



**Department of  
Education**

*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**DEMOCRACY PREP HARLEM CHARTER SCHOOL  
RENEWAL REPORT**

**2014 – 2015 SCHOOL YEAR  
JANUARY 2015**

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## Part 1: Summary of Renewal Recommendation

### I. Charter School Overview:

#### Background Information

Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School	
Board Chair(s)	Dr. Robert North
School Leader(s)	Theresa Walsh (ES), Anwar Abdul-Rahman (MS), Steven Popper (HS)
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	Democracy Prep Public Schools
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School Districts 5 (Grades K-1, 6-8) and 3 (Grades 9-10)
Physical Address(es)	2005 Madison Avenue, Manhattan (K-1)
	207 West 133rd Street, Manhattan (6-8)
	212 West 120 Street, Manhattan (9-10)
Facility Owner(s)	Private and DOE
School Opened For Instruction	2010-2011
Current Charter Term Expiration Date	2/8/2015
Current Authorized Grade Span	K-12
Current Authorized Enrollment	1,309
Proposed New Charter Term	4.5 years [February 9, 2015 – June 30, 2019]
Proposed Authorized Grade Span for New Charter Term	K-12
Proposed Authorized Enrollment for New Charter Term	1,309
Proposed Sections per Grade for New Charter Term	Grades K-12: 4 sections per grade

## Overview of School-Specific Data

### School Evaluation of Academic Goals as stated in Annual Report to NYSED and Renewal Application to NYC DOE

Academic Goal Analysis					
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Cumulative Charter Term Total
Total Achievable Goals	12	12	12	12	48
# Met	4	8	3	5	20
# Partially Met	0	1	0	0	1
# Not Met	0	1	4	5	10
# Not Applicable *	8	2	5	2	17
% Met	33%	67%	25%	42%	42%
% Partially Met	0%	8%	0%	0%	2%
% Not Met	0%	8%	33%	42%	21%
% Not Applicable *	67%	17%	42%	17%	35%
% Met of All Applicable Goals	100%	80%	43%	50%	65%

\* Some goals may not be applicable in all years. For example, goals related to the NYC Progress Report are not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year as Progress Reports were not issued that year.

### ES/MS students scoring at or above Level 3 on NYS assessments, compared to CSD, NYC and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School</b>	48.6%	43.3%	16.1%	15.0%
CSD 5	30.1%	28.9%	13.8%	16.4%
Difference from CSD 5 *	18.5	14.4	2.3	-1.4
NYC	43.6%	44.3%	25.7%	27.0%
Difference from NYC *	5.0	-1.0	-9.6	-12.0
New York State **	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-4.2	-11.8	-15.0	-15.6

% Proficient in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School</b>	70.6%	74.5%	18.2%	34.9%
CSD 5	39.7%	38.6%	11.8%	13.0%
Difference from CSD 5 *	30.9	35.9	6.4	21.9
NYC	56.0%	58.3%	27.3%	28.9%
Difference from NYC *	14.6	16.2	-9.1	6.0
New York State **	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	7.3	9.7	-12.9	-1.3

\* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself served. CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

\*\* New York State proficiency rates were taken from data.nysed.gov.

### Student improvement on the state tests compared to other students

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile - English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School – All Students</b>	<b>76.0%</b>	<b>64.0%</b>	<b>65.0%</b>	<b>60.0%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	87.7%	67.3%	55.2%	44.6%
City Percent of Range- All Students	75.2%	56.5%	51.4%	36.8%
<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School – School's Lowest Third</b>	<b>78.0%</b>	<b>78.5%</b>	<b>79.0%</b>	<b>76.0%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	55.9%	85.6%	37.3%	67.6%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	51.9%	71.5%	47.7%	53.4%

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile – Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School – All Students</b>	<b>82.5%</b>	<b>81.0%</b>	<b>58.5%</b>	<b>79.0%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	93.6%	100.0%	44.6%	98.6%
City Percent of Range- All Students	89.9%	100.0%	41.3%	100.0%
<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School – School's Lowest Third</b>	<b>85.0%</b>	<b>81.5%</b>	<b>76.0%</b>	<b>90.5%</b>
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	92.1%	90.6%	51.4%	100.0%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	91.0%	90.9%	54.3%	100.0%

A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A peer/city percent of range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of their peer group/city.

## Closing the Achievement Gap

Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities *	64.0%	55.2%	63.5%	53.5%
English Language Learner Students	-	41.2%	37.1%	53.1%
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	60.0%	52.5%	55.6%	46.6%
Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities *	60.0%	69.0%	44.2%	67.4%
English Language Learner Students	-	42.1%	30.6%	74.2%
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	74.4%	69.8%	58.5%	82.4%

\* Defined as students with a placement in Self-Contained, ICT, or SETSS.

Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School enrolled its first class of ninth grade students beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. As a result, data on high school graduation rates is not available. In addition, Regents Pass Rates and Credit Accumulation data are only available for the 2013-2014 school year.

## Weighted Regents Pass Rates

2014				
	Math	Science	Global History	U.S History
<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School</b>	1.12	1.08	-	-
Peer Percent of Range	48.9%	41.3%	-	-
City Percent of Range	58.9%	48.4%	-	-

The Weighted Regents Pass Rate measures students' progress since the corresponding eighth grade test, with more weight given to students with lower proficiency based on eighth grade test results.

A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A Peer/City Percent of Range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of its peer group/city.

## Credit Accumulation

% 1st-Year Students Earning 10+ Credits				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School</b>	-	-	-	75.0%
Peer Percent of Range	-	-	-	24.9%
City Percent of Range	-	-	-	43.9%

A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A Peer/City Percent of Range of 50% represents the position of the average and can be interpreted as a school outperforming 50% of its peer group/city.

## II. Renewal Recommendation and Rationale

Based on the evidence presented herein and detailed below in Part II, the NYC DOE recommends a 4.5 year full-term renewal with an academic performance condition and an operational/compliance condition.

The academic condition is as follows:

1. As part of its oversight of Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School in its next term, the NYC DOE will require the school to submit English Language Arts (ELA) interim assessment data for grades three through eight within 30 days of receiving results to the NYC DOE for continued monitoring.

The operational/compliance condition is as follows:

1. As part of its oversight of Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School in its next term, the NYC DOE will require the school to submit a corrective action plan to address the high rate of uncertified teachers employed by the school. This plan should include how the school will make significant progress in reducing the number of uncertified teachers by the start of the 2015-2016 school year, and how the school will be in compliance with the Charter Schools Act, which prohibits more than five staff members or more than 30% of the teaching staff from not being certified in accordance with requirements applicable to other public schools, by the end of the next charter term. A draft of the corrective action plan should be submitted to the NYC DOE no later than March 26, 2015.

### A. Academic Performance

At the time of this school's renewal, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School (Democracy Prep Harlem) has demonstrated academic success.

#### **New York Charter Schools Act**

The New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 establishes a system of charter schools throughout New York State, with objectives that include:

#### **§ 2850 (2)**

- (a) Improve student learning and achievement;
- (b) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;

- (e) Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and
- (f) Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

Data available for Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School indicates that the school has made progress towards meeting these objectives.

### **Mission and Vision**

Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's mission is to educate responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship.

### **School Specific Academic Performance**

The school entered its fifth year of operation with the 2014-2015 academic year. The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) has four years of New York State (NYS) assessment data and four years of other academic indicator(s) to evaluate the academic achievement and progress of the students at Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School.

Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, NYS assessments were aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). As such, proficiency rates for school years prior to the 2012-2013 school year are not directly comparable.

In both 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School only educated students in grades six through eight for the New York State math and ELA assessments. Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's elementary school had no students in tested grades in either of those years. The elementary school did not open until the 2013-2014 school year; as such, the elementary school will not have students in New York State-tested grades until the 2016-2017 school year.

In 2012-2013, 18.2% of Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's students were proficient in math on NYS assessments. This level of math proficiency was higher than 35% of elementary/middle schools citywide.<sup>1</sup> When compared to elementary/middle schools with student populations most like its own (i.e. peer schools), Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School outperformed only 27% of similar schools. However, when compared to Community School District (CSD) 5, the school's math proficiency was higher than that of 44% of elementary/middle schools. In 2012-2013, 16.1% of Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's students demonstrated proficiency on NYS assessments in English Language Arts (ELA). With this level of ELA proficiency, the school outperformed 33% of elementary/middle schools citywide, 20% of its peer schools, and 56% of CSD 5 elementary/middle schools.

The following year, in 2013-2014, the percent of students at Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School who were proficient in math on NYS assessments rose to 34.9%. For 2013-2014, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's math proficiency was higher than 50% of elementary/middle schools citywide. Similarly, the school outperformed 47% of its peer schools, and 67% of CSD 5 elementary/middle schools. In 2013-2014, the percent of students at Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School who demonstrated proficiency on NYS assessments in ELA fell to 15.0%. With this level of proficiency, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School outperformed only 27% of elementary/middle schools citywide, 17% of its peer schools, and 33% of elementary/middle schools in CSD 5.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that while Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School was classified as a middle school for the 2012-2013 NYC DOE Progress Report, the 2012-2013 percentile rankings provided in this report for elementary/middle schools reflect the school's current classification as an elementary/middle school such that the schools in Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's peer, CSD and city comparison groups remain the same.

In 2013-2014, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was 60.0% with a City Percent of Range of 36.8%, placing the school in the 28<sup>th</sup> percentile of elementary/middle schools citywide.<sup>2</sup> The school's peer and CSD percentiles were 43% and 11%, respectively. This means that more than half of the elementary/middle schools in Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's peer group and almost all of the elementary/middle schools in CSD 5 had an ELA median adjusted growth percentile greater than Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile in 2013-2014.

In 2013-2014, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's math median adjusted growth Percentile was 79.0% with a City Percent of Range of 100.0%, placing it in the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile of elementary/middle schools citywide.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the school's peer group and CSD percentiles were 97% and 89%, respectively. This means that nearly all other elementary/middle schools in Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's peer group and CSD had math median adjusted growth percentiles lower than Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's math median adjusted growth percentile in 2013-2014.

As the school has only had one complete year serving high school students during the current charter term, the NYC DOE has minimal academic data associated with high school performance to evaluate. The following represents one year of credit accumulation and weighted regents pass rate results for Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School. In the most recent school year, 2013-2014, 75.0% of first-year students at Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School earned 10+ credits, placing the school in the bottom 10% of its peer group schools and in the 28<sup>th</sup> percentile of all high schools citywide for first-year students earning 10+ credits.

Weighted Regents pass rates are available for only one year in math and science; therefore, a performance trend cannot be identified. In 2013-2014, the school generally performed below its peer group schools when analyzing weighted Regents pass rates: the school's peer group percentiles were 38% and 28% for the math and science weighted Regents pass rates, respectively. However, the school earned citywide percentile ranks of 56% and 51% for its weighted Regents pass rates in math and science, respectively. The school's weighted Regents pass rate was above the citywide average in math, but slightly below the citywide average in science.<sup>4</sup>

Over the four years that data is available for the retrospective charter term, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School met 65% of its applicable academic charter goals.<sup>5,6</sup> Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School met five of 10 applicable academic performance goals in its most recent year. Because of the move to Common Core Learning Standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE

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<sup>2</sup> A comparison range consists of all possible results within two standard deviations of the average. A percentile rank provides the percentage of schools that score the same or lower than the school under consideration. A City Percent of Range of 36.8% indicates that the school's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was below the citywide average but less than one standard deviation below the average (that only 36.8% of the range around the average represented scores lower than that of Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School), while a citywide percentile of 28% indicates that Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was higher than only 28% of all elementary/middle schools citywide.

<sup>3</sup> A City Percent of Range of 100.0% indicates that the school's math median adjusted growth percentile was two standard deviations above the citywide average. A percentile rank provides the percentage of schools that score the same or lower than the school under consideration. A citywide percentile of 98% indicates that Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's math median adjusted growth percentile was higher than 98% of all elementary/middle schools citywide.

<sup>4</sup> The school's City Percent of Range for its Science Weighted Regents Pass Rate was 48.4%, indicating that the school's weighted pass rate was slightly below the average.

<sup>5</sup> This calculation does not include goals which have not been evaluated (not applicable) either as a result of the goal no longer being measurable (e.g. NYC DOE Progress Report grades for 2013-2014 school year and beyond) or the goal not yet measurable for the school at the time of the annual reporting (e.g. high school graduation rate for an academic year in which the school was not serving grade 12 students).

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and math exams or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals for the 2012-2013 school year. Goals that compared the school to the Community School District performance were included in the analysis. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE will not include goals that are related to NYC DOE Progress Report Grades or, due to a change in state regulation, goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two in its analysis of progress towards goals.

did not evaluate goals that measure a school's academic performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and math assessments for the 2012-2013 school year. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, due to a change in state regulation the NYC DOE will not evaluate goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two; further, due to the elimination of the accountability instrument, the DOE will not evaluate goals related to NYC DOE Progress Report grades beginning with the 2013-2014 school year. The school has demonstrated a mostly declining trend in the achievement rate of its stated charter goals during the retrospective charter term, with lower goal attainment rates in the most recent two years of the charter term under review compared to the first two years under review.

On its 2012-2013 NYC DOE Progress Report, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School received a B grade in all sections, including as its Overall grade. This ranked Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School in the 47<sup>th</sup> percentile of all middle schools citywide and marked deterioration in its citywide ranking from the prior year. On the 2011-2012 NYC DOE Progress Report, the school earned an overall grade of A, placing it at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile compared with all middle schools citywide.<sup>7</sup> (Schools receive an ungraded progress report in their first year serving students.)

NYC DOE Progress Reports graded each school with an A, B, C, D, or F and were based on student progress, student performance, and school environment. Scores were based on comparing results from one school to a peer group of 40 schools with similar student populations and to all schools citywide. The Student Progress section of the NYC DOE Progress Report was the most heavily weighted of all sections; it constituted 60% of a school's grade. The grade in this section was primarily based on median adjusted growth percentiles,<sup>8</sup> which measure students' growth on state tests relative to other students with the same prior-year score. Although the NYC DOE Progress Report was discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, individual academic performance metrics from the former NYC DOE Progress Report are included in this renewal report for all years for which data was available in the current charter term.

### **Closing the Achievement Gap**

NYC DOE-authorized charter schools are also assessed based on their ability to close the achievement gap for specific student populations. In school years prior to the 2013-2014 school year, schools received additional credit on the NYC DOE Progress Report for progress and performance of students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELLs), and students who start in the lowest third of proficiency citywide. Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, charter schools will be assessed on the actual performance as well as the academic growth of students in these populations compared with public school students in the CSD and throughout New York City.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 82.4% of Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's students in the lowest third citywide experienced growth in math that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting math scores. This level places Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School in the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile of elementary/middle schools citywide. However, in the same year only 46.6% of Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School students in the lowest third citywide experienced growth in ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting ELA scores; this level places Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School in only the 28<sup>th</sup> percentile of all elementary/middle schools citywide.

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<sup>7</sup> For purposes of the NYC DOE Progress Report, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School was classified as a middle school for the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years.

<sup>8</sup> A student's growth percentile compares his or her growth to the growth of all students in the City who started at the same level of proficiency the year before. To evaluate a school on its students' growth percentile, the NYC DOE uses an adjusted growth percentile. Growth percentile adjustments are based on students' demographic characteristics and reflect average differences in growth compared to students with the same starting proficiency level. The NYC DOE evaluates a school based on its median adjusted growth percentile, the adjusted growth percentile of the middle student when all students adjusted growth percentiles are listed from lowest to highest.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 67.4% of Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's students with disabilities experienced growth in math that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting math scores. This level places Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile of elementary/middle schools citywide. In the same year, 53.5% of students with disabilities citywide experienced growth in ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting ELA scores; this places Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School in the 59<sup>th</sup> percentile of all elementary/middle schools citywide.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 74.2% of Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's English Language Learner students experienced growth in math that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting math scores. This level places Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile of elementary/middle schools citywide. In the same year, 53.1% of English Language Learner students experienced growth in ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting ELA scores; this places Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School in the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of all elementary/middle schools citywide.

As the school did not have a high school graduating class in the retrospective charter term, closing the achievement gap data is not available for the school's high school grades. The NYC DOE does not have closing the achievement gap data associated with four-year weighted diploma rates or the College and Career Preparatory Course Index (CCPCI) to evaluate at the time of this charter renewal.

## **B. Governance, Operations & Finances**

Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School is a partially operationally sound and fiscally viable organization. This assessment was made based on a review of the following indicators of operational and fiscal viability:

- Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's FY11, FY12, FY13, and FY14 independent financial audits;
- Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's FY15 budget and five-year projected budget;
- Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's 2014-2015 staff handbook;
- Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's 2014-2015 student/family handbook;
- On-site review of Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's financial and operational records;
- Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's self-reported staffing data;
- Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's Board of Trustees meeting minutes;
- Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's Board of Trustees bylaws; and
- Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's financial disclosure forms.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has maintained a partially developed governance structure and organizational design.

The Board currently has 10 active members, which is consistent with the minimum of five members and maximum of 15 members established in the Board's bylaws. The Board's Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer are specified positions in the bylaws and are currently filled with no vacancies. However, the Board's clerk is currently a vacant position. The founding Board Chair, Dr. Robert North, is still a member of the school's Board. Financial disclosure forms are not available for all current board members.

The school's bylaws indicate that the Board is to hold 10 meetings a year. In all years of the charter term (2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014), the Board did not hold the required number of monthly meetings, as evidenced by school reported data and the posted

meeting minutes. Required meetings are those which met quorum; the school's Board has not consistently achieved quorum during the charter term. As recorded in meeting minutes, across 24 meetings reviewed, the Board achieved quorum 22 times.

There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership team as evidenced by the school's organizational chart and school leadership's monthly updates on academic, financial, and operational performance to the Board and its committees, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.

The Board's bylaws reference the following standing committees: Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Development Committee, Governance Committee, Community and Family Communications Committee, and Academic Accountability Committee. However, meeting minutes do not indicate that the Development, Governance, Community and Family Communications, and Academic Accountability committees are regularly active.

The founder of Democracy Prep Public Schools, Seth Andrew, is no longer a member of the school's Board. However, the current CEO, Katie Duffy Stanton, has been with Democracy Prep Public Schools since 2007-2008 and was formerly the organization's Chief Operating Officer, Chief of Staff and Executive Director of Harlem Prep Charter School, another school in the Democracy Prep Public Schools network.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has partially developed a stable school culture.

The leaders of the elementary, middle, and high school grades at Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School were all founding members of their respective schools. Theresa Walsh, the school leader for the elementary grades, which opened in the 2013-2014 school year, has been with Democracy Prep Harlem since 2013-2014. Anwar Abdul-Rahman, the school leader for the middle school grades, which were the original grades served by the school upon opening in the 2010-2011 school year, has been with Democracy Prep Harlem since that year. Steven Popper, the school leader for the high school grades, which were opened in the 2013-2014 school year, has been with Democracy Prep Harlem since 2013-2014.

For the most recent period, instructional staff turnover was 24% of instructional staff not returning, either by choice or request, at the start of the 2014-2015 school year.<sup>9</sup> Although this rate was lower than the previous school year's rate of 38%, it was higher than the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 instructional staff turnover rates of 10% and 5%, respectively.

To date, the school has met its charter goal of having an annual average student attendance rate of at least 95% in only two of the four years of the retrospective charter term, though the school's attendance rate did improve over the last year.

Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations. The school has at least 65 days of unrestricted cash on hand to meet current liabilities totaling \$2,867,124.

Overall, the school is financially sustainable based on its current practices.

There was no material weakness noted in the four independent financial audits.

### **C. Compliance with Charter, Applicable Law and Regulations**

Over the charter term, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School has been compliant with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

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<sup>9</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form in December 2014

All staff members do not have appropriate fingerprint clearance. The school lacked fingerprint clearance for two of 88 staff members.

Democracy Prep Harlem is not compliant with state requirements for teacher certification. The Charter Schools Act prohibits more than five staff members or more than 30% of the teaching staff from not being certified in accordance with requirements applicable to other public schools. Of Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's 67 instructional staff members, 30 are not certified.

For the 2014-2015 school year, the school had an application deadline of April 2, 2014 and lottery date of April 10, 2014, adhering to charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1. Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently adhere to this requirement.

The school has provided the NYC DOE with a current and complete copy of its Student Discipline Policy for the 2014-2015 academic year. This policy was determined to be compliant with federal law.

Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently submit complete invoicing and reconciliation documents by the associated deadlines.

**D. Plans for Next Charter Term**

Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School is authorized to serve grades kindergarten through twelve as per a previously approved material charter revision in 2013, but currently serves kindergarten and first, and sixth through tenth grades. In the next charter term, Democracy Prep Harlem plans to fully phase-in and serve grades kindergarten through twelve.

## Part 2: School Overview and History

Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School is an elementary/middle/high school serving 780 students<sup>10</sup> in grades kindergarten through one and six through ten during the 2014-2015 school year. It opened in the 2010-2011 school year with grade six and is under the terms of its first charter. The school's authorized full grade span is for grades kindergarten through twelve, which it is not expected to reach during its current charter term expiring on February 8, 2015.<sup>11</sup> The school does not currently offer a public universal Pre-Kindergarten program in New York City. The school is located in two NYC DOE-operated<sup>12</sup> facilities (elementary and high school grades), as well as a privately operated facility (middle school grades). The school serves its elementary and middle school grades in Community School District 5 in Manhattan and its high school grades in Community School District 3 in Manhattan. The school's elementary school grades are co-located with The Urban Assembly School for Global Commerce, Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy II Charter School, and Choir Academy of Harlem. The school's high school grades are co-located with an Adult and Continuing Education program.<sup>13</sup>

Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School is a co-ed school founded by Seth Andrew in 2010-2011 that will serve grades kindergarten through twelve at scale. The mission of Democracy Prep Harlem is to educate responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship. Many aspects of the school design and philosophy are based on Seth Andrew's experience teaching English in South Korea; Democracy Prep Harlem high school students take four years of Korean language and can earn school trips to Korea. Democracy Prep Harlem's academic program is supported by enrichment activities such as sports, Debate team, Spoken Word club, Theatre, and Math club. Democracy Prep Harlem has a primary focus in civic education which develops Democracy Prep Harlem students to become poised public speakers, skilled negotiators of conflicting information, engaged community members, critical thinkers, and confident leaders.

Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School is part of the Democracy Prep Public Schools network, a charter management organization (CMO). The CMO provides an overarching Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Superintendent, Chief Financial Officer, General Counsel, back office support, institutional goals aligned to network goals, student assessment data, and other support services, such as Human Resources, Recruitment, and Finance. Democracy Prep Harlem, working with and through the network, manages student information via the NYC DOE's Automate the Schools (ATS) system, orders equipment and supplies, and compiles its own financial reports (in conjunction with Democracy Prep Harlem's Board of Trustees Finance Committee). The fee structure is based on an initial 15% of public non-competitive revenues, which includes all per-pupil revenues for basic tuition, supplemental and students with disabilities payments, with an annual reduction of 0.5%. In the 2014-2015 school year, the management fee paid to the CMO, after reduction, is 13%.

Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's Board of Trustees is led by chair Dr. Robert North, who has been with the Board since the school's inception. The elementary school is led by Theresa Walsh, who was a former teacher and grade-level chair at the elementary school; the middle school is led by Anwar Abdul-Rahman, who was a founding teacher at the middle school; and the high school is led by Steven Popper, who transitioned from Democracy Prep's Leader U program (Leader U aims to attract, prepare, and empower education entrepreneurs to lead new high-performing Democracy Prep schools as Campus Directors). Democracy Prep Public Schools also has a Chief Executive Officer, Katie Duffy Stanton, who has been with the network since 2007-2008 and was formerly the CMO's Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff under the founder, Seth Andrew.

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<sup>10</sup> ATS data as of October 31, 2014

<sup>11</sup> NYC DOE internal data

<sup>12</sup> NYC DOE internal data

<sup>13</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Management System

The school typically enrolls new students in all grades, though grades kindergarten, six, and nine are considered the primary entry grades. There were 2,882 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2014 lottery. The school does backfill students from the waitlist during the school year across all grades.<sup>14</sup>

Over the charter term, the school enrolled and served students as follows with average class size and section count noted for the most recently completed school year, 2013-2014.

### Enrollment

Grade-Level Annual Enrollment *	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Kindergarten	-	-	-	121
Grade 1	-	-	-	-
Grade 2	-	-	-	-
Grade 3	-	-	-	-
Grade 4	-	-	-	-
Grade 5	-	-	-	-
Grade 6	109	117	123	117
Grade 7	-	110	117	106
Grade 8	-	-	112	117
Grade 9	-	-	-	110
Grade 10	-	-	-	-
Grade 11	-	-	-	-
Grade 12	-	-	-	-
Total Enrollment	109	227	352	571

\* Enrollment figures reflect ATS data as of October 31 for each school year with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Self-reported information collected through the 2014-2015 DOE Annual Charter School Survey

### Additional Enrollment Data

School Year 2013-2014 Information	Section Count	Average Class Size
Kindergarten	4	30
Grade 1	-	-
Grade 2	-	-
Grade 3	-	-
Grade 4	-	-
Grade 5	-	-
Grade 6	4	29
Grade 7	4	27
Grade 8	4	29
Grade 9	4	28
Grade 10	-	-
Grade 11	-	-
Grade 12	-	-
Students Admitted Through The Lottery	300	

\* Lottery and section count information are based on self-reported data from the 2013-2014 DOE Annual Charter School Survey. Average Class Sizes were determined by dividing ATS enrollment as of October 31, 2013 by the appropriate grade-level section count.

Please see additional demographic data in Section 4 of this report for information regarding the enrollment of special populations at Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School. This information includes enrollment data for the percentage of students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, English Language Learners and students with disabilities as compared to the CSD and citywide averages, as well as targets proposed by the New York State Education Department (NYSED).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, Board of Regents authorized charter schools, including those authorized by NYC DOE, will be held accountable to enrollment targets once established by NYSED for students with disabilities, English Language Learner students, and students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch.

## Part 3: Renewal Report Overview

### Renewal Report

This report contains the findings and recommendations of the NYC DOE regarding the charter school's application for charter renewal. This report is based on a cumulative record of the school's progress during the current charter term, including but not limited to oversight visits, annual reports, and formal correspondence between the school and its authorizer, the NYC DOE, all of which are conducted in order to evaluate and monitor the charter school's academic, fiscal, and operational performance. Additionally, the NYC DOE incorporates into this report its findings from the renewal application process, which includes a written application, a report on student achievement data and a school visit by the Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) and other staff from the NYC DOE.

Upon review of all the relevant materials, a recommendation is made to the NYC DOE Chancellor. The Chancellor's determination, and the findings on which that decision is based, is then submitted to the New York State Board of Regents.

### Is the school an academic success?

To assess whether a school is an academic success, the NYC DOE considers performance measures, including, but not limited to the following (as appropriate for grades served):

- New York State ELA and math assessment absolute results;
- New York State Regents exams passage rates;
- Comparative proficiency for elementary and middle schools, including growth rates for ELA and math proficiency;
- Comparative graduation rates and Regents completion rates for high schools;
- Closing the achievement gap performance relative to CSD or New York City public schools;
- New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) or other approved alternate assessments; and
- Performance data pertaining to college and career readiness.

Academic success is rated as **Demonstrated**, **Partially Demonstrated**, or **Not Yet Demonstrated**.

### Is the school a fiscally and operationally sound, viable organization?

To assess whether a school is a fiscally and operationally sound, viable organization, OSDCP focuses on three areas: Governance Structure & Organizational Design, School Climate & Community Engagement, and Financial Health. This includes an analysis of the school's audited financial statements, based on the National Association of Charter School Authorizer's Core Performance Framework.<sup>16</sup>

The NYC DOE considers a variety of supporting materials and data, including but not limited to the following:

- Board of Trustee bylaws;
- Board of Trustee meeting minutes;
- Annual Reports submitted by schools to New York State Education Department (NYSED);
- NYC DOE School Surveys;
- Data collection sheets provided by schools;
- Student, staff, and Board turnover rates;
- Audits of authorized enrollment numbers; and
- Annual financial audits.

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

<sup>16</sup> Please refer to the following website for more information:  
[http://nacsa.mycrowdwisdom.com/diweb/catalog/item/id/126547/q/%20q=performance\\*20framework&c=82](http://nacsa.mycrowdwisdom.com/diweb/catalog/item/id/126547/q/%20q=performance*20framework&c=82)

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

As it pertains to compliance, the NYC DOE identifies areas of compliance and noncompliance with relevant laws and regulations as identified in the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework.

**Staff Representatives**

The following experts participated in the review of this school, including the renewal visit to the school conducted on October 27 and October 28, 2014.

- Sonya Hooks, Senior Director, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Meera Jain, Director of Evaluation and Policy, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Kim Wong, Director of Operations, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Caitlin Robisch, Director of Analytics, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Paul Yen, Data Analyst, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Lynnette Aqueron, Senior School Improvement Specialist, NYC DOE Division of English Language Learners and Student Support
- Rochelle Hendlin, Consultant

## Part 4: Findings

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

At the time of this school's renewal Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School has demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

#### High Academic Attainment and Improvement

- The school has four years of academic performance data and four years of NYS assessment data at the time of this report. For detailed information on grade-level data on NYS assessments, please see Appendix A.

NOTE: The 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 ELA and math proficiency percentages should not be compared directly with prior-year results. Unlike prior years, proficiency on the NYS assessments for ELA and math in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 were based on the Common Core Learning Standards – a more demanding set of knowledge and skills necessary for 21<sup>st</sup> century college and career readiness.

#### ES/MS students scoring at or above Level 3 on NYS assessments, compared to CSD, NYC and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School</b>	<b>48.6%</b>	<b>43.3%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>
CSD 5	30.1%	28.9%	13.8%	16.4%
Difference from CSD 5 *	18.5	14.4	2.3	-1.4
NYC	43.6%	44.3%	25.7%	27.0%
Difference from NYC *	5.0	-1.0	-9.6	-12.0
New York State **	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-4.2	-11.8	-15.0	-15.6

% Proficient in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School</b>	<b>70.6%</b>	<b>74.5%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>34.9%</b>
CSD 5	39.7%	38.6%	11.8%	13.0%
Difference from CSD 5 *	30.9	35.9	6.4	21.9
NYC	56.0%	58.3%	27.3%	28.9%
Difference from NYC *	14.6	16.2	-9.1	6.0
New York State **	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	7.3	9.7	-12.9	-1.3

\* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself served. CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

\*\* New York State proficiency rates were taken from data.nysed.gov.

### Performance on the NYC Progress Report<sup>17</sup>

Middle School Progress Report Grades	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Overall Grade	-	A	B	Progress Reports were discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.
Student Progress	-	A	B	
Student Performance	-	A	B	
School Environment	-	A	B	

Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School did not receive high school progress reports during school years 2010-2011 through 2012-2013 as the school did not enroll ninth grade students until the 2013-2014 school year. Further, the school did not enroll elementary grade students (kindergarten) until the 2013-2014 school year.

### Mission and Academic Goals

According to the Renewal Application submitted to the NYC DOE by Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School, as well as annual reports submitted to the NYSED, over each of the four years in the charter term during which the school was open, the school achieved/met academic goals as follows:

- 4 of 4 applicable charter goals in the first year of the charter,
- 8 of 10 in the second year,
- 3 of 7 in the third year,<sup>18</sup> and
- 5 of 10 in the fourth year.

<sup>17</sup> For purposes of the NYC DOE Progress Report, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School was classified as a middle school for the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years.

<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that because of the move to Common Core standards in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not include goals that measure a school's actual performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and math exams or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals for the 2012-2013 school year. Goals that refer to comparative academic performance of the school (e.g. to the Community School District) were included in the analysis. In addition, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE will not include goals that are related to NYC DOE Progress Report Grades or, due to a change in state regulation, goals that are related to standardized assessments for students in grades kindergarten through two in its analysis of progress towards goals.

**Progress Towards Academic Charter Goals \***

Academic Goals		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
1.	Each year, 75% of sixth through eighth grade students who have been at the School on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above level 3 on the New York State ELA Exam.	N/A	Not Met	N/A	Not Met
2.	Each year, 75% of sixth through eighth grade students who have been at the School on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above level 3 on the New York State Math Exam.	N/A	Met	N/A	Not Met
3.	Each year, 75% of sixth through eighth grade students who have been at the School on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above level 3 on the New York State Science Exam.	N/A	Met	Not Met	Met
4.	Each year, 75% of sixth through eighth grade students who have been at the School on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above level 3 on the New York State Social Studies Exam.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5.	For years 2 through 5 of Democracy Prep Harlem, grade-level cohorts of the same students (i.e. students who are in the school for two years in a row) 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	Met	N/A	Not Met
6.	For years 2 through 5 of Democracy Prep Harlem, grade-level cohorts of the same students (i.e. students who are in the school for two years in a row) will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's State math exam and 75 percent at or above Level 3 on the current year's State math exam.	N/A	Met	N/A	Not Met
7.	Each year, the percent of students performing at or above level 3 on the New York State ELA Exam in each tested grade will, in the majority of grades, exceed the average performance of students tested in the same grades of Community School District 5.	Met	Partially Met	Not Met	Met
8.	Each year, the percent of students performing at or above level 3 on the New York State Math Exam in each tested grade will, in the majority of grades, exceed the average performance of students tested in the same grades of Community School District 5.	Met	Met	Met	Met
9.	Each year, the school will earn a score sufficient to place it in the 75th percentile of all schools on the NYC DOE Progress Report.	N/A	Met	Not Met	N/A
10.	The school will prepare students for success in college and citizenship, measured by academic metrics, earned visits to colleges, and a College Preparation Portfolio (CPP). <sup>19</sup>	N/A	N/A	Met	Met

<sup>19</sup> Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School self-reported that it "utilizes a comprehensive internal measure that encompasses the performance of [its] eighth-grade scholars on the Civics portion of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Naturalization Test, their progress toward satisfaction of the civic skills requirements they must complete prior to receiving a Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School diploma, and the average number of college visits they have earned over the life of their Democracy Prep Harlem middle school experiences" to evaluate progress towards this goal.

Academic Goals		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
11.	The school will be deemed “In Good Standing” each year for annual yearly progress.	Met	Met	Met	Met
12.	The school will maintain an average daily attendance rate of 95% or better for students and staff. <sup>20</sup>	Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met

\* Goals were self-reported by the school in the school's Renewal Application submitted to NYC DOE and 2013-2014 Annual Report documentation submitted to NYSED.

## Responsive Education Program

The school administers the University of Chicago developed STEP (Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress) assessments for kindergarten and first grade and school-created trimester assessments for the upper grades. The following was noted:

- Many students enter Democracy Prep Harlem lagging behind grade level in reading and math.
- Kindergarten students made significant growth at each checkpoint throughout the past school year, increasing 1.35 levels from Round 1 to Round 2, 1.24 levels from Round 2 to Round 3, and 0.72 levels from Round 3 to Round 4.
- By the start of the third trimester in March 2014, Democracy Prep Harlem kindergarten students had already grown 3.3 levels on average since the beginning of the school year, which exceeds typical growth for students at other charter schools within the Democracy Prep Public Schools network.
  - By DPH's standards, kindergarten students on a STEP Level 3 by the end of the school year are considered proficient and Democracy Prep Harlem students are on track as a cohort to meet the goal of a STEP Level 4 by June, despite starting the year behind.
  - DPH projects similar levels of growth from Rounds 4 to 6 throughout the rest of the school year.
- Democracy Prep Harlem scholars have demonstrated significant progress on Common Core aligned internal trimester assessments during the current school year. Grade six students earned an average trimester exam score of 76.2% (which includes reading, writing, math, science, and history), a pass rate of 70.8% and a high pass rate of 33.1%. The average trimester exam score for grade seven students across all subjects was 72.7%, and grade eight students scored an average of 75.6%.

As part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE visited the school on October 27 and October 28, 2014. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- **Alignment with Common Core:**
  - Democracy Prep Harlem's core academic program provides three hours of reading and writing, two hours of math, an hour of social studies/study skills, and an hour of science for all middle school students each day. Elementary students receive three hours of reading, 45 minutes of writing, an hour and a half of math, and 45 minutes of science or social studies each day. High school students study literature, writing, history, math, science and Korean for 50 minutes each daily.
  - School leadership reported that in response to the 2012-2013 NYS assessments, Democracy Prep Harlem now uses a curriculum that is fully aligned to the CCLS and has

<sup>20</sup> Please note the school self-reported attendance rates over the four year charter period of 96.2%, 95.7%, 93.7%, and 95.0%, respectively, in its Renewal Application to the NYC DOE dated December 5, 2014. However, information captured in the DOE Automate the Schools database (ATS) shows attendance rates of 96.2%, 96.6%, 93.8%, and 94.7%, respectively. As a result, the DOE considers this goal met in only two of the four years of the charter period. Please see the attendance table in the School Climate & Community Engagement section for more information.

refined its scope and sequence documents, particularly for Reading Comprehension, Textual Analysis, and Writing, to align work with the Common Core Learning Standards.

- School leadership at Democracy Prep Harlem also redesigned internal assessments and did not share them with teachers in advance in order to mirror the testing experience with the students.
- A major focus is building knowledge in a cohesive and coherent way, drawing from the Core Knowledge framework.
- Instead of focusing solely on strategies using unrelated reading passages, Democracy Prep Harlem now uses Knowledge Domain specific readings, aligned to scientific and history content knowledge, built over time and taught to a standard.
- In writing, Democracy Prep Harlem has shifted from more narrative-based, inward-focused writing to expository, opinion-based assignments and skills.

- **Addressing the Needs of All Learners:**

- Democracy Prep Harlem implements an inclusive, heterogeneous educational model that serves all students.
- The entirety of Democracy Prep Harlem incorporates supports for all students struggling academically, not just those with disabilities.
- The academic program at Democracy Prep Harlem avoids remediation “pull-out” from core courses whenever possible and uses a curriculum that meets each student where he or she is and, using extra time and supports, accelerates students academically to master CCLS at a faster rate than in traditional schools.
- Democracy Prep Public Schools utilized a universally designed curriculum to provide access for a broad range of diverse student disabilities and needs. This approach guides the full inclusion of students with disabilities, from the facilities, to the differentiated curriculum, to the routines and rituals of daily life.
  - Specifically, this approach includes a design of materials and activities that are attainable by individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, understand, organize, engage, and remember.
  - An essential aspect of universal design at Democracy Prep Public Schools is the creation of a structured, disciplined, and predictable school culture. Chaotic environments are especially detrimental to those students with disabilities including autism, Asperger’s Syndrome, ADD/ADHD, Downs Syndrome, and others. The creation of uniform behavioral expectations across the entire school, in every classroom, hallway, bathroom, and office means that students will know exactly what to expect and what is expected of them at all times.
- To provide all Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act) services, Democracy Prep Harlem has designed a flexible model that is fully compliant with applicable laws. Democracy Prep Harlem shares two full-time ACT (Academic Collaboration Team) specialists through the Democracy Prep Public Schools network and an ACT Manager at each fully-grown campus, along with at least one full-time ACT teacher certified in special education for students with mild and moderate special needs at each grade level.
  - These individuals are responsible for implementing classroom-based IEP services and ensuring access to the general curriculum for all students with IEPs.
  - The ACT Manager works directly with the Committee on Special Education (CSE) and also serves as the school’s Section 504 Officer.

- If, through the lottery process, a student is admitted who has profound or severe disabilities, Democracy Prep Harlem will ensure that the student has the appropriately certified aides and teachers working with him or her to provide necessary services in an inclusive Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) environment.
    - Additionally, full-time social workers provide counseling services to all students who have counseling mandates on each campus, and speech therapists provided (and paid for) by the NYC DOE come to the campus to provide speech and language services to students on-site.
  - Democracy Prep Harlem is committed to serving students most at risk of academic failure as well as having an instructional program that provides sufficient differentiation to accommodate the needs of those who enter above grade level in reading and mathematics.
    - Democracy Prep Public Schools’ mastery-based curriculum, myriad enrichment opportunities, and Advanced Placement course offerings at the high school level enable all students — including accelerated learners — to enjoy a learning experience tailored to their specific needs.
    - For example, in Guided Reading, students are grouped by ability level. Consequently, students who are above grade level will be grouped with the other highest performing students in their class during reading blocks and will be assigned more complex tests by their teachers. In math, accelerated learners have an opportunity to tackle “challenge work” during their daily problem-solving block.
  - Democracy Prep Harlem serves any and all students who are classified as ELLs through a structured English immersion (SEI) program that provides them with the challenge and extra supports needed to achieve proficiency in English.
    - This SEI model does not segregate ELLs from their English speaking peers.
    - Through Democracy Prep Harlem’s extended school day and extended school year, ELL students benefit from dramatically increased exposure to English speaking, listening, reading, and writing, which speeds the acquisition of English language.
    - Students who have been identified as ELL are assessed annually using the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) Test as well as nationally normed standardized tests, teacher-created exams, and informal teacher observation in the classroom to determine improvement in English proficiency.
    - Students who score above the established cutoff point for ELLs will be deemed no longer ELL, while those who score below the cutoff point will continue to be classified as ELL. Students no longer deemed ELL, like all students, will still have access to language and academic support and services from the ACT Team.
- **Instructional Model and Classroom Instruction:**
  - During the renewal visit, 27 classrooms across grades kindergarten and one and six through ten, were observed with the school’s Campus Directors, a network superintendent and other network staff.
  - In some observed classes, teachers were following the school’s co-teaching model, including team teaching, parallel teaching, one teach and one assist, and/or alternative teaching.
  - Class-sizes observed ranged from 21 to 27 students, with one to two teachers in all classrooms.

- Forms of questioning identified during the classroom observations were mostly basic but some included challenging students to demonstrate understanding or to analyze and apply understanding.
  - In most classrooms, checks for understanding methods observed included questioning, polling, classwork, teacher observation, and frequent use of student turn and talk.
  - In some observed classrooms, differentiation of materials, tasks, and products, through small group instruction or independent practice, was observed. These were consistent with the school model.
  - In all observed classes, students were responsive to teacher directions and instruction.
  - In most observed classes, students were either fully on task or mostly on task. Off-task students were off task for a short duration.
  - Based on debriefs with the school's leadership team members after classroom visits, all classrooms had instruction that aligned with the instructional model and current academic goals of the school.
- As defined by the school, all Democracy Prep Public Schools utilize a student behavior code based on a “no excuses” model and feature five common elements: rigorous college-prep academics, more time to learn, data-driven decision-making, safe and supportive school culture, and exemplary talent.
    - **Rigorous college-prep academics.** Democracy Prep Harlem operates academically rigorous, college preparatory campuses. The school's curriculum is based on an accelerated introduction to the Common Core Learning Standards. Students are challenged to do their best academically, regardless of language proficiency, special education status, or the academic level at which they enter the school. The school's rigorous academic program includes the core subjects, as well as engaging electives such as art, music, and fitness.
    - **More time to learn.** Democracy Prep Harlem students attend school Monday through Thursday from 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 or 5:15 p.m. (depending on grade level), and until at least 1:30 p.m. on Fridays, as well as one Saturday each month. The school year includes approximately 191 days of instruction, and students in need of additional individual support or required remediation receive after-dismissal tutoring and attend school on additional Saturdays and during some school breaks. Students who have not yet mastered the grade's content expectations by the end of the year attend a mandatory Summer Academy. Within these programs, Democracy Prep Harlem students most in need of extra help benefit from over 70% more instructional time each year than they would receive in a typical district school. Should a student attend Democracy Prep Harlem from kindergarten through graduation, he/she would receive over a decade more educational time than would a peer attending the average traditional public school.
    - **Data-driven decision-making.** Democracy Prep Public Schools network utilizes a sophisticated feedback loop of frequent data collection and analysis including a network-wide dashboard tool, interim assessments, and comparative academic measures to drive effective instruction at the student, class, teacher, grade, school, and network levels. Assessments include absolute measures, value-added measures, and internally developed/externally validated trimester and comprehensive exams.
    - **Safe and supportive school culture.** Democracy Prep Public Schools were founded on the belief that a safe, structured, and supportive school community is essential to ensure dramatic academic gains for all students. Democracy Prep Harlem adheres to a “broken windows” approach to school discipline and a “tipping point” approach to school culture. Teachers focus relentlessly on appropriate consequences for small issues to ensure that more significant negative behaviors are unlikely to occur. School culture is based on the “DREAM Values” according to which all staff and students live: Discipline, Respect, Enthusiasm, Accountability, and Maturity. Students earn or forfeit “DREAM Dollars” based on their adherence to these values. Accumulated DREAM Dollars may be linked to college scholarship accounts, and students may “purchase” privileges and benefits such

as end-of-trimester trips including Civic and College Expeditions with their accrued DREAM dollars.

- **Exemplary talent.** Democracy Prep Public Schools has an extremely selective staff application process; fewer than the top 1% of applicants are hired. Lead teachers receive a base salary that exceeds the local scale and are eligible for excellent benefits and performance-based raises. All staff members undergo extensive performance reviews and receive weekly professional development (PD) during the school year and three weeks of intensive PD in the summer. Democracy Prep Harlem teachers and leaders are guided by explicit, well-defined career paths and are afforded ample opportunities for growth.

## Learning Environment

NYC DOE representatives conducted one-on-one interviews with 14 teachers and two instructional coaches. The following was noted:

- All interviewed teachers reported that they received school-based professional development both in the summer and weekly during the school year, with the administration providing resources. They also reported being encouraged by administration to get further professional development outside of the school.
  - All of the interviewed teachers mentioned being observed regularly and receiving frequent and useful feedback to improve their teaching craft.
  - All interviewed teachers reported that they use data in the classrooms through both formal and informal assessments for groupings and lesson planning.
- NYC DOE representatives conducted group interviews with students across all grades served in the 2014-2015 school year (kindergarten, first, and sixth through tenth grades). The following was noted:
    - Most students commented that going to college was seen as an end goal after leaving Democracy Prep Harlem.
    - Most students commented that teachers were supportive and helpful.
    - Some students talked about the benefits of the out-of-town field trips to Washington D.C. and Boston as learning trips.
  - According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 96% of parents agree or strongly agree “that the school has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss [their] child” and 98% of parents who responded to the survey agree or strongly agree “that the school has high expectations for [their] child.”<sup>21</sup>
  - According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey 100% of teachers agree or strongly agree that “order and discipline are maintained at the school” and 100% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that “at my school students are often harassed or bullied in school.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 67% of parent respondents strongly agree that Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss their child; another 29% agree with the statement. Similarly, 73% of parent respondents strongly agree that Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School has high expectations for their child; another 25% agree with the statement.

<sup>22</sup> According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 66% of teacher respondents strongly agree that order and discipline are maintained at Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School; another 34% agree with the statement. Of teacher respondents, 40% strongly disagree that students are often harassed or bullied in the school; 60% of teacher respondents disagree with the statement; and 0% agree or strongly agree with the statement.

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

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

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has partially developed its governance structure and organizational design.

On October 28, 2014, as part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE met with a representation of the school's Board of Trustees independent of the school leadership team. Based on document review and observation, the following was noted:

- The Board currently has 10 active members. This level of membership is consistent with the minimum of five members and maximum of 15 members established in the Board's bylaws.
- The Board's Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer are specified positions in the bylaws and are currently filled with no vacancies. However, the Board's clerk is currently a vacant position.
- The Board has not consistently achieved quorum, as recorded in meeting minutes. Across 24 meetings reviewed for meeting held during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years, the Board achieved quorum 22 times.
- As recorded in monthly meeting minutes, the Superintendent and/or Principals update the Board on academic progress and school/network operations, and the Director of Finance and Chief Financial Officer update the Board on financial standing at the school/network.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership team as evidenced by the school's organizational chart and school leadership's monthly updates on academic, financial and operational performance to the Board and its committees, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.
- The Board's bylaws reference the following standing committees: Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Development Committee, Governance Committee, Community and Family Communications Committee, and Academic Accountability Committee. However, meeting minutes do not indicate that the Development, Governance, Community and Family Communications, and Academic Accountability committees are regularly active.
- The founder of Democracy Prep Public Schools, Seth Andrew, is no longer a member of the school's Board. However, the current CEO, Katie Duffy Stanton, has been with Democracy Prep Public Schools since 2007-2008 and was formerly the organization's Chief Operating Officer, Chief of Staff and Executive Director of Harlem Prep Charter School, another school in the Democracy Prep Public School network.
- The founding Board Chair, Dr. Robert North, is still a member of the school's Board and continues to serve as Board Chair.

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

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has partially developed a stable school culture.

- To date, the school has met its charter goal of having an annual average student attendance rate of at least 95% in two of the four years of the retrospective charter term. Average daily attendance for students over the course of the charter term is provided in the table below.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The table reflects average daily attendance data taken from the NYC DOE's Automate the Schools (ATS) system for school years 2010-2011 through 2013-2014. Please note that the school self-reported different attendance rates in its Renewal Application than those recorded in ATS for 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. The school self-reported attendance rates of 95.7%, 93.7% and 95.0% for school years 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, respectively.

## Average Attendance

Elementary and Middle School Attendance				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School *	96.2%	96.6%	93.8%	94.7%
NYC **	93.2%	93.9%	93.6%	93.2%
Difference from NYC	3.0	2.7	0.2	1.5
High School Attendance				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School *	-	-	-	95.2%
NYC **	-	-	-	86.5%
Difference from NYC	-	-	-	8.7

\* Attendance figures reflect average attendance as recorded in ATS.

\*\* NYC attendance figures reflect average attendance across all general education district schools as reflected in ATS.

- Staff turnover has not been consistent over the charter term. For the most recent period, staff turnover was 24% of instructional staff not returning, by choice or request at the start of the 2014-2015 school year.<sup>24</sup> Although this rate was lower than the previous school year's instructional turnover rate of 38%, it was higher than the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 instructional staff turnover rates of 10% and 5%, respectively.
- Student mobility is presented below for the charter term without comparison to other schools, the CSD, or NYC as final student retention goals were not established by the New York State Education Department for the retrospective charter term. Based on the NYC DOE's evaluation and not in comparison to any other school, the CSD, or NYC averages, the school recently has had challenges with retaining students.

## Mobility

Student Mobility out of Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School *				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Number of Students who Left the School	12	35	104	107
Percent of Students who Left the School	11.0%	15.4%	29.5%	19.8%

\* Figures are based on student enrollment as of October 31 for each respective school year with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012. Students in terminal grades are not included.

- The NYC DOE has made changes to the NYC School Survey during the entirety of the retrospective charter term. Questions asked have been altered, added or deleted from year to year. Also, beginning with the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, survey categories will not be measured in total points out of 10 possible points. To allow for consistency during the evaluated charter term, selected questions, consistent with the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework were identified as relevant for charter schools. These are presented below for the duration of the retrospective charter term. In the most recent year of survey results, 2013-2014, the percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing was above citywide averages for all of four selected questions. The percentage of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing was above citywide averages for all of the three selected questions. However, the percentage of students

<sup>24</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form in December 2014

agreeing or strongly agreeing was not above citywide averages for any of the three selected questions.

- NYC School Survey Response Rates should be comparable over time, however, as the measurement of these has remained consistent. Response rates for each parents, teachers and students (if participating) are presented below for each year of the charter term. The response rates for Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School students and parents have consistently been above NYC averages. The response rates for Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School teachers have been above NYC averages for the last three years of the charter term.

### NYC School Survey Results

Percent of Respondents that Agree or Strongly Agree						
Survey Question		Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School				Citywide Average
		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014
Students*	Most of my teachers make me excited about learning.**	83%	83%	47%	40%	62%
	Most students at my school treat each other with respect.	62%	51%	44%	44%	60%
	I feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker room, cafeteria, etc.	73%	83%	88%	78%	79%
Parents	I feel satisfied with the education my child has received this year.	99%	98%	95%	97%	95%
	My child's school makes it easy for parents to attend meetings.	95%	96%	86%	98%	94%
	I feel satisfied with the response I get when I contact my child's school.	97%	90%	88%	96%	95%
Teachers	Order and discipline are maintained at my school.	100%	95%	100%	100%	80%
	The principal at my school communicates a clear vision for our school.	100%	100%	97%	98%	88%
	School leaders place a high priority on the quality of teaching.	100%	100%	96%	98%	92%
	I would recommend my school to parents.***	-	90%	74%	87%	81%

\* Students in grades kindergarten through five do not participate in the NYC School Survey.

\*\* This question was phrased as "My teachers inspire me to learn" in the 2009-2010 through 2012-2013 School Surveys.

\*\*\* This question was not introduced until the 2011-2012 School Survey.

## NYC School Survey Results

		Response Rates			
		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students*	Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School	86%	96%	94%	95%
	NYC	83%	82%	83%	83%
Parents	Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School	80%	70%	56%	65%
	NYC	52%	53%	54%	53%
Teachers	Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School	80%	100%	93%	100%
	NYC	82%	81%	83%	81%

\* Students in grades kindergarten through five do not participate in the NYC School Survey.

- The school's charter goals include, "parents will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the NYC School Survey in which the school receives scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement and Safety and Respect." The school has met this goal in each year of the charter.

As part of the renewal process, representatives for the NYC DOE have collected evidence relevant to the school's climate and community engagement over the school's charter term. Based on discussion, document collection and review, and observation, the following was noted:

- The NYC DOE conducted a public renewal hearing on October 28, 2014 at Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's middle school located at 207 West 133rd Street, Manhattan, New York, 10030 in an effort to elicit public comments. Approximately 54 participants attended the hearing with 20 persons speaking in support of the school's renewal and none speaking in opposition.
- The NYC DOE made randomized phone calls to parents/guardians from a roster provided by the school for students of all grades. Calls to school parents/guardians were made during December 2014 until 20 phone calls were completed. Of these calls, 100% provided positive feedback regarding the school.

## Financial Health

### **Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations.**

- Based on the fiscal year 2014 (FY14) financial audit, the school had a ratio of 2.01, which indicated a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the fiscal year (FY14) financial audit, the school had sufficient cash to cover its operating expenses with 65 days of unrestricted cash on hand allowing for at least two months of operating expenses without an infusion of cash. At the conclusion of FY14, the school had \$1,548,943 unrestricted cash on hand.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2014-2015 budget to the actual enrollment as of September 30, 2014 revealed that the school had met its enrollment target, supporting its projected enrollment based revenue.
- As of the FY14 financial audit, the school had no debt obligations.

## Financial Sustainability

### **Overall, the school is financially sustainable based on its current practices.**

- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY14, the school generated an aggregate surplus over these audited fiscal years, and in FY14 the school operated at a surplus.
- Based on the FY14 financial audit, the school's debt-to-asset ratio of 0.42 indicated that the school had more total assets than it had total liabilities.
- Based on the financial audits from FY11 through FY14, the school generated overall positive cash flow from FY11 to FY14, though the school had negative cash flow from FY13 to FY14.

There was no material weakness noted in the four independent financial audits of FY11 to FY14.

### **Essential Question 3: Is the School Compliant with its Charter and All Applicable Law and Regulations?**

Over the charter term, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School has been compliant with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

As of the review in December 2014, the Board of Trustees for Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School is in compliance with:

- **Membership size.** Over the charter term, the Board has consistently had a membership size that falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws, a minimum of five and maximum of 15 members.
- **Posting of minutes and agendas.** The Board has consistently made all board minutes and agendas available upon request to the public prior to or at Board meetings by posting board minutes and agendas on the school's website.
- **Timely submission of documents.** The Board did consistently submit the Annual Report to the New York State Education Department by the deadline of August 1 (or by the NYSED granted extension date) for each year of the current charter term.

As of the review in December 2014, the Board of Trustees for Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School is out of compliance with:

- **Required number of monthly meetings.** The school's bylaws indicate that the Board is to hold 10 meetings a year. In all years of the charter term (2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014), the Board did not hold the required number of monthly meetings, as evidenced by school-reported data and the posted meeting minutes. Required meetings are those which met quorum.
- **Submission of all required documents.** All current Board members have not submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms. The documents submitted, however, do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.<sup>25</sup>
- **Notification of Board Member Resignations/Submission of New Board Members for Approval.** The board has not consistently submitted board resignation notices or new board member credentials within the required five days of change to OSDCP for review and, if necessary, approval. During the charter term, documents were not submitted per the required timeframe for two board members.
- **Timely submission of documents.** The school has not posted to its website its annual audit for each year of the charter term, as required in charter law. Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School has only posted its FY14 audit to its website.

As of the review in December 2014, the charter school is in compliance with:

- **Safety Documents.** The school has submitted the required safety plan. The school has the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification.
- **Immunization.** The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization.
- **Insurance.** The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to the NYC DOE.
- **Application and Lottery.** For the 2014-2015 school year, the school had an application deadline of April 2, 2014 and lottery date of April 10, 2014, adhering to charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1. Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently adhere to this requirement.
- **Fire Emergency.** At least one of the school leaders was trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.
- **Student Discipline Plan.** The school has provided the NYC DOE with a current and complete copy of its Student Discipline Policy for the 2014-2015 academic year. This policy was determined to be compliant with federal law.

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<sup>25</sup> Source: New York State Education Department Annual Report

- **Timely Submission of Invoicing and Reconciliation Documents.** Over the course of the charter term, the school did consistently submit complete invoicing and reconciliation documents by the associated deadlines.

As of the review in December 2014, the charter school is out of compliance with:

- **Fingerprint clearance.** All staff members do not have appropriate fingerprint clearance. The school lacked fingerprint clearance for two of 88 staff members.
- **Teacher certification.** The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is not compliant with state requirements for teacher certification. The Charter Schools Act prohibits more than five staff members or more than 30% of the teaching staff from not being certified in accordance with requirements applicable to other public schools. Of Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School's 67 staff members, 30 are not certified.

### Enrollment and Retention Targets

- Amendments to Article 56 of the New York State Consolidated Laws: Education, which relates to Charter Schools, call for charter schools, as a consideration of renewal, “to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets” for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who are eligible for the Free and Reduced Price Lunch program. The amendments further indicate “Repeated failure to comply with the requirement” as a cause for revocation or termination of the charter.
  - The law directs schools to demonstrate “that it has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students” in the event it has not yet met its targets.
  - The NYC DOE, as authorizer, will annually monitor the school’s performance against these targets and the efforts it makes to meet this state requirement.
  - As of November 1, 2014, charter school enrollment and retention targets as required by the NYS Charter Schools Act are still in a *proposed* status. The information presented below for enrollment is compared to NYC CSD and NYC averages, however, these averages should not be assumed to be similar to the final enrollment targets to be released by NYSED.<sup>26</sup>
- In all years of operation, including the most recently completed school year 2013-2014, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School:
  - served a lower or comparable percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch compared to the CSD 5 percentages for the relevant grades served, though the school served a higher percentage than the CSD 3 rate for grade nine in 2013-2014, and a higher percentage than the citywide rate in three of the four years;
  - served a lower percentage of students with disabilities compared to the CSD 5 rate for the last three years, but a higher percentage than the CSD 3 rate for grade nine in 2013-2014 and a higher or equivalent rate to the citywide percentage for three of the four years under review; and
  - served a lower percentage of English Language Learner students compared to CSDs 3 and 5 as well as the citywide percentages for the relevant grades served.

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<sup>26</sup> Please see the following website for more information: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/enrollment-retention-targets.html>

## Enrollment of Special Populations<sup>27</sup>

Special Population		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014 State Enrollment Target (Proposed) <sup>28</sup>
Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)	<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School</b>	<b>80.7%</b>	<b>85.0%</b>	<b>86.6%</b>	<b>83.7%</b> <sup>29</sup>	<b>91.3%</b>
	CSD 5	86.5%	88.3%	86.7%	86.3%	
	CSD 3	-	-	-	64.1%	
	NYC	81.6%	83.8%	82.7%	81.2%	
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>
	CSD 5	23.0%	21.2%	22.5%	22.5%	
	CSD 3	-	-	-	14.7%	
	NYC	19.7%	19.5%	19.9%	19.8%	
English Language Learners (ELL)	<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>
	CSD 5	15.1%	12.0%	11.7%	11.6%	
	CSD 3	-	-	-	6.6%	
	NYC	13.2%	12.1%	11.8%	13.8%	

Additional Enrollment Information				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grades Served	6	6-7	6-8	K, 6-9
CSD(s)	5	5	5	5 (Grades K, 6-8) 3 (Grade 9)

<sup>27</sup> Comparisons of a charter school's special populations to the CSD and City are made relative only to the grades served by the school. For example, if a charter school serves grades kindergarten through five, comparisons of that school's special populations will only be made relative to grades kindergarten through five in the CSD and citywide. CSD comparisons are particular to the grades served in each CSD each year. Enrollment rates reflect demographic characteristics as of June 1 and enrollment as of October 31 for each given school year, with the exception of enrollment in the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.

State enrollment targets were generated by a calculator developed by the State Education Department (SED). Once a school's CSD, total enrollment and grade span are entered, the calculator generates a school-specific enrollment target. The CSD for a multi-district school is the primary CSD as determined by each school. The enrollment is determined by the total number of students enrolled as of October 31, 2013. Any school with an unusual grade configuration (i.e. K, 6-9) should use an available grade configuration provided by SED that is most aligned as determined by the DOE, otherwise a school's actual grade span is used. For more information regarding SED's methodology behind the calculation of charter school enrollment and retention targets, please refer to the memo at <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2012Meetings/July2012/712brca11.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Targets were identified for Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School by using CSD 5 as the primary CSD and a grade range of grades six through nine.

<sup>29</sup> The school has used a private vendor for school lunch services starting midway through the 2012-2013 school year. As a result, the percentage of students receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch for the 2013-2014 school year was self-reported by the school as part of its Renewal Application dated December 2014. Please note that the NYC DOE's ATS records indicate that 65.0% of students at Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School were eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch based on HRA eligibility alone for 2013-2014.

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

As reported by school leadership and the school's Board, the following was noted:

- Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School is authorized to serve grades kindergarten through twelve as per a previously approved material charter revision in 2013, but currently serves students in kindergarten and first and sixth through tenth grades. In the next charter term, Democracy Prep Harlem plans to fully phase-in and serve grades kindergarten through twelve.

## Part 5: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

### Renewal Process

In the final year of its charter, a NYC DOE Chancellor-authorized charter school seeking renewal must demonstrate its success during the current 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 prior term, to make a compelling, evidence-based case that it has earned the privilege of an additional charter term, and, if renewed, to carry out an ambitious plan for the future.

The NYC DOE does not automatically grant charter renewal, and no charter operator is entitled to renewal. Rather, a school must prove that it has earned renewal and is worthy of continuing the privilege of educating New York City public school students. To make such determinations, the NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) renewal team performs a comprehensive review of the school's academic, operational and fiscal performance over the course of the charter which includes an analysis of the school's renewal application. This application is built around the four essential questions of the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework and includes a retrospective analysis of the school's prior track record as well as a prospective plan for the school. In reviewing this information, a school must be able to demonstrate that it can satisfy the four essential questions of the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework:

1. Is the school an academic success?
2. Is the school a fiscally and operationally 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?

The school presents evidence to support their application for renewal by providing a compelling response to these overarching questions that demonstrates its students have made significant academic progress, is serving students equitably, has sustainable operations to be successful in the next charter term, and that the school has met the goals and objectives pledged in its current 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.

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 also important factors that inform a renewal decision. For more information on how OSDCP makes renewal recommendations to the Chancellor, please see the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework overview in Part 6 of this report.

### Statutory Basis for Renewal

The New York State Charter Schools Act ("the Act") authorizes the creation of a system 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:

#### **§2850:**

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

- (f) Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

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>30</sup>

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.

(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.

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.

The determination of whether to approve a renewal application rests in the sole discretion of a charter school's authorizer.

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>31</sup> As one such charter entity, the New York City Department of Education ("NYC DOE") 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;

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<sup>30</sup> See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

<sup>31</sup> See generally §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4).

- 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; and
- The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the board of regents 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.<sup>32</sup>

Where the NYC DOE 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>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> § 2851(4)(e) added with the 2010 amendments to the Act.

<sup>33</sup> See § 2852(5).

## Part 6: NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework

The Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships (OSDCP) team may recommend to the Chancellor three potential outcomes for charter schools applying for renewal: full-term renewal (with or without conditions), short-term renewal (with or without conditions), or non-renewal.

After the OSDCP renewal site visit, the OSDCP team incorporates its findings from the visit into this renewal report. The evidence and findings align to the four essential questions of the NYC DOE accountability framework and may include classroom observations, leadership interviews, assessment results, School Survey results, public hearings and other community feedback, as well as a variety of other data. Schools will be given the opportunity to correct factual errors in this report. If the OSDCP renewal team determines that renewal is not warranted, the school will be informed in writing of the reasons for the non-renewal. If OSDCP approves the renewal application and the Chancellor recommends renewal for the school, prior to the school's charter expiration date, OSDCP will send the renewal report and recommendation along with the school's renewal application and other supporting evidence to the Board of Regents for its approval.

### ***Full-Term Renewal, With or Without Conditions***

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 clearly and consistently demonstrated high academic attainment and/or consistent and significant student academic progress, has met the majority of its charter goals, has demonstrated financial stability, has demonstrated operational viability, has attained sufficient board capacity, and has an educationally sound learning environment in order to gain this type of renewal.

### ***Short Term Renewal, With or Without Conditions***

In cases where a school is up for renewal of its initial charter and has two years or fewer of state-assessment results, or where any school has demonstrated mixed academic results or has uncertain organizational or financial viability, a short-term renewal with conditions may be considered.

### ***Non-Renewal***

Renewal is not automatic. 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.

### ***Grade Expansions or Enrollment Changes***

A school may seek material charter revisions as part of the renewal process. In the case of a grade expansion or change in authorized enrollment, these material charter revisions are considered separately from the charter renewal. Charter renewal, with or without conditions, is not a guarantee of approval for a proposed material charter revision.

## The NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework

To help Chancellor-authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the OSDCP 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 and operationally 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?

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. These factors include academic, fiscal, operational and environmental indicators of a charter school's performance. Additionally, some of the indicators we evaluate relate to expected performance as defined in the New York State Charter Schools Act including evidence of improved student learning and achievement, special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure, use of different and innovative teaching methods, parent and student satisfaction, and enrollment and retention of special student populations. Further detail about the application of the framework to school reflection and evaluation is provided beginning on page 17 of the NYC DOE Chancellor-Authorized Schools Accountability Handbook for 2014-2015.

What follows is a framework that outlines strands, indicators, and potential evidence for each of the four essential questions. The framework identifies what OSDCP looks at in determining whether a school is successful enough to earn a new charter term, with or without conditions, and the duration of the charter term recommended by NYC DOE. As schools use the NYC DOE OSDCP Accountability Framework, they should remember that charter schools exist to deliver improved student achievement for the students they serve, particularly at-risk students, so the schools are 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, while also recognizing the importance of closing the achievement gap and offering high-quality learning opportunities for all students.

### **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
- Meet other rigorous academic goals as stated on school charter
- Demonstrate increasing student achievement/growth
- Are closing the achievement gap for at risk students, including special needs and ELL students
- Are surpassing academic performance measures of DOE identified peer-schools
- Are surpassing academic performance measures compared with district/city proficiency averages

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

- Grades 3-8 NYS ELA Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- Grades 3-8 NYS Math Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- Grades 4 and 8 NYS Science Results (absolute and comparative performance, individual student progress, progress for at-risk populations, etc.)
- HS 4- and 6-Year Graduation Rates
- Grades 8-12 NYS Regent Exam Results
- 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
- When applicable, NYSAA or other approved alternate assessments results
- Results on state accountability measures
- Charter School Academic Goals
- School-reported internal assessments
- NYC DOE Progress Reports or School Quality Reports<sup>34</sup>

### **1b. Instructionally Sound and 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 and Common Core Learning Standards
- Use instructional models and resources that are consistent with school mission and flexible in addressing the needs of all learners
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- Utilizes a coherent and effective interim assessment system (e.g., use of formative, interim, and summative assessment data) for monitoring progress, predicting performance, and adjusting instruction
- Have an effective process for supporting improved classroom instruction, including frequent observation and feedback
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Use a defined process for evaluating and supporting curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals

<sup>34</sup> Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE replaced the DOE Progress Report with the DOE School Quality Report. The 2012-2013 school year is the last year NYC public schools will have a Progress Report score. The Progress Report and School Quality Report contain similar indicators of performance.

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

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

### **1c. Learning Environment**

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

- Provide a safe, respectful, and stable academic environment conducive to student learning (one with efficient transitions and safe hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.)
- Have a strong academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best effort academically and to actively engage in their own learning and the life of the school
- 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
- Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and supported
- Have 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:

- Classroom observations
- NYC DOE School Survey results (students, parents and teachers)
- School mission and articulated values
- Student management plan (code of conduct, school values, discipline policy, positive incentive system, etc.)
- Student attendance and retention rates
- Student discipline data (referral, suspension, expulsion)
- Parent complaint/concern information
- Self-administered satisfaction survey results
- Interviews with school leadership, staff, and, if appropriate, students
- Scheduled student engagement opportunities (e.g., student advisory, internships, student government, student led conferences, peer tutoring, peer mediation, etc.)
- School calendar and class schedules

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

### 2a. Mission and Goals

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

- Have an animated mission statement and clearly articulated goals (both academic and non-academic) that staff, students and community embrace
- Demonstrate an active self-evaluation process that involves regular monitoring, an examination of practices based on outcomes against goals, and reporting on progress towards school goals
- Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring data

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

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

## 2b. Leadership and Governance Structure

Schools with successful leadership and governance 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 Law and conflict of interest laws, 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
- 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
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provides 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 and core operational policies
- School calendar
- Professional development plans
- Stakeholder interviews (board, school leadership and staff)

## 2c. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

- A healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student-centered, and open to parents and community support
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the NYC DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Strong community-based partnerships that support and advocate for the school
- Engage families actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- 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
- Share instructional and operational practices with the larger NYC school community and actively seek opportunities for partnering and collaboration
- 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

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

- NYC DOE School Survey satisfaction parent, teacher, and, if appropriate student results
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs
- Participation in NYC DOE initiatives and efforts to collaborate/partner with other NYC schools
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)
- 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
- Student/Family and Staff Handbooks

## 2d. Operational Health

Schools that are effective, sustainable organizations have many of the characteristics below:

- A safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Demonstrate efficient and orderly daily operations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage and insurance and facility documents
- An effective process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, supporting, and evaluating school leadership and staff
- A flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- Consistently meet student enrollment and retention targets as established by SED (applicable to schools renewed after 2010)
- Communications with NYC DOE are timely, comprehensive, and appropriate
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees

Evidence of an operationally viable organization may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- Appropriate insurance documents
- Operational policies and procedures
- Operational organizational chart
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- School safety plan
- Immunization completion rate information
- Appropriate AED/CPR certifications

## 2e. Financial Sustainability

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

- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, at 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
- Consistently clean financial audits and compliant escrow accounts
- If applicable, strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school's design and academic program
- School leadership and Board maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- School leadership and Board oversee financial and operational responsibilities in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to decision-making
- Demonstrate financial planning for future school years, including per-pupil and space-related cost projections

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 audits, escrow accounts and other fiscal reporting documents
- Financial leader(s) resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships

### **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 the school's charter and charter agreement have the characteristics below:

- Implement 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
- Implement 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 Comprehensive Review reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership/Board and staff interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

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

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have the characteristics below:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting
- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for Free and Reduced Price Lunch, ELL and Special Education students to those of their community school district of location<sup>35</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 enrollment process and annual waiting lists with integrity
- Employ instructional staff with appropriate security clearances and meet all certification requirements

<sup>35</sup> School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from the NY State Education Department. This requirement of the New York State Charter Schools Act applies to schools renewed after 2010.

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

- School reporting documents
- School's NYSED Annual Report
- Student recruitment plan and resources
- Student management policies and promotion and retention policies
- Student/Family Handbook
- Student discipline policy and 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 the characteristics below:

- Safe and secure facilities with no significant compliance concerns
- Consistently clean annual audits, up-to-date escrow accounts, and complete 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 comply with NYC DOE OSDCP's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members
- Inform NYC DOE OSDCP, and where required, receive OSDCP 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
- Stakeholder interviews

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

### 4a. School Expansion or Model Replication

In anticipation of a new charter term, a school may consider various growth options: replication, expansion to new grades or increased enrollment, or alteration of its 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 determine community needs and to communicate regarding the school's 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 revision or merger applications
- 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 (for example, human resource policies for growing your own talent, 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)
- School develops contingency plans especially for facilities or financial scenarios

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

- Charter renewal application
- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organizational 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 without major changes through expansion or replication, 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 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

## Appendix A: School Performance Data

### Students scoring at or above Level 3

Grade-Level Proficiency in English Language Arts				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School</b>				
Grade 6	48.6%	30.6%	3.6%	10.1%
Grade 7	-	56.7%	12.7%	11.7%
Grade 8	-	-	32.4%	22.8%
<b>DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 5 *</b>				
Grade 6	18.5	-1.0	-10.3	-5.6
Grade 7	-	30.2	-2.3	-5.1
Grade 8	-	-	17.7	5.9
<b>DIFFERENCE FROM NYC</b>				
Grade 6	5.0	-14.7	-19.7	-15.2
Grade 7	-	13.4	-12.8	-15.1
Grade 8	-	-	7.0	-6.1

Grade-Level Proficiency in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
<b>Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School</b>				
Grade 6	70.6%	65.8%	11.7%	38.5%
Grade 7	-	83.8%	12.8%	20.8%
Grade 8	-	-	30.6%	43.9%
<b>DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 5 *</b>				
Grade 6	30.9	26.3	-4.7	19.4
Grade 7	-	45.9	2.0	7.9
Grade 8	-	-	19.5	37.0
<b>DIFFERENCE FROM NYC</b>				
Grade 6	14.6	6.5	-17.1	4.8
Grade 7	-	26.5	-12.1	-8.8
Grade 8	-	-	4.8	21.1

\* CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

## Appendix B: Additional Accountability Data

### NYC DOE Accountability Reports

[Annual Site Visit Report 2010-2011](#)

[Annual Site Visit Report 2011-2012](#)

[Annual Comprehensive Report 2012-2013](#)