



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

NEW YORK CITY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL FOR ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION
INDUSTRIES
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

APRIL 2010

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

The New York City Charter High School for Architecture, Engineering and Construction Industries is a high school serving approximately 232 students in grades 9 and 10 in the 2009-2010 school year.¹ The school opened in 2008 with grade 9 and plans to grow to serve students in grades 9-12.² It is currently housed in a private facility in District 7.³

The school population comprises 32% Black, 67% Hispanic, 0% White, and 1% Asian students. 82% of students are designated at Title I.⁴ The student body includes 12% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 62% of the students enrolled and girls account for 38%.⁵

The school has not yet received a DOE Progress Report. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 86%.⁶ The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.⁷

Annual Review Process Overview:

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

The following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Marian Mogulescu, Education Consultant

¹ NYC DOE ATS system

² NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

³ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

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

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

⁶ NYC DOE School Progress Report. This document is posted on the NYC DOE website at <http://www.schools.nyc.gov>.

⁷ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

Part 2: Findings

What the school does well

- The school utilizes organized and well-planned instructional units to promote content proficiency and actively engage students.
 - Students were observed actively engaged in whole group lessons, independent written work and group work.
 - The administration and staff recognized a need for intervention for certain students and put a plan in place to support those students with extra help each week.
 - The school's theme is infused in content area unit plans and lessons each week as teachers make clear connections to the architecture and construction fields, the exploration of engineering possibilities, and the breadth of job possibilities within these professions.
- A Professional Development program through Victory, the school's management partner, supports teachers with mentor coaches.
 - Teachers have regular meetings with mentor coaches to work on curriculum planning, strategies and approaches. Staff and mentor coaches communicate and maintain continuity and consistency through frequent email sharing and reflecting.
- The school employs a rigorous assessment system and strong data-tracking tools to monitor student performance and inform teaching and learning.
 - The school uses the Power School Power Teacher program regularly to review student achievement.
 - The advisory system affords opportunities for staff and students to review academic progress as well as social and emotional issues, making sure students receive support to move forward.
 - Teachers keep multiple forms of student work and evidence of learning for each child.
 - Staff uses observations, group work, peer support, lesson closing routines, examination of student work, specific seating arrangements, exit passes, presentations and tests to assess progress of each student.
 - Staff meets daily during common planning time to plan advisory lessons, have "kid talk" around specific students to make plans for support, and work in content area groups for curriculum.
- The school fosters a safe learning environment that encourages student expression and ensures the security of students and faculty.
 - Staff and students interact with each other respectfully and collaboratively, and teachers actively work to create an inclusive, supportive environment.
 - Guidelines for positive focus on learning are posted in each room, in student-friendly language.
 - The advisory class includes early college and career orientation, test-taking skills, and relationship building activities.
 - Bulletin Boards celebrate the Honor Roll, Notable People, Student Wall of Fame, photos from special school activities and other topics to stimulate student interest and recognition in a variety of areas.
- The school has created a strong culture that encourages academic excellence and allows all students and staff to interact in a supportive learning community.
 - Word walls, thoughtful questions, and student work are displayed in each classroom to guide and inspire students.
 - The day begins with independent reading during DEAR, emphasizing the importance of reading every day.

- Daily routines are clear and implemented in each of the classrooms, allowing for consistency of expectations throughout the school.
- Students are encouraged to be responsible with their learning and in their collaboration with others.
- Students feel that they know each other well and that the staff knows them well, and are available and helpful toward visitors.

What the school needs to improve

- Higher-order skills were not consistently developed in all classrooms, and independent work to support critical thinking skills was not always in evidence. The school should continue to refine inquiry approaches and support student discussion, with the goal of building and reinforcing these higher-order skills.
- The school continues to work on finding space that is appropriate for four full grade levels as it is growing each year.
- Staff and Administration should consider developing more program choices/electives and implement different possibilities as space and existing opportunities are examined.
- Staff should continue to find ways to address Special Education and English Language Learner student needs.

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