was run by the school
  - The school's long-term financial outlook appears good based on the total assets of \$1,008,770 and total liabilities of \$1,149. Therefore, for each dollar in long-term liability, the school possesses \$877.95 in long-term assets to meet its obligations
  - The school exercises appropriate internal controls on its financial systems
- The school board is providing adequate and balanced oversight
  - Board gets reporting from the principal's report, finance committee report, attendance and suspension figures besides other statistics
  - Board is getting governance training and further workshops are scheduled

#### **What the school needs to improve**

- The school should continue its collaborative work in curriculum planning and cross-grade communication in order to articulate the content of the additional grades they will serve.
- The school should continue to document student progress and create more school-wide systems for staff sharing of data to inform unit and curriculum planning.
- The school should continue to deepen its partnerships and relationships with community agencies and institutions to encourage engagement in the external experiences available as the school grows.
- The board should continue to conduct strategic planning that lays out well defined goals for each year.
- The board should continue to pursue training on the practical aspects of running and overseeing a charter school to enhance operational capacity.

## Part 3: Framing Questions

### FRAMING QUESTIONS:

Throughout the Renewal Process and the life of each school's charter, the NYCDOE Charter School 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 or 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