



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**CHALLENGE PREPARATORY 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

Challenge Preparatory Charter School	
Board Chair(s)	Karon McFarlane
School Leader(s)	Mrs. LaToiya Tolliver-Revell (School Leader) Rev. Dr. Les Mullings (Chief Executive Officer)
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 27
Physical Address(es)	710 Hartman Lane, Queens
Facility Owner(s)	Private
School Opened For Instruction	2010-2011
Current Charter Term Expiration Date	2/8/2015
Current Authorized Grade Span	K-8
Current Authorized Enrollment	504
Proposed New Charter Term	4.5 years [February 9, 2015 – June 30, 2019]
Proposed Authorized Grade Span for New Charter Term	K-8
Proposed Authorized Enrollment for New Charter Term	792
Proposed Sections per Grade for New Charter Term	Grades K-3 and Grades 7-8: 4 sections per grade Grades 4-6: 3 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	2	1	2	4	9
# Partially Met	0	2	1	1	4
# Not Met	2	1	7	5	15
# Not Applicable *	8	8	2	2	20
% Met	17%	8%	17%	33%	19%
% Partially Met	0%	17%	8%	8%	8%
% Not Met	17%	8%	58%	42%	31%
% Not Applicable *	67%	67%	17%	17%	42%
% Met of All Applicable Goals	50%	25%	20%	40%	32%

* 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
Challenge Preparatory Charter School	-	-	31.2%	29.6%
CSD 27	-	-	29.2%	30.2%
Difference from CSD 27 *	-	-	2.0	-0.6
NYC	-	-	28.1%	30.5%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	3.1	-0.9
New York State **	-	-	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-	-	0.1	-1.0

% Proficient in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Challenge Preparatory Charter School	-	-	39.8%	47.2%
CSD 27	-	-	31.8%	39.7%
Difference from CSD 27 *	-	-	8.0	7.5
NYC	-	-	33.1%	39.3%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	6.7	7.9
New York State **	-	-	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	-	-	8.7	11.0

* 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
Challenge Preparatory Charter School – All Students	-	-	-	61.0%
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	-	-	-	47.0%
City Percent of Range- All Students	-	-	-	41.6%
Challenge Preparatory Charter School – School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	66.0%
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	35.1%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	26.3%

Median Adjusted Growth Percentile - Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Challenge Preparatory Charter School – All Students	-	-	-	65.0%
Peer Percent of Range - All Students	-	-	-	54.4%
City Percent of Range- All Students	-	-	-	57.4%
Challenge Preparatory Charter School – School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	49.0%
Peer Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	7.8%
City Percent of Range - School's Lowest Third	-	-	-	0.0%

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 *	-	-	-	27.3%
English Language Learner Students	-	-	-	-
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	-	-	-	26.9%
Percent in the 75th Growth Percentile - Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Students with Disabilities *	-	-	-	36.4%
English Language Learner Students	-	-	-	-
Students in the Lowest Third Citywide	-	-	-	40.0%

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

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.

As part of its renewal application, Challenge Preparatory Charter School submitted one material revision. The NYC DOE determination is as follows: regarding the material revision to continue phase-in of maximum authorized enrollment of up to 792 students during the next charter term, the NYC DOE approves this material revision.

A. Academic Performance

At the time of this school's renewal, Challenge Preparatory Charter School 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 Challenge Preparatory Charter School indicates that the school has made progress towards meeting some of these objectives.

Mission and Vision

Challenge Preparatory Charter School's mission is to prepare students to excel academically and compete successfully for admission to high-performing public, private and parochial high schools in New York City. To accomplish its mission, Challenge Preparatory Charter School offers a rigorous academic curriculum within a safe and supportive school environment.

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 two years of New York State (NYS) assessment data and four years of other academic indicators to evaluate the academic achievement and progress of the students at Challenge Preparatory Charter School (Challenge Prep).

Math proficiency rates for Challenge Preparatory Charter School have consistently exceeded those of Community School District (CSD) 27, New York City (NYC) and New York State, though ELA proficiency rates for the school have remained relatively equivalent to those of CSD 27, NYC and New York State.

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 are not directly comparable. However, as this school had its first year of testing in 2012-2013, all proficiency results are aligned to the CCLS.

In 2012-2013, 39.8% of Challenge Preparatory Charter School's students were proficient in math on the NYS assessments. Challenge Preparatory Charter School's math proficiency was greater than or equal to that of 68% of elementary schools citywide. When compared to elementary schools with student populations most like its own (i.e. peer schools), Challenge Preparatory Charter School outperformed 59% of similar schools, and when compared to CSD 27, the school outperformed 64% of elementary schools. In 2012-2013, 31.2% of Challenge Preparatory Charter School's students demonstrated proficiency in NYS assessments in English Language Arts (ELA). With this level of proficiency, Challenge Preparatory Charter School outperformed 65% of elementary schools citywide. Additionally, Challenge Preparatory Charter School outperformed 64% of its peer schools and 56% of CSD 27 elementary schools.

The following year, in 2013-2014, the percent of students at Challenge Preparatory Charter School who were proficient in math on the NYS assessments rose to 47.2%. For 2013-2014, Challenge Preparatory Charter School's math proficiency was greater than or equal to 66% of elementary schools citywide. When compared to peer schools, Challenge Preparatory Charter School outperformed 58% of similar schools, and the school outperformed 72% of CSD 27 elementary schools. In 2013-2014, the percent of students at Challenge Preparatory Charter School who demonstrated proficiency on NYS assessments in ELA fell to 29.6%. With this level of proficiency, Challenge Preparatory Charter School outperformed 60% of elementary schools citywide, 48% of its peer schools, and 52% of elementary schools in CSD 27.

It should be noted that CSD 27 is a large district in southeastern Queens that encompasses the neighborhoods of Woodhaven, Ozone Park, Howard Beach and parts of Richmond Hill, in addition to the Rockaways and Breezy Point on a separate peninsula. Challenge Preparatory Charter School is located on the peninsula in CSD 27 and is thus isolated from many other CSD 27 schools. The vast majority (93%)¹ of Challenge Preparatory Charter School students reside on the peninsula within 3.5 miles of the school building. While there are 36 other public elementary and K-8 schools in CSD 27, only 13 of these are within 3.5 miles of Challenge Preparatory Charter School. Of these 13, Challenge Preparatory Charter School outperformed all

¹ Reflects ATS residential data for students enrolled at Challenge Preparatory Charter School as of October 31, 2014

but two schools on the 2013-2014 NYS ELA assessment and all but one on the 2013-2014 NYS math assessment.

Over the four years that data is available for the retrospective charter term, Challenge Preparatory Charter School has met only 32% of its applicable academic charter goals.^{2,3} Challenge Preparatory Charter School met four of 10 applicable academic performance goals in its most recent year. Because of the move to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in 2012-2013, the NYC DOE did not evaluate goals that measure a school's academic performance relative to 75% or greater absolute proficiency on the NYS ELA and math exams 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 include 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 an inconsistent trend in its achievement rate of its stated charter goals during the retrospective charter term. The school's goal achievement rate was 50% in year one (2010-2011), then it decreased over the next two years and was 20% by year three (2012-2013), but then it increased to 40% in the most recent year (2013-2014).

In 2013-2014, Challenge Preparatory Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was 61.0% with a City Percent of Range of 41.6%, placing the school in the 31st percentile of elementary schools citywide.⁴ Similarly, the school's peer and CSD percentiles were 38% and 40%, respectively. This means that 60% or more of other elementary schools in Challenge Preparatory Charter School's peer group, CSD, and citywide had ELA median adjusted growth percentiles greater than Challenge Preparatory Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile in 2013-2014.

In 2013-2014, Challenge Preparatory Charter School's math median adjusted growth percentile was 65.0% with a City Percent of Range of 57.4%, which placed it in the 59th percentile of elementary schools citywide.⁵ Similarly, the school's peer and CSD percentiles were 48% and 56%, respectively. This means that Challenge Preparatory Charter School's math median adjusted growth percentile was near the median among those of its peer group and other CSD 27 elementary schools for 2013-2014.

The school has shown evidence of a developed responsive education program and supportive learning environment. Reports from past NYC DOE visits to the school indicate that in the first two years of the charter, the school's culture was already established as mission-driven and results-focused, both among the school leadership and across the staff, and put a high value on professional growth. The reports also stated that the school used data to drive differentiation and

² 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).

³ 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 assessments 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.

⁴ 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 41.6% 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 41.6% of the range around the average represented scores lower than that of Challenge Preparatory Charter School), while a citywide percentile of 31% indicates that Challenge Preparatory Charter School's ELA median adjusted growth percentile was higher than only 31% of all elementary schools citywide.

⁵ A City Percent of Range of 57.4% indicates that the school's math median adjusted growth percentile was within one standard deviation above the average. A citywide percentile of 59% indicates that Challenge Preparatory Charter School's math median adjusted growth percentile was higher than 59% of all elementary schools citywide.

small-group support and was committed to meeting the needs of all learners through a variety of intervention options.⁶

On its 2012-2013 NYC DOE Progress Report, Challenge Preparatory Charter School received an Overall B grade, as well as B grades in the Student Performance and School Environment sections, and a C grade in the Student Progress section. The school's overall score of 41.1 points ranked the school 27th out of 37 early childhood schools citywide that received a Progress Report grade for 2012-2013. In 2012-2013 the school was classified by the NYC DOE as an Early Childhood School; Early Childhood schools do not receive a percentile rank, therefore no percentile rank was included in the Progress Report.

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 30-40 schools with the most similar student population and to all schools citywide. The Student Progress section of the NYC DOE Progress Report was the most heavily weighted of all sections. For schools designated as Early Childhood schools, the grade in this section was based on Early Grade Progress, which measured how individual students' proficiency on State ELA and math assessments exceeded their expected proficiency in third grade based on the student's demographic characteristics. 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, 40.0% of Challenge Preparatory 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 Challenge Preparatory Charter School in the 37th percentile of elementary schools citywide. In the same year, 26.9% of Challenge Preparatory 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 places Challenge Preparatory Charter School in the bottom 2% of all elementary schools citywide.

On the 2013-2014 NYS assessments, 36.4% of Challenge Preparatory 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 Challenge Preparatory Charter School in the 31st percentile of elementary schools citywide. Similarly, 27.3% of students with disabilities at Challenge Preparatory Charter School 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 Challenge Preparatory Charter School in the bottom 6% of all elementary schools citywide.

In 2013-2014 Challenge Preparatory Charter School did not serve the minimum number⁷ of students designated as English Language Learners to receive data on the percent of English

⁶ Challenge Preparatory Charter School Annual Comprehensive Report 2010-2011 and 2011-2012

Language Learner students who experienced growth in math or ELA that, with adjustments, matched or exceeded the growth of 75% or more of other students citywide with the same starting scores.

B. Governance, Operations & Finances

Challenge Preparatory Charter School is an operationally sound and fiscally viable organization. This assessment was made based on a review of the following indicators of operational and fiscal viability:

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

Over the course of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees has maintained a developed governance structure and organizational design. It has consistently achieved quorum for the required number of Board meetings outlined in its bylaws. It has maintained a steady membership, its officer positions have been consistently filled, and its committees have been consistently active. The Board posts its meeting minutes and agenda publicly via the school's website. The Board receives standing academic and operational reports from the school's leadership team during meetings.

Additionally, the Board and school leadership team have consistently proven their capacity to respond quickly and positively to unforeseen challenges, most notably with regard to the school's operational and financial recovery from Hurricane Sandy during school year 2012-2013. In that school year, the school absorbed an additional 120 students in grades kindergarten through three, representing a 50% increase in total students from the prior year, at the request of the NYC DOE. Of these new students, 36 (or 30%) were placed in grade three, a testing grade, during the school's first year of Common Core-aligned state assessments.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has developed a stable school culture. The school's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Rev. Dr. Les Mullings, has been with the school since its inception, as has its School Leader, LaToiya Tolliver-Revell. Additionally, Challenge Preparatory Charter School has maintained an instructional staff turnover rate below 10% throughout the course of its charter term; notably, it experienced no instructional staff turnover during its first and third years of operation.

Overall, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations. The school has approximately 23 days unrestricted cash on hand totaling \$383,566 to meet near term obligations.

Overall, the school is financially sustainable based on its current practices. There were no material weaknesses noted in the school's four independent financial audits.

⁷ The minimum number of students for each metric in the Closing the Achievement Gap section is five. Metrics are excluded for a school when student-sample-size criteria are not met because of confidentiality considerations and the unreliability of measurements based on small numbers.

The school faced substantial financial hardship during FY13 after its newly constructed facility experienced \$750,000 worth of damages. The school was unable to receive Small Business Association or Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) loans to assist in damage repair and only received \$30,000 in insurance money to replace the contents of the building and \$12,000 in donations to replace musical equipment. The school increased its enrollment to its maximum authorized amount to increase revenue and reduced expenses across the board in order to make necessary building repairs. In spite of this hardship, the school saw significant positive increases in various fiscal measures such as its current ratio, unrestricted days cash on hand, aggregated total margin, and its debt to asset ratio the following fiscal year.

C. Compliance with Charter, Applicable Law and Regulations

Over the charter term, Challenge Preparatory Charter School has been compliant with most applicable laws and regulations.

The school has submitted its required fingerprint clearance documentation for all staff members and has four staff members whose fingerprint clearance is outstanding but pending. Per the school, the four outstanding staff members are recent former NYC DOE employees who had been fingerprinted pursuant to their employment with the NYC DOE. Their clearance with respect to employment at Challenge Preparatory Charter School is pending.

The school has provided the NYC DOE with a current and complete copy of its Student Discipline Policy for the 2014-2015 academic year. Although Challenge Preparatory Charter School did submit the school's 2014-2015 Student Discipline Policy, the school's Student Discipline Policy for the current academic year was determined to be not compliant with federal law in that the policy does not mention the school's adherence to due process requirements. The school has since revised its policy after the date of original submission to the NYC DOE to include language related to its adherence to due process requirements.

D. Plans for Next Charter Term

The school has submitted a request to make the following material revisions to its charter as part of its next charter term:

- Continue phase-in of maximum authorized enrollment from 504 to 792 students.

In addition, as per the school's original charter application and as initially authorized by the NYC DOE, the school intends to serve grades kindergarten through eight at scale. The school plans to continue with the phase-in of middle school grades six through eight in the next charter term.

Part 2: School Overview and History

Challenge Preparatory Charter School is an elementary school serving 503 students⁸ in grades kindergarten through five during the 2014-2015 school year. It opened in the 2010-2011 school year with kindergarten and first grades and is under the terms of its first charter. The school's authorized full grade span as per the original charter application as approved by the NYC DOE is for grades kindergarten through eight. However, the school is authorized to serve grades kindergarten through five only in the fifth year of its current charter term, i.e. the current school year, 2014-2015. The school's current charter term expires on February 8, 2015.⁹ The school does not currently offer a public universal Pre-Kindergarten program in New York City. The school is located in a privately operated facility in Community School District 27 in Queens on the Rockaway peninsula.

Challenge Preparatory Charter School's mission is to prepare students to excel academically and compete successfully for admission to high-performing public, private, and parochial high schools in New York City. To accomplish its mission, Challenge Preparatory offers a rigorous academic curriculum within a safe and supportive school environment.

Challenge Preparatory Charter School's Board of Trustees is led by chair Karon McFarlane. The school's founder, Rev. Dr. Les Mullings, has served as its CEO since the 2012-2013 school year. The School Leader and Principal, LaToiya Tolliver-Revell, has been at the school since its inception, first as a Director of Curriculum and then as School Leader from October 2010 onward.

The school suffered significant direct damage in 2012 due to Hurricane Sandy and was closed for eight days due to the effects of the storm on the Rockaways (October 29, 2012 to November 14, 2012). The school's building incurred significant damage, and much of the consequent cost was not covered by either insurance or federal funding. The storm also affected students and staff, significant numbers of whom were re-located as a consequence of the damage to homes and loss of local power and transportation. This was the same school year in which Challenge Prep absorbed an additional 120 students in grades kindergarten through three, representing a 50% increase in total students from the prior year, at the request of the NYC DOE. Of these new students, 36 (or 30%) were placed in grade three, a testing grade, during the school's first year of CCLS-aligned state assessments.

The school typically enrolls new students in grades kindergarten through five. There were 328 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2014 lottery. The school does backfill students from the waitlist during the school year.¹⁰

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	67	65	74	71
Grade 1	70	71	96	70
Grade 2	-	69	93	96
Grade 3	-	-	93	89
Grade 4	-	-	-	95
Grade 5	-	-	-	-
Total Enrollment	137	205	356	421

* 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.

⁸ ATS data as of October 31, 2014

⁹ NYC DOE internal data

¹⁰ 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	3	24
Grade 1	3	23
Grade 2	4	24
Grade 3	4	22
Grade 4	4	24
Grade 5	-	-
Students Admitted Through The Lottery	72	

* 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 Challenge Preparatory 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).¹¹

¹¹ 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.¹²

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.

¹² Please refer to the following website for more information:
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 on October 22 – 23, 2014:

- Gabrielle Mosquera, Senior Director, NYC DOE Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
- Kamilah O'Brien, 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, Education Administrator and Senior School Improvement Specialist, NYC DOE Office of Special Education
- Arthur Sadoff, Independent Consultant

Part 4: Findings

Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?

At the time of this school's renewal Challenge Preparatory Charter School has demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

High Academic Attainment and Improvement

- The school has four years of academic performance data and two 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 21st century college and career readiness. However, as Challenge Preparatory Charter School had its first year of testing in 2012-2013, all proficiency results are aligned to the CCLS.

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
Challenge Preparatory Charter School	-	-	31.2%	29.6%
CSD 27	-	-	29.2%	30.2%
Difference from CSD 27 *	-	-	2.0	-0.6
NYC	-	-	28.1%	30.5%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	3.1	-0.9
New York State **	-	-	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-	-	0.1	-1.0

% Proficient in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Challenge Preparatory Charter School	-	-	39.8%	47.2%
CSD 27	-	-	31.8%	39.7%
Difference from CSD 27 *	-	-	8.0	7.5
NYC	-	-	33.1%	39.3%
Difference from NYC *	-	-	6.7	7.9
New York State **	-	-	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	-	-	8.7	11.0

* 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

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

Mission and Academic Goals

According to the Renewal Application submitted to the NYC DOE by Challenge Preparatory Charter School, as well as annual reports submitted to the New York State Education Department, over each of the four years in the charter term during which the school was open, the school achieved/met academic goals as follows:

- 2 of 4 applicable charter goals in the first year of the charter,
- 1 of 4 in the second year,
- 2 of 10 in the third year,¹³ and
- 4 of 10 in the fourth year.

Progress Towards Academic Charter Goals *

Academic Goals	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
1. Each year, for students who have attended the school for two consecutive BEDS days, 75% of students in grade three (2012-2013 on), grade four (2013-2014 on), and grade five (2014-2015 on) will score at a level 3 or 4 on NYSED ELA exams.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not Met
2. Each year, for students who have attended the school for two consecutive BEDS days, 75% of students in grade three (2012-2013 on), grade four (2013-2014 on), and grade five (2014-2015 on) will score at a level 3 or 4 on NYSED math exams.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not Met

¹³ 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 assessments 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.

Academic Goals		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
3.	Each year, 75% of the students in kindergarten and first grade (2010-2011 on), second grade (2011-2012 on), third grade (2012-2013 on), fourth grade (2013-2014 on), and fifth grade (2014-2015 on) enrolled on BEDS day will perform at grade level on the DIBELS by the end of the year.	Met	Met	Met	Met
4.	Each year, 75% of the students in kindergarten and first grade (2010-2011 on), second grade (2011-2012 on), third grade (2012-2013 on), fourth grade (2013-2014 on), and fifth grade (2014-2015 on) will score at or above grade level on the TerraNova test in Reading by the end of the end of the year.	Not Met	Partially Met	Partially Met	Met
5.	Each year, 75% of the students in kindergarten and first grade (2010-2011 on), second grade (2011-2012 on), third grade (2012-2013 on), fourth grade (2013-2014 on), and fifth grade (2014-2015 on) will score at or above grade level on the TerraNova test in Math by the end of the end of the year.	Not Met	Partially Met	Not Met	Met
6.	Each year, the percentage of students at proficiency on the TerraNova in reading will reduce by at least one-half the difference between the percentage demonstrating proficiency and an NCE of 50.	N/A	N/A	Not Met	Partially Met
7.	Each year, the percentage of students at proficiency on the TerraNova in math will reduce by at least one-half the difference between the percentage demonstrating proficiency and an NCE of 50.	N/A	N/A	Not Met	Met
8.	The percentage of students attending the school for two consecutive BEDS days, demonstrating proficiency on NYSED ELA will place the school in the top quartile of all schools as measured by the NYC DOE. (Charter schools and CSD 27 were added to this goal.)	N/A	N/A	Not Met	Not Met
9.	The percentage of students attending for two consecutive BEDS days, demonstrating proficiency on NYSED math will place the school in the top quartile of all schools as measured by the NYC DOE. (Charter schools and CSD 27 were added to this goal.)	N/A	N/A	Not Met	Not Met
10.	Each year, the school will receive a 'B' or higher on the Student Progress section of the NYC DOE Progress Report.	N/A	N/A	Not Met	N/A
11.	Each year, the school will be deemed 'In Good Standing' on the NYSED Report Card.	N/A	N/A	Met	N/A
12.	Each year, the school will have an average attendance rate of at least 95%.	Met	Not 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

In school years 2010-2011 through 2012-2013, the school administered the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Reading 3D, and Pearson enVision interim assessments. The school also administered TerraNova interim assessments beginning in school year 2011-2012. These assessments yielded the following data:

- At the time of the NYC DOE's school visit on May 16, 2012, the school had met or exceeded its mid-year interim assessment goals for student proficiency in the 2011-2012 school year.¹⁴
- Based on document review conducted as part of the NYC DOE's 2012-2013 Annual Comprehensive Review process, the school also met its three mid-year internal assessment goals for the 2012-2013 school year.¹⁵

As part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE visited the school on October 22 – 23, 2014. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- **Alignment with Common Core:**
 - School leadership reported that it had made several curricular shifts in response to its 2013-2014 state assessment results in ELA and math, which for the second consecutive year were below the results predicted by its internal assessment data. Immediately prior to the start of school year 2014-2015, the school replaced its previous ELA and math curricula with CCLS-aligned EngageNY modules across all grade levels. Teachers were supported in making this shift through the use of outside consultants and training from the Center for Education Innovation – Public Education Association (CEI-PEA) to help clarify the modules and adjust the school's prior curriculum maps and sequencing.
 - Additionally, school leadership reported that starting in school year 2014-2015, Challenge Prep replaced its prior TerraNova and DIBELS interim assessments with the CCLS-aligned Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress assessment as well as i-Ready software. All of the school's internal assessments are now computer-based.
 - The school participates in CEI-PEA's Partnership for Innovation in Compensation for Charter Schools (PICCS) program, which affords it several supports to implement CCLS-aligned instruction and assessments. These include the PICCS Performance Plus software program, which helps teachers plan lessons based on the school's overarching curriculum scope and sequence, which itself is derived from pre-loaded Common Core and additional New York State learning standards. Teachers also use Performance Plus to develop their own standards-aligned unit and benchmark assessments.
- **Addressing the Needs of All Learners:**
 - During the October 22 – 23, 2014 visit, the school reported having 57 students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 20 English Language Learners, eight of whom also had IEPs. The school collaborates very closely with the Committee on Special Education (CSE) to ensure all IEPs are followed.
 - The school has six fully certified special education teachers, all of whom are working in Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classrooms. School leadership reported that the school has had one ICT class per grade level since its inception.
 - Student IEPs are copied and given to ICT and general education teachers who service students. Copies of these IEPs are also shared with related service providers at the school.
 - Students with IEPs are educated in the general education setting to the fullest extent possible.

¹⁴ NYC DOE Annual Site Visit Report, May 2012

¹⁵ NYC DOE Annual Comprehensive Review Report, 2012-2013 School Year

- The school offers Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS); however, these are provided to students off-site.
- The school has a full Response to Intervention (RtI) protocol. Appropriate staff members meet to discuss specific students, and the students' progress is monitored in a six-week cycle. Most interventions include the Wilson Reading System, Just Words, Write Steps, Reading Rescue, Foundations, Orton-Gillingham Math and other Orton-Gillingham based reading programs. The three-tiered RtI protocols are managed by the school's Child Study Team (CST), which is comprised of the school's classroom teachers, special education teachers, intervention teachers and social workers/guidance counselors. Tier I interventions range from classroom modifications to curricular adjustments. If a Tier I intervention is not deemed effective, the CST may decide to implement more intensive Tier II interventions related to behavior or academics. If after six weeks the CST determines that Tier II interventions are not effective based on collected data, observations, and work samples, the team then decides between terminating, modifying, or continuing the existing intervention or moving the student into a more intensive/specialized instruction reserved for students with disabilities (Tier III). This step is simultaneous with a referral for a special education evaluation by the Committee on Special Education.
- The school's English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher collaborates with general education teachers in planning lessons for ELLs in all subject areas. The ESL teacher is aware of the student's various language acquisition levels and addresses student language needs through ESL strategies. In addition, she identifies students who may be ELLs through the ELL Identification Process, oversees the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) administration, and ensures support for those students who have reached proficiency but are still entitled to accommodations.

- **Instructional Model and Classroom Instruction:**

During the renewal visit on October 22 – 23, 2014, 19 classrooms in grades kindergarten through five were observed with the School Leader and Director of Curriculum.

- In all observed classes, teachers were following either a co-teaching or ICT model of instruction. Co-teaching classrooms largely followed a model of either team teaching or of one lead teacher and one teacher leading small group or individualized instruction.
- Classes observed ranged from 19 to 24 students in size, with two teachers in all classrooms.
- Forms of questioning identified during the classroom observations included some basic fact recall, but most instructors challenged students to demonstrate understanding or to analyze and apply. Examples included: student pairs using a six-point rubric to evaluate each other's writing pieces during a literacy block, a turn-and-talk during another literacy block wherein students shared what they had learned about informative writing and how it compared to narrative writing, and a science lesson that challenged student groups to create dichotomous keys to classify classroom objects.
- In most rooms, checks for understanding methods observed included questioning, classwork, teacher observation, and frequent use of student turn and talk.
- In all observed classrooms, differentiation of materials, tasks, and products, through small group instruction or independent practice, was observed. These were consistent with the school model. Examples include: the use of varied small groupings during close reading portions of the school's literacy block, and the use of differentiated vocabulary worksheets that tasked students to define a word, provide an example of the word, or identify the word based on a picture.
- In all observed classes, students were responsive to teacher directions and instruction.
- In all observed classes, students were fully on task and highly engaged.
- 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.

Learning Environment

NYC DOE representatives conducted one-on-one interviews with 10 general education and special education teachers. The following was noted:

- All interviewed teachers reported that they received school-based professional development (PD) both in the summer and daily in grade-level teams during the school year, with the administration providing resources. They also reported that outside consultants focused on ELA and math instruction were provided four to six times per year and outside PD from the CEI-PEA PICCS program and online PD provider Edviation (formerly PD 360) was provided as well.
- Some interviewed teachers mentioned the use of the Danielson Rubric for formal teacher evaluations conducted by the School Leader, and all interviewed teachers stated that they found feedback from both these formal evaluations and their informal classroom observations to be helpful to their practice.
- All interviewed teachers spoke readily about the implementation of rigor in their classrooms and could easily elaborate on how they used rigor to inform classroom tasks, questioning, and adjustments to lesson plans.
- All interviewed teachers spoke positively about the school's general shift to Common Core Learning Standards-aligned instruction and its specific use of EngageNY ELA and math modules throughout all grade levels.
- All interviewed teachers reported that they use data in the classrooms through both formal (i.e. currently iReady and NWEA MAP and, in prior years, DIBELS and TerraNova), and informal assessments (i.e. observational notes, exit slip assessments) to help differentiate classroom assignments and classroom groupings as well as set interim growth goals for students.

NYC DOE representatives conducted group interviews with 19 students across grades two through five. The following was noted:

- All interviewed students reported that their teachers had high academic expectations for them and also felt strongly supported by teachers in trying to reach those expectations.
- Most interviewed students spoke positively of their teachers' emphasis on independent thought, critical analysis, and use of evidence in their classwork.
- Many interviewed students spoke positively of the school's balance of challenging academic work and fun and engaging activities such as field trips, science experiments, and art, gym, and music classes.
- All interviewed students spoke positively of the school's use of homework as a means to reinforce and practice content learned during the school day.
- All interviewed students reported that, while their teachers were always available and willing to help them with challenging work, they were encouraged to first try to answer questions themselves to foster independence.

According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 98% of parents agree or strongly agree “that the school has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss [their] child” and 99% of parents who responded to the survey agree or strongly agree “that the school has high expectations for [their] child.”¹⁶

According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey 90% of teachers agree or strongly agree that “order and discipline are maintained at the school” and 92% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that “at my school students are often harassed or bullied in school.”¹⁷

¹⁶ According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 70% of parent respondents strongly agree that Challenge Preparatory Charter School has teachers who are interested and attentive when they discuss their child; another 28% agree with the statement. Similarly, 76% of parent respondents strongly agree that Challenge Preparatory Charter School has high expectations for their child; another 23% agree with the statement.

¹⁷ According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 32% of teacher respondents strongly agree that order and discipline are maintained at Challenge Preparatory Charter School; another 58% agree with the statement. Of teacher respondents, 50% strongly disagree that students are often harassed or bullied in the school; 42% of teacher respondents disagree with the statement; 8% agree with the statement; and 0% 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 developed its governance structure and organizational design.

On November 3, 2014, as part of the renewal review process, representatives for the NYC DOE conducted an interview 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 six active members. This level of membership is consistent within the minimum of five members and maximum of 11 members established in the Board's bylaws.
- The Board's Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary positions, as specified in the bylaws, are currently filled with no vacancies.
- The Board has consistently achieved quorum, as recorded in the meeting minutes that were reviewed for Board meetings held for school years 2010-2011 through the current school year, 2014-2015 (45 meetings in total through November 2014). In school years 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013, the Board held the required number of monthly meetings, as evidenced by the Board Yearly Meeting Schedule and the posted meeting minutes.
- The CEO and School Leader provide the Board with standing updates on academic progress and operations at the school, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- There are clear lines of accountability between the Board and school leadership as evidenced by the school's organization 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 has active and functioning committees, as required by its bylaws, including an Executive Committee, a Finance Committee, and an Academic Accountability Committee, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The school's founder, Rev. Dr. Les Mullings, stepped down from the school's Board upon taking the school-level position of CEO in school year 2012-2013. The School Leader is LaToiya Tolliver-Revell, who has been at the school since its inception, first as a Director of Curriculum and then as School Leader from October 2010 onward.

School Climate & Community Engagement

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has 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 only its first year of operation. Average daily attendance for students over the course of the charter term is 94.4% according to the data in the table below.¹⁸

¹⁸ The table reflects school self-reported attendance data for school years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 and attendance data taken from the NYC DOE's Automate the Schools (ATS) system for school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. Please note that the school self-reported a different attendance rate than that recorded in ATS for the 2012-2013 school year, though it is not significantly different. The school self-reported an attendance rate of 93.9% for 2012-2013.

Average Attendance

Elementary and Middle School Attendance				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Challenge Preparatory Charter School *	96.0%	93.0%	94.0%	94.6%
NYC **	93.2%	93.9%	93.6%	93.2%
Difference from NYC	2.8	-0.9	0.4	1.4

* Attendance was self-reported by the school for school years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. For school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 attendance was taken from ATS.

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

- The school has experienced very little instructional turnover during the course of the charter term. In 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, the percentage of staff who did not return, either by choice or request, at the start of the following school year was 0%, 5%, 0% and 10%, respectively. For the current school year, instructional staff turnover is 4%, which represents two instructional staff members who have left the school either by choice or request since the start of the 2014-2015 school year.¹⁹ There is no evidence that this turnover has affected student performance.
- 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 has had minor challenges with retaining students.
 - The school reported that its mobility rate in school year 2012-2013 was largely due to the displacement of students and their families because of Hurricane Sandy, accounting for 55 of the 68 students who left during that school year.²⁰

Mobility

Student Mobility out of Challenge Preparatory Charter School *				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Number of Students who Left the School	17	25	68	33
Percent of Students who Left the School	12.4%	12.2%	19.1%	8.4%

* 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 three of four selected questions. The percentage of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing was above citywide averages for all of the three selected questions.

¹⁹ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form in October 2014 and updated information submitted in December 2014.

²⁰ Self-reported information submitted by the school in January 2015

- 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 Challenge Preparatory Charter School parents have been above NYC averages in all four years; the response rates for Challenge Preparatory Charter School teachers have been above NYC averages in only the last three years.

NYC School Survey Results

Percent of Respondents that Agree or Strongly Agree						
Survey Question		Challenge Preparatory Charter School				Citywide Average
		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014
Students*	Most of my teachers make me excited about learning.**	-	-	-	-	-
	Most students at my school treat each other with respect.	-	-	-	-	-
	I feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker room, cafeteria, etc.	-	-	-	-	-
Parents	I feel satisfied with the education my child has received this year.	99%	100%	100%	99%	95%
	My child's school makes it easy for parents to attend meetings.	94%	98%	96%	98%	94%
	I feel satisfied with the response I get when I contact my child's school.	100%	98%	95%	98%	95%
Teachers	Order and discipline are maintained at my school.	100%	94%	97%	89%	80%
	The principal at my school communicates a clear vision for our school.	100%	87%	97%	95%	88%
	School leaders place a high priority on the quality of teaching.	100%	94%	100%	89%	92%
	I would recommend my school to parents.***	-	88%	97%	89%	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*	Challenge Preparatory Charter School	-	-	-	-
	NYC	-	-	-	-
Parents	Challenge Preparatory Charter School	68%	76%	87%	80%
	NYC	52%	53%	54%	53%
Teachers	Challenge Preparatory Charter School	35%	100%	97%	86%
	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, "Each year, parents will express satisfaction with the school's program, based on the NYC DOE School Survey, in which the school will receive scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement, and Safety and Respect; the school will only have met this goal if 50% or more of parents participate in the survey." The school met this goal in 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013. This goal was not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year.
- The school's charter goals include, "Each year, teachers will express satisfaction with school leadership and professional development opportunities based on the NYCDOE School Survey, in which the school will receive scores of 7.5 or higher in each of the four survey domains: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement, and Safety and Respect; the school will only have met this goal if 50% or more of teachers participate in the survey." The school partially met this goal in 2010-2011 and met this goal in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.²¹ This goal was not applicable for the 2013-2014 school year.

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:

- For more than 100 days following the damage of Hurricane Sandy in October 2012, the school established itself as a community hub for the provision of goods and services to displaced residents of the Rockaways. Designated as a FEMA Disaster Recovery Center shortly after the storm, the school provided hot meals to 2,000 to 2,500 people each day (more than 75,000 meals total); partnered with clothing retailer Uniqlo to distribute 1,000 down jackets and 5,000 thermal underwear layers to dislocated residents; distributed more than 70 semi-truckloads of food, blankets, cleaning supplies, and other household necessities; and partnered with several donors to collect and distribute 2,750 toy packages to affected families before the winter break.
- Throughout its charter term, the school has been able to establish and leverage partnerships with community organizations in the Rockaways through its CEO's established community leadership. These partnerships include organizations such as the Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation, the Rockaway Development & Revitalization Corporation, the Far Rockaway Community Church of the Nazarene, the Rockaway Center for Community Development, and Joseph P. Addabbo Family Health Centers.
- The school's Board bylaws have specified a Parent Representative position since its inception. This position has been consistently filled and the parent representative's contact information is provided on the school's website.
- The school reports having an active Parent Association (PA) that meets regularly and has officers. PA officer contact information is provided on the school's website.
- Up to three parents per classroom may serve as Class Parents, the primary liaisons between the parents of students in the classroom and the school's teachers and administration.
 - Parents may also volunteer to run the School Store twice a week.
- Over the course of the retrospective charter term, the school has increased its support of parents by adding a Parent Engagement Coordinator to its staff. In addition to working with parent volunteers and the Parent Association, the Parent Engagement Coordinator works with the School Leader and other school staff to support outreach and communication to parents and help monitor the effectiveness of the school's parent engagement initiatives.
- The school provides all parents with an i-Ready login and password to enable them to help students with their i-Ready assignments.
 - Students without computer access at home instead complete these assignments during pull-out periods. Parents are sent printouts of these assignment results.

²¹ The school fully met the goal if the teacher response rate was greater than or equal to 50% and the school received at least 7.5 points based on teacher responses in each of the four NYC School Survey categories (Safety and Respect, Communication, Engagement, and Academic Expectations). If either the response rate did not meet the benchmark and/or the school received less than 7.5 points in one or more of the Survey categories, the goal was considered 'partially met.' In 2010-2011 the school received a score greater than or equal to 7.5 in all four categories, however, the teacher response rate was 35%.

- Through its involvement with non-profit organization The Book Fairies, the school sends books home each month to students without home libraries. Parents are encouraged to read these books with their children at home, as well as at the school during Family Reading Nights.
- The NYC DOE conducted a public renewal hearing on October 23, 2014, at 710 Hartman Lane, Queens NY, 11691 for the school in an effort to elicit public comments. Approximately 10 participants attended the hearing with one person 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 from October through December 2014 until 20 phone calls were completed. Of these calls, 100% of parent/guardian respondents 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 FY14 financial audit, the school's current ratio of 1.46 indicated a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY14 financial audit, the school's unrestricted cash balance of \$383,566 indicated a risk that the school will not be unable to cover at least one month of its operating expenses without an infusion of cash. This amount represents 23 days of unrestricted cash on hand.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2014-2015 budget to the actual enrollment as of November 30, 2014 revealed that the school had met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY14 financial audit, the school had met its debt obligations of \$1,397,558.

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 0.89 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, and the school had positive cash flow in each measurable year.

There was no material weakness noted in the four independent financial audits from FY11 through FY14.

Based on document review and an interview during the visit to the school, the following was noted:

- At the beginning of FY13, the school moved into a newly constructed private facility, which shortly thereafter received extensive damage due to Hurricane Sandy; damages totaled approximately \$750,000.
 - The school received only \$30,000 in insurance funds to replace contents of the building but not to repair damage to the building.
 - The school received a \$12,000 donation to replace musical equipment.
 - The school was not eligible to receive SBA or FEMA loans to assist with building repairs because they do not own the facility.
 - The school increased enrollment to its full authorized amount to increase revenue and restructured the use of space in order to accommodate the increased enrollment.
 - The school delayed many planned purchases to reduce expenses.
- The school made significant improvement in the fiscal measures in which it historically lagged (current ratio, unrestricted days cash, aggregated total margin, and debt to asset ratio) by the close of FY14, despite the budgetary hardship imposed by Hurricane Sandy.
- The school currently outsources all of its fiscal operations to the Charter School Business Management organization.

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

Over the charter term, Challenge Preparatory Charter School has been compliant with most applicable laws and regulations.

As of the review in December 2014, the Board of Trustees for Challenge Preparatory 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 11 members.
- **Submission of all required documents.** All current Board members have submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms. The documents submitted do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.²²
- **Required number of monthly meetings.** The school's bylaws indicate that the Board is to hold 10 meetings a year inclusive of its annual meeting. In school years 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2013-2014, the Board held the required number of monthly meetings, as evidenced by the Board Yearly Meeting Schedule and the posted meeting minutes. Required meetings are those which meet quorum. The current Charter Schools Act requires that the Board hold monthly meetings over a period of 12 calendar months, per year. The Board has updated its bylaws to comply with this law.
- **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 them on the school's website.
- **Notification of Board Member Resignations/Submission of New Board Members for Approval.** The board has 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.
- **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. The school has posted to its website its annual audit for each year of the charter term, as required in charter law.

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

- **Teacher certification.** The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is 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.
- **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 4, 2014 and lottery date of April 8, 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.** One or more of the school leaders were trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.
- **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.

²² Source: New York State Education Department Annual Report

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

- **Fingerprint clearance.** The school has submitted its required fingerprint clearance documentation for all staff members and has four staff members whose fingerprint clearance is outstanding but pending. Per the school, the four outstanding staff members are recent former NYC DOE employees who had been fingerprinted pursuant to their employment with the NYC DOE. Their clearance with respect to employment at Challenge Preparatory Charter School is pending.
- **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. Although Challenge Preparatory Charter School did submit the school's 2014-2015 Student Discipline Policy, the school's Student Discipline Policy for the current academic year was determined to be not compliant with federal law in that the policy does not mention the school's adherence to due process requirements. The school has since revised its policy after the date of original submission to the NYC DOE to include language related to its adherence to due process requirements.

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.²³
- In all years of operation, including the most recent completed school year 2013-2014, Challenge Preparatory Charter School:
 - served a lower percentage of students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch compared to the CSD 27 rate but a higher percentage compared to the citywide rate (with the exception of 2010-2011, in which the school served a lower percentage of students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch compared to the citywide rate);
 - served a lower percentage of students with disabilities compared to both the CSD 27 and citywide percentages (with the exception of 2010-2011, when it served a higher rate than the CSD 27 percentage); and
 - served a lower percentage of English Language Learner students compared to both the CSD 27 and citywide percentages.

²³ <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/p12/enrollment-retention-targets.html>

Enrollment of Special Populations²⁴

Special Population		2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014 State Enrollment Target (Proposed)
Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)	Challenge Preparatory Charter School	77.4%	83.9%	87.4%	85.7%	86.2%
	CSD 27	83.0%	87.0%	87.6%	87.1%	
	NYC	80.7%	83.3%	82.6%	82.4%	
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	Challenge Preparatory Charter School	13.1%	8.8%	9.3%	11.6%	13.2%
	CSD 27	12.8%	13.5%	14.8%	16.9%	
	NYC	14.5%	15.2%	16.7%	19.3%	
English Language Learners (ELL)	Challenge Preparatory Charter School	3.6%	3.9%	3.9%	3.3%	12.1%
	CSD 27	13.5%	12.1%	10.8%	10.0%	
	NYC	20.2%	18.8%	17.7%	16.6%	

Additional Enrollment Information				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grades Served	K-1	K-2	K-3	K-4
CSD(s)	27	27	27	27

²⁴ 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. 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>.

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

The school has submitted a request to make the following material revision to its charter as part of its next charter term:

- Expand maximum authorized enrollment from 504 to 792 students.

In addition, as per the school's original charter application and as initially authorized by the NYC DOE, the school intends to serve grades kindergarten through eight at scale. The school plans to continue with the phase-in of middle school grades six through eight in the next charter term.

The school also noted that it plans to make the following changes as part of its next charter term:

- The school revised its charter goals to include middle school goals.
- The school replaced the Terra Nova assessment with the NWEA MAP assessment as its internal standardized assessment tool to measure absolute and value-added goals. The school also proposes to use the NWEA to create interim quarterly assessments from its test bank containing Common Core Learning Standards-aligned test questions.
- The school's curriculum plan and overall educational program have been expanded to reflect the addition of a middle school and plans for instruction, curriculum, assessment, promotion, student enrollment, at-risk populations, student and teacher schedules, student discipline and professional development within middle school grades.
- The school's organizational and staffing structures, along with consequent operational and staffing policies, have been amended to reflect a kindergarten through eighth grade community.
- The Board's Code of Ethics and the Board's Bylaws have been revised to reflect all requirements of the New York State Charter Law as amended in 2010.
- The school specified in its revised charter that its evaluation tool for the CEO, administrators, and instructional leadership is the Vanderbilt Assessment for Leadership in Education.

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 its 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.²⁵

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.²⁶ 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;

²⁵ See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

²⁶ 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.²⁷

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.²⁸

²⁷ § 2851(4)(e) added with the 2010 amendments to the Act.

²⁸ 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 Reports²⁹

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

²⁹ 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 location³⁰ 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

³⁰ 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
Challenge Preparatory Charter School				
Grade 3	-	-	31.2%	25.9%
Grade 4	-	-	-	33.0%
DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 27 *				
Grade 3	-	-	2.0	-3.9
Grade 4	-	-	-	2.4
DIFFERENCE FROM NYC				
Grade 3	-	-	3.1	-4.0
Grade 4	-	-	-	1.9

Grade-Level Proficiency in Mathematics				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Challenge Preparatory Charter School				
Grade 3	-	-	39.8%	46.4%
Grade 4	-	-	-	47.8%
DIFFERENCE FROM CSD 27 *				
Grade 3	-	-	8.0	8.5
Grade 4	-	-	-	6.5
DIFFERENCE FROM NYC				
Grade 3	-	-	6.7	7.8
Grade 4	-	-	-	7.9

* 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 Comprehensive Review Report 2012-2013](#)

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

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