



**ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP CHARTER SCHOOL
RENEWAL REPORT**

**2013 – 2014 SCHOOL YEAR
FEBRUARY 2014**

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Part 1: Summary of Renewal Recommendation

I. Charter School Overview:

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of Charter School | Academic Leadership Charter School (ALCS) |
| Current Board Chair(s) | Robert Podhurst |
| School Leader | Norma Hurwitz, Executive Director Leena Varghese, Principal |
| Management Company (if applicable) | N/A |
| Other Partner(s) | N/A |
| District(s) of Location | NYC Community School District 7 |
| Physical Address | 677 E 141st St Bronx, NY 10454 |
| Facility | Public |
| School Opened For Instruction | 2009-2010 School-Year |
| Current Charter Term Expiry Date | 2/09/2013 |
| Maximum Grade Levels/Enrollment at Expiry Date | K-5 / 350 |
| Proposed Charter Term | Five Years |
| Proposed Maximum Grade Levels / Enrollment at New Expiry Date | K-8 / 500 |

II. Overview of School-Specific Data:

Performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report

| Progress Report Grade | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Overall Grade | - | - | - | A | B |
| Student Progress | - | - | - | B | C |
| Student Performance | - | - | - | B | A |
| School Environment | - | - | - | B | C |
| Closing the Achievement Gap Points | - | - | - | 4.8 | 2.2 |

Students scoring at or above Level 3, compared to CSD, NYC, and State averages

| % Proficient in English Language Arts | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
| Academic Leadership Charter School | - | - | 62.5% | 23.2% |
| CSD 7 | - | - | 27.6% | 9.6% |
| Difference from CSD 7 | - | - | 34.9 | 13.6 |
| NYC | - | - | 49.0% | 27.7% |
| Difference from NYC | - | - | 13.5 | -4.5 |
| New York State | - | - | 55.2% | 31.2% |
| Difference from New York State | - | - | 7.3 | -8.0 |

| % Proficient in Math | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
| Academic Leadership Charter School | - | - | 70.8% | 48.9% |
| CSD 7 | - | - | 36.4% | 12.0% |
| Difference from CSD 7 | - | - | 34.4 | 36.9 |
| NYC | - | - | 57.0% | 34.2% |
| Difference from NYC | - | - | 13.8 | 14.7 |
| New York State | - | - | 65.7% | 28.9% |
| Difference from New York State | - | - | 5.1 | 20.0 |

All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

| Academic Goal Analysis (based on School's submission) | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| | 1st Year 2009-2010 | 2nd Year 2010-2011 | 3rd year 2011-2012 | 4th Year 2012-2013 | Cumulative 4 Year Total |
| Total Achievable Academic Goals | 2 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 21 |
| # Met | 2 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 14 |
| # Partially Met | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| # Not Met | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| % Met | 100% | 100% | 56% | 63% | 67% |
| % Partially Met | 0% | 0% | 11% | 25% | 14% |
| % Not Met | 0% | 0% | 33% | 13% | 19% |

III. Rationale for Recommendation

A. Academic Performance

At the time of this school's renewal, Academic Leadership Charter School (ALCS) has demonstrated academic achievement. In both years for which there is New York State (NYS) assessment data, ALCS has significantly outperformed its district of location, Community School District (CSD) 7, on NYS ELA and math assessments. The school received overall grades of A and B on New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Progress Reports in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, respectively.

The New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 establishes a system of charter schools throughout New York State, with objectives that include, "(a) Improve student learning and achievement;" and "(b) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure." ALCS has made progress through its initial charter term in fulfilling its primary objectives.

The school's mission is to provide its students an academically focused elementary education with students exceeding New York State standards in ELA, Math, and Science in a safe and nurturing environment that empowers students to become leaders, take an active role in their learning, and exhibit good character.

In its first charter term, ALCS has two years of NYS assessment data and two NYC DOE Progress Reports to evaluate achievement and progress for its students. NYC DOE Progress Reports grade each school with an overall grade of A, B, C, D, or F and are based on the school's performance in each of these categories: student progress, student performance, school environment, with additional points for closing the achievement gap contributing to the overall grade. Grades are based on comparing school results in each category to a peer group of up to 40 schools with the most similar student population, and to all schools citywide.

ALCS has demonstrated positive performance over the last two year on the NYC DOE Progress Report. The school earned an overall A grade in 2011-2012 and an overall B grade in 2012-2013. Based on its Progress Report scores, ALCS was in the top quarter of early childhood schools in 2011-2012 and in the top half of elementary schools in 2012-2013. Further, in both years that ALCS received a Progress Report, its scores placed it in the top third of its peer group; in other words, its overall Progress Report score ranked higher than two-thirds of the schools with the most similar student populations.

ALCS has received strong grades in the subsection of Student Performance in both years, earning a B in 2011-2012 and an A in 2012-2013. The Student Performance grade looks at the number of students who have reached proficiency on NYS ELA and math assessments, comparing the school's average proficiency to that of its peer group and to all schools citywide. Importantly, it also looks at average student proficiency ratings, comparing school averages to peer and city results.

The main metrics contributing to the Student Progress subsection are Median Adjusted Growth Percentiles, which s measure how much students grow relative to all students in the city who received the same proficiency score the year before¹. ALCS earned a B in Student Progress in 2011-2012 and a C in 2012-2013.

¹ This measure calculates the median (middle) adjusted growth percentile of a school's eligible students. A student's growth percentile compares his or her growth to the growth of all students in the City who started at the same level of proficiency the year before. A student's growth percentile is a number between 0 and 100, which represents the percentage of students with the same score on last year's test who scored the same or lower than the student on this year's test. To evaluate a school on its students' growth percentile, the Progress Report uses an adjusted growth percentile. Growth percentile adjustments are made for students with special education program recommendations anytime within the last four years, and to account for the Economic Needs index of the school. The Progress Report evaluates a school based on its median adjusted growth percentile, the adjusted growth percentile of the middle student when all students adjusted growth percentiles are listed from lowest to highest.

In addition, the school received 4.8 and 2.2 points in the Closing the Achievement Gap section of its 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 Progress Reports, respectively. These additional points are awarded to schools based on the percentage of students identified as high need students (Students with Disabilities [SwD], English Language Learners [ELLs], and students scoring in the lowest third citywide, for example) that reach Level 3 or 4 or show particularly strong growth on NYS math and ELA assessments. Schools can also gain points in this section for the percent of SwD who move to a less restrictive setting and progress made by ELL students. ALCS serves a higher need population than 62% of elementary schools citywide. With this population, the school has made gains with their students with disabilities; ALCS is in the top 6% of the district in terms of performance of SwD in the Integrated Co-teaching (ICT) setting on the ELA test and the top 19% or better of the district for proficiency in math for SwD in either ICT setting or receiving Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS).

In both years for which there is NYS assessment data, ALCS has significantly outperformed its district of location, CSD 7, in ELA and math when comparing common tested grades. When compared to the CSD, ALCS is in the top 11% of schools in ELA performance, and the top 1% of schools in the CSD for math performance. In addition, ALCS surpassed citywide proficiency averages in math both years and ELA city averages in one of the two years. When compared to the city, the school is in the top 22% of all elementary schools across the city in math, and the top 48% in ELA. As with schools statewide, with the switch to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) assessments, ALCS's proficiency scores declined but, as noted, its proficiency rates remained well above the CSD average in 2012-2013, and remained above the city average in math, while falling below the city average in ELA.

Based on an analysis of applicable academic charter goals², over the course of its first term ALCS has cumulatively met 67% of its applicable goals, partially met an additional 14% of its goals, and failed to meet 19% over the course of the term. In its first two years, when there were only two applicable academic goals, based on the grades the school served at the time, ALCS met 100% of its goals. Beginning in 2011-2012, when the school reached grade spans that took NYS assessments for the first time, ALCS met 56% (five of nine goals) of its academic goals that year and 63% (five of eight goals) the following year.

Over the course of its charter term, the NYC DOE has conducted four site visits: Annual Visits in the Spring of 2010, 2011, and 2012, and, as part of the renewal process, a two-day visit in the Fall of 2013. As noted in reports from past NYC DOE school visits, ALCS has developed a responsive education program and supportive learning environment.

Based on a visit in May of 2011, it was noted that "the school provides a strong and consistent academic program for its primary grade students, one that strives for rigor and that evidences differentiation of instruction, a blend of instructional approaches, routine use of assessment data, and effective planning practices." That finding was confirmed in the following year's visit: "[t]he school provides a strong, rigorous, consistent approach to teaching and learning that applies the principles of differentiation based on achievement data and sets high academic performance expectations for students and staff." This was reconfirmed during the more recent renewal visit, which took place in September, where even in the primary grades with children new to the school, students were observed to be consistently on-task, focused on learning, and familiar with instructional routines.

B. Governance, Operations & Finances

At the time of its renewal, ALCS is a fiscally sound and viable organization.

² 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% absolute proficiency or goals that measure reducing the performance gap of a cohort in ELA and Math assessments in its analysis of progress towards goals. Goals that compared the school to the Community School District performance were included in the analysis.

By the end of the school's charter term, the Board of Trustees had established a developed governance structure and organizational design. The Board currently has nine members (two of whom are non-voting), which is more than the minimum number of seven members and fewer than the maximum number of thirteen established in its bylaws. The Board experienced approximately 50% turnover in 2010-2011 and at the start of school year 2011-2012 had only four members. However, by June 2012 it had reestablished and maintained its minimum membership number. Leadership of the Board transferred from Nick McNickle to current Board Chair Robert Podhurst in 2012-2013. The Board receives regular updates from school leadership related to the school's academic and financial health, as evidenced by meeting minutes.

The school's instructional leadership team has been stable over the course of this charter term. The school's current Executive Director (ED), Norma Hurwitz, is the school's founding leader and served as both ED and principal until the 2012-2013 school year. The school promoted two founding teachers to leadership positions at that time: Leena Varghese to Principal and Jaime Kennedy to Assistant Principal. Both staff members still hold these positions.

The school's operational team experienced significant turnover during the beginning of its charter period, leading to several operational concerns that became the basis for the school's Notice of Probation in 2011-2012. The Notice of Probation related particularly but not limited to its administration and management of its 2011 enrollment lottery, high annual turnover among operations and office staff, and board oversight. The Notice, which expired at the end of the year, is described in more detail in Section C. Compliance with Charter, Applicable Law and Regulations, below.

Over the course of the school's charter term, the school has developed a stable school culture. The school's NYC DOE School Survey results have consistently been Average to Well Above Average across all four categories, with the exception of one Below Average category result in 2012-2013. While there has been variation in Teacher satisfaction results in two of the four years, Parent satisfaction results have been consistently above city averages all four years. Participation in the School Survey has consistently been high among both parents and teachers, never having been below 91 percent. In addition, ALCS has met its student enrollment goals related to stability and retention during each year of its charter.

Financially, the school is in a strong position to meet near-term financial obligations and is financially sustainable based on its current practices. There was no material weakness noted in the 2010-2011, 2011-2012 or 2012-2013 independent annual financial audits.

C. Compliance with Charter, Applicable Law and Regulations

Over the charter term, ALCS has been compliant with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

As noted above, the school was issued a Notice of Probation by the NYC DOE on July 19, 2011. During the probationary period the school successfully addressed the concerns and violations related to operations and oversight, particularly but not limited to its administration and management of its 2011 enrollment lottery, high annual turnover among operations and office staff, and board oversight. ALCS has sufficiently revised its operational policies and procedures as well as its operational job descriptions and evaluation tools and was removed from Probation by the NYC DOE in a letter dated September 18, 2012. The school's operational staff has been stable since the 2012-2013 school year.

Improvements made by the school include re-activation of the Board's required committees; revision of its operational manual, including a revised lottery plan with conducting of the lottery outsourced to a vendor, improved job descriptions and support for new hires. This has resulted in increased stability and improved performance among operations and office staff and fair and open lotteries. Given the impact of turnover on the circumstances that led to probation, the NYC DOE continued to monitor school operations and oversight under a Notice of Concern over the rest of

that school year. By the end of this monitoring period, the Notice of Concern was allowed to expire at the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

Since November 2011, the Board of Trustees has been compliant with applicable laws, regulations, and provisions of the charter contract.

D. Plans for Next Charter Term

ALCS is proposing to expand to serve middle school grades in its next charter term, beginning with grade six and adding a grade each year after its initial expansion until it reaches grade eight, completing its proposed grade expansion.

ALCS is also proposing to add an additional section to each of its elementary grades, beginning in kindergarten and first grades in 2014-2015.

ALCS is working to identify a second, private facility to accommodate its expansion plans. There is no additional space at their current location to accommodate any expansion in enrollment.

The combined impact of the proposed expansions would be for the school to reach a total enrollment at scale of 625 students.

For the aforementioned reasons, the NYCDOE recommends a full-term renewal and approves ALCS's request to expand its grade span served to middle school grades in the next charter term.

The school's approval to begin this expansion in 2014-2015 is contingent on its securing private facility space. If the school expands, as conditionally approved, it would serve 500 students in grades K-8 at full scale in 2016-2017. During the term, ALCS will have an enrollment in its public space of between 300 and 350 students in no more than 14 sections with no additional space available beyond its current (2013-2014) public space allocation. After 2014-2015, the school will use at maximum 12 sections in the public space.

Approval for the school to begin this grade expansion is strictly contingent on the school's ability to secure private facility space for the middle school grades. If private space is not secured, the grade expansion is denied and the school will continue to serve just grades K-5, with a total authorized enrollment of 350 students in 2014-2015 and 300 thereafter.

Part 2: School Overview and History

Academic Leadership Charter School (ALCS) is an elementary school serving approximately 349 students³ from kindergarten through fifth grade during the 2013-2014 school year. It opened in the 2009-2010 school year, with kindergarten and first grades and is under the terms of its first charter. The school's previously authorized full grade span is kindergarten through fifth grade, which it reached during its current charter term, which expires February 9, 2014. The school is located in a New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) facility in District 7, in the Bronx at 677 East 141st Street and is co-located with P.S. 65 Mother Hale Academy.

The school's mission is to provide its students an academically focused elementary school designed to provide its students the foundation for a college and career ready education, with its students exceeding New York State performance standards in ELA, Math, and Science, while providing a safe and nurturing learning environment that empowers students to become leaders and take an active role in their learning while exhibiting good character.

The school's intake grade is kindergarten but it typically backfills open seats in first and second grade as well. There were 733 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2013 lottery.⁴

Over the charter term, the school has served the following percentages of special populations of students⁵:

Special Populations

| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) | 91.3% | 89.3% | 90.3% | 91.6% |
| Students with Disabilities (SwD) | 13.0% | 13.6% | 13.8% | 14.3% |
| English Language Learners (ELL) | 11.3% | 10.2% | 16.7% | 15.0% |

The ALCS Board of Trustees is led by Board Chair Robert Podhurst. The school's founder, Norma Hurwitz, is still an ex-officio member of the school's Board and is the school's Executive Director. She was principal until the 2012-2013 school year. The school promoted two founding teachers to leadership positions at that time: Leena Varghese to Principal and Jaime Kennedy to Assistant Principal. Both staff members still hold these positions.

³ ATS data 10/10/13

⁴ Self-reported on Data Collection Sheet submitted with Renewal Application in November 2013.

⁵ Special population figures are pulled from ATS as of June 1st each year. These figures are compared against the total population which is pulled from ATS as of October 31st each year.

Part 3: Renewal Process Overview

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 first 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.

As the school is approaching the end of its charter term, the NYC DOE performs a comprehensive review of the school's performance over the course of the charter. This renewal process is conducted through analyzing student performance data and collecting and evaluating school-submitted documents during the charter term. Evidence of a school's success is organized around the four essential questions that comprise the NYC DOE's Accountability Framework:

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

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

Renewal Report

This report contains the findings and recommendations of the NYC DOE regarding a school's application for charter renewal. This report is based on a cumulative record of the school's progress during its charter term, including but not limited to oversight visits, annual reports, and formal correspondence between the school and its authorizer, the NYC DOE, all of which are conducted in order to identify areas of weakness and to help the school to address them. 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 staff from the Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) team and other staff from the NYC DOE.

Upon review of all the relevant materials, a recommendation is made to the 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:

- Overall NYC DOE Progress Report score,
- New York State ELA and math results and/or New York State Regents exams,
- ELA and math proficiency compared to the district for elementary and middle schools, and graduation rates compared to the city for high schools,
- New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) or other approved alternate assessments, and
- Performance data pertaining to college and career readiness.

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

Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?

To assess whether a school is a fiscally sound, viable organization, CSAS focuses on three areas: Governance Structure & Organizational Design, School Climate & Community Engagement, and

Financial Health. This includes an analysis of the school's audited financial statements, based on the NACSA (National Association of Charter School Authorizers) Financial Framework.⁶

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.

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 all applicable laws and regulations.

Staff Representatives

The following NYC DOE staff representatives participated in the review of this school, including the visit to the school on September 25 and 26, 2013:

- Richard Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE Charter Schools Accountability and Support
- Kamilah O'Brien, Director of Operations, NYC DOE Charter Schools Accountability and Support
- Gabrielle Mosquera, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE Charter Schools Accountability and Support
- Mary Doyle, Executive Director, NYC DOE Office of State Portfolio Policy

⁶ http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance_Framework_Fall_2012_Draft.pdf, page 38-59

Part 4: Findings

Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?

At the time of this school's renewal Academic Leadership Charter School (ALCS) has demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

Academic Attainment and Improvement

ALCS has received two NYC DOE Progress Reports and has two years of New York State (NYS) assessment data at the time of this report. (For detailed information grade-level data on NYS assessments, please see Appendix A.)

In 2012-2013, ALCS's fourth graders took the NYS science assessment for the first time with 95.6% earning a level 3 or 4, with an average proficiency score of 3.93.

Performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report

| Progress Report Grade | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Overall Grade | - | - | A | B |
| Student Progress | - | - | B | C |
| Student Performance | - | - | B | A |
| School Environment | - | - | B | C |
| Closing the Achievement Gap Points | - | - | 4.8 | 2.2 |

Students scoring at or above Level 3, compared to CSD, NYC, and State averages

| % Proficient in English Language Arts | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
| Academic Leadership Charter School | - | - | 62.5% | 23.2% |
| CSD 7 | - | - | 27.6% | 9.6% |
| Difference from CSD 7 | - | - | 34.9 | 13.6 |
| NYC | - | - | 49.0% | 27.7% |
| Difference from NYC | - | - | 13.5 | -4.5 |
| New York State | - | - | 55.2% | 31.2% |
| Difference from New York State | - | - | 7.3 | -8.0 |

| % Proficient in Math | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
| Academic Leadership Charter School | - | - | 70.8% | 48.9% |
| CSD 7 | - | - | 36.4% | 12.0% |
| Difference from CSD 7 | - | - | 34.4 | 36.9 |
| NYC | - | - | 57.0% | 34.2% |
| Difference from NYC | - | - | 13.8 | 14.7 |
| New York State | - | - | 65.7% | 28.9% |
| Difference from New York State | - | - | 5.1 | 20.0 |

All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

Mission and Academic Goals

Over its charter term, ALCS has met 67% of its total applicable academic charter goals, including 2 of 2 applicable goals in year one and two, 5 of 9 in year three, with an additional goal partially met, and 5 of 8 in the fourth year, with two other applicable goals partially met.

Progress Toward Academic Charter Goals

| | Met in Year 1? | Met In Year 2? | Met in Year 3? | Met in Year 4? |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1) Absolute Performance: Each year, 80% of 3rd through 5th graders who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS ELA exam | N/A | N/A | No | N/A |
| 2) Absolute Performance: Each year, 80% of 3rd through 5th graders who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS Math exam | N/A | N/A | No | N/A |
| 3) Absolute Performance: Each year, 80% of 4th graders who have been enrolled at the school on BEDS day for at least two consecutive years will perform at or above Level 3 on the NYS Science exam | N/A | N/A | N/A | Yes |
| 4) Value-added Performance: For years 4 through 5 of the proposed charter, grade level cohorts of the same students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's NYS ELA exam and 80% at or above Level 3 on the current year's NYS ELA exam For those students scoring above proficiency in a grade level cohort exceeding 80% on the previous year's exam, students will demonstrate growth (above 80%) in the current year | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 5) Value-added Performance: For years 4 through 5 of the proposed charter, grade level cohorts of the same students will reduce by one-half the gap between the percent at or above Level 3 on the previous year's NYS Math exam and 80% at or above Level 3 on the current year's NYS Math exam For those students scoring above proficiency in a grade level cohort exceeding 80% on the previous year's exam, students will demonstrate growth (above 80%) in the current year | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 6) Comparative Performance: Each year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the NYS ELA exam in each tested grade will, in the majority of grades, exceed the average performance of students in the same grades in CSD 7 | N/A | N/A | Yes | Yes |
| 7) Comparative Performance: Each year, the percent of students performing at or above Level 3 on the NYS Math exam in each tested grade will, in the majority of grades, exceed the average performance of students | N/A | N/A | Yes | Yes |

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|---------|---------|
| in the same grades in CSD 7 | | | | |
| 9) NYCDOE Progress Report: The school will receive a “B” or higher in the Student Progress section of the NYC DOE Report Card | N/A | N/A | Yes | No |
| 9) AYP Status: Each year, ALCS will be deemed “In Good Standing.” | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 10) School-specific educational indicator: Each year, 60% of students who have attended ALCS for at least 3 years will perform at or above Level 3 (50%) on the Terra Nova in ELA | N/A | N/A | No | Partial |
| 11) School-specific educational indicator: Each year, 60% of students who have attended ALCS for at least 3 years will perform at or above Level 3 (50%) on the Terra Nova in Math | N/A | N/A | Yes | Yes |
| 12) School-specific educational indicator: At least 60% of the students in all grades will perform at or above level on the spring administration of the DRA | Yes | Yes | Partial | Partial |

Responsive Education Program

The school administers the Terra Nova national norm-reference assessment twice a year, in fall and spring to all students. The following results were reported by the school and noted (please see Appendix A for more detail on Terra Nova performance).

- In ELA, in eight of nine instances over the course of the term, the school had positive growth in percentile scores from fall to spring within tested grades. In looking at cohorts over time, (fall of first grade results to spring of current grade as of 2012-2013) results indicate overall increases for three of three cohorts in ELA, with the cohort in the school the longest recording the largest increase in percentile score, growing 36.5 percentile points over that period of time.
- In math, in six of nine instances over the course of the term the school had positive growth in percentile scores from fall to spring within tested grades. In looking at cohorts over time, (fall of first grade results to spring of current grade as of 2012-2013) results indicate overall increases for all three cohorts in math, with the cohort in the school the longest recording the largest increase in percentile score, growing 45.8 percentile points over that period of time.

As part of the renewal review process, representatives of the NYC DOE visited the school on September 25 and 26, 2013. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- Alignment with Common Core
 - Over the course of the term, the school reports that it has made a variety of adjustments to align with Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), including:
 - using professional development to increase standards awareness, ensuring CCLS are used in instructional planning, making adjustments to curriculum to increase rigor and content-based writing, and while the school’s curriculum has always emphasized non-fiction texts and critical thinking and writing in math, increasing the emphasis on evidence-based responses.
 - the school adjusted its interim assessments as more information became available on the CCLS and to reflect the kinds of questions and tasks that were included as resources to support schools in Common Core implementation.
 - additional adjustments are underway in response to the actual experience of taking the CCLS assessments in 2012-2013—adjustments to classroom libraries to provide opportunities with a greater selection of authentic literature, earlier introduction of novels and more support from instructional leaders to staff in lesson planning, refining sequencing and duration of some lesson in school’s curriculum maps, more support in math for differentiation of lessons, including

application questions, greater student engagement and the adding of a second mini-lesson to each math class.

- Addressing the Needs of All Learners
 - The school employs a two-teacher model in most core instructional classes, allowing for flexible grouping and targeted differentiation to meet the needs of different learners. A third teacher that may be specialized (Title I, Special Education, or ELL) may provide additional push-in support, depending on IEPs or identified needs. At the time of the visit, the school's staffing model was four Teacher Assistants short and some observed classrooms did not have two teachers as a result.
 - ALCS's special education program provides support in two settings: Special Education Teacher Support Service (SETTS) and Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT).
 - During the time of the visit, the school had two students with IEPs requiring a more restrictive setting and those students were awaiting placement by the Committee for Special Education (CSE). These students were receiving additional push-in support; however, on the day of the visit both students were observed struggling to remain on-task in their ICT classes and additional support was not available.
 - According to the school's special education coordinator, team teachers have opportunities to plan together, working with grade level leaders during weekly Professional Development and directly with teachers during grade level preparation periods, which were new in the 2013-2014 school year.
 - The school staff members providing support services for SwD have the appropriate certifications, student records are kept in secure files, and the school reports a good relationship with its local CSE.
 - During the course of its initial charter term, the school has offered an optional after school program run by its teachers to focus on literacy and math remediation in small group instructional settings.
- Instructional Model and Classroom Instruction
 - On the days of the visit, twelve classrooms in grades kindergarten through five were observed with the school's instructional leaders (Principal and Assistant Principal) and the following was noted:
 - In seven of the twelve classrooms, two or more adults were observed providing instruction; in the remaining observed classes one adult was observed providing instruction. (The school had not yet reached its planned number of Teaching Assistants, plus one TA was absent during the visit). In classrooms with two adults, most classes used a Team Teaching model, with two groups of instruction occurring with different materials. One push-in support was observed, as well as one instance when a parent volunteer provided tutoring support for two students.
 - Observed classes varied in size from seventeen to twenty-nine students—all observed classes with more than twenty-two students had two adults providing instruction.
 - In virtually every class all students were fully on task during the observed lessons (the only exceptions were the two students awaiting placement to a 12:1:1 setting) and were responsive to teacher directions and instruction.
 - Observed teachers used direct instruction, modeling, guided and independent practice (variations on the "I Do -We Do -You Do" model), partner and table discussion, and structured mini-lessons.
 - A variety of checks for understanding were observed: questioning, class work, polling, homework, performance-based activities in writing and art, polling (thumbs up/down if you agree, for example), and some peer discussion/review (via turn and talks, for example).
 - Lesson pacing was consistently efficient and effective with little down time in transitions or between tasks.
 - In all two-teacher classrooms and some one-teacher classrooms, differentiation was observed through grouping with students getting additional attention in smaller groups, working with different materials (leveled reading materials, for example), and activity/practice resources.

- Based on debriefs with instructional leaders after classroom visits, all classrooms had instruction that was aligned with ALCS's instructional model and current academic priorities. Although consistency of execution could improve, instruction was aligned with expectations.
- Assessment System
 - The school assessment system includes the following internal assessments:
 - Scholastics Development Reading Assessment (DRA) at all grades;
 - The Terra Nova assessment at all grades;
 - The school's developed interim assessments and mock assessments, which are administered in all grades.
 - The school adjusted the rigor of its interim assessments in 2012-2013 to better approximate the anticipated rigor of the revised NYS assessments, with a gradual increase in difficulty from first to fourth administration.

Learning Environment

- NYC DOE representatives conducted one-on-one interviews with fifteen teachers. The following was noted:
 - All interviewed teachers reported that they received school-based professional development both in the summer and weekly during the school year, with the administration providing resources. Some teachers mentioned a lack of time for collaboration and that training focused on tested grades and lacked differentiation. Other interviewed teachers agreed with the administration that there were greater opportunities for collaboration and more grade level specific training and opportunities for planning.
 - All interviewed teachers were clear about the supervision and evaluation process and talked about receiving both formal and informal observations with feedback that was helpful.
 - All interviewed teachers reported that they use data in the classrooms through both formal (i.e. interim and mock assessments, DRA) and informal assessments (i.e. observational notes, exit slips, assessments, for groupings and lesson planning) and that the data helped them know where kids were. They also reported that they felt they were adequately supported by administration in understanding and using data.
 - All interviewed teachers noted that a lot of time was required of them in terms of planning and working beyond an already long school day, with many staying after six or seven PM regularly. Some felt it was necessary to serve the children the school has and viewed it positively; others thought it was not sustainable over time.

Essential Question 2: Is the School a Fiscally 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 October 8, 2013, as part of the renewal review process, representatives of the NYC DOE conducted an interview with the school's Board of Trustees. Based on document review and observation, the following was noted:

- The Board currently has nine active members, two of whom are *ex officio* members. The Board experienced approximately 50% turnover in 2010-2011 and at the start of school year 2011-2012 had only four members. However, by June 2012 it had reestablished and maintained the minimum membership number of seven as outlined in its bylaws.
- All of the Board's officer positions are currently filled.
- The Board has consistently achieved quorum, as recorded in meeting minutes.
- The school's Executive Director consistently updates the Board on academic progress and operations at the school, as recorded in meeting minutes and observed by the NYC DOE.
- There are clear lines of accountability between Board and school leadership and school staff 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 a Finance Committee, Education Committee, and Development Committee, as recorded in meeting minutes. During 2010-2011, when Board membership had fallen below its required size, the Board's committees were under-staffed and not active as committees. This circumstance was rectified in 2011-2012. Committees, additional to those in the Board's bylaws, have been added as needed over the course of the charter term. These include a Lottery Committee in 2011-2012 and a Long-Term Planning Committee in 2012-2013.
- The school's founder, Norma Figueroa-Hurwitz, is an *ex officio* member of the school's Board. Her husband, Ted Hurwitz, a school founder, is also an *ex officio* member of the Board.

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 90% during each year of its charter term.⁷

| Average Daily Attendance | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 91% | 92% | 94% | 93% |

- To date, the school has met its charter goal of 95% of all students enrolled during the course of the year returning the following September. The school has met this goal during each year of its charter term.⁸
- The school has experienced fairly consistent turnover among Lead Teachers. The turnover rates for Lead Teachers (excluding those terminated by the school) throughout the charter term are: 14% in 2009-2010; 24% in 2010-2011; 24% in 2011-2012; 34% in 2012-2013; and 18% in 2013-2014.⁹

⁷ Self-reported data from the Progress Towards Goals document with Renewal Application in August 2013.

⁸ Self-reported data from the Progress Towards Goals document with Renewal Application in August 2013.

⁹ Self-reported on Data Collection Sheet submitted with Renewal Application in November 2013.

- Over the course of the charter term, ALCS's NYC School Survey results were:

Academic Leadership Charter School NYC DOE School Survey Results

| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|
| Academic Expectations | Well Above Average | Average | Well Above Average | Average |
| Communication | Well Above Average | Average | Well Above Average | Average |
| Engagement | Well Above Average | Average | Above Average | Below Average |
| Safety & Respect | Above Average | Average | Above Average | Average |

- Over the course of the charter term, ALCS's NYC School Survey response rates were:

Academic Leadership Charter School NYC DOE School Survey Response Rates Compared to Citywide Average

| | Parents | Citywide | Teachers | Citywide | Students ¹⁰ | Citywide |
|------------------|------------|----------|-------------|----------|------------------------|----------|
| 2009-2010 | 82% | 49% | 73% | 76% | – | – |
| 2010-2011 | 91% | 52% | 100% | 82% | – | – |
| 2011-2012 | 92% | 53% | 100% | 82% | – | – |
| 2012-2013 | 94% | 54% | 100% | 83% | – | – |

- Over the course of the charter term, the school's NYC DOE School Survey results and response rates have been excellent and good, respectively. Parent and Teacher participation have always been well above city average, except for Teachers in the school's first year, and ALCS's satisfaction results have been Average or Above and Well Above Average in all years and categories, except for the Engagement category in 2012-2013. Parent satisfaction has been consistently very positive but Teacher satisfaction has varied, very positive in 2009-2010 and 2011-2012, leading to Above and Well Above Average overall results those two years and Average overall results in the other two years when Teacher satisfaction was significantly lower. The school has met its charter goal related to Parent satisfaction in all four years of the term. ALCS has not met its Teacher satisfaction goal in two of four years but its teacher retention goal all four years.

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

- The school has an active Parent Organization that holds frequent meetings with school leadership to help determine the topics of parent workshops throughout the school year.
- The school's average parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences has been 95% or above throughout its charter term.¹¹
- The NYC DOE conducted a public renewal hearing for the school in an effort to elicit public comments. About 150 participants attended the hearing, twenty speaking in support of the school's renewal and none speaking in opposition.
- The NYC DOE made randomized phone calls to parents from a roster provided by the school for students of all grades. Calls to school parents/guardians were made until there were twenty

¹⁰ Student Response Rates on the NYC School Survey have not been applicable for this school over the course of the current charter term.

¹¹ Self-reported information from the school's renewal application, submitted in August 2013.

complete phone calls. Of these calls, 90% of the provided positive feedback regarding the school and 10% provided neutral feedback regarding the school.

Based on student interviews of approximately ten students in grades four and five conducted on the September 25th-26th visit to the school, the following was noted:

- Students interviewed reported that the school had a college-bound culture and all teachers and staff had college-bound expectations for the students.
- Students interviewed reported that parent communication from teachers could be for either positive or negative reasons, such as doing well on a test, disobeying a teacher, or not finishing work.

Financial Health

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

- Based on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 financial audit, the school's current ratio indicated a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school had sufficient unrestricted cash to cover its operating expenses for more than two months without an infusion of cash.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2013-2014 budget to the actual enrollment as of October 31, 2013 showed that the school had met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY13 financial audit, the school had no debt obligations.

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

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

There was no material weakness noted in the 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 independent financial audits.

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

Over the charter term, ALCS has been compliant with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

ALCS was issued a Notice of Probation by the NYC DOE on July 19, 2011, after concerns were raised about the school's operational and governance capacities. An analysis by the NYC DOE, aided by the school and its Board, confirmed several of these concerns.

The Notice of Probation was given due to in response to the following:

- The school's April 13, 2011 lottery was conducted in a manner that gave rise to serious violations of the New York State Charter School Law and material and substantial violations of the charter agreement in force between ALCS and the DOE (the "Charter").
- Operational issues were uncovered or reported that represented a pattern of failed operational oversight by school leadership and the Board in serious violation of the Board's duties as set forth in §2853 of the Charter School Law and Part 3. VIII.1 of the Charter.
- Procedures for conducting classroom visits for interested families and for participating in post-registration placement testing were not consistently carried out by school staff, resulting in the possibility that some potential students were tested prior to enrollment.
- The Board at that time was operating without the necessary standing committees identified in the Charter (VIII.2 Board Structures and Operations, Exhibit K, Article V.c; Article VI.c2), which, in addition to being a violation of its charter terms, impaired the Board's ability to provide adequate oversight of the school's leadership and operations (§2853, 1(f). Charter school organization; oversight).
- Two business/operational staff members may separately have engaged in practices intended to financially benefit themselves at the school's expense, in serious violation of law, Charter and the school's Rules of Conduct.

The school created a Corrective Action Plan which was approved by the NYC DOE and monitored by the Board, school leadership, and the members of the CSAS team during the course of the probation term. In addition, representatives of the NYC DOE attended nine of twelve ALCS Board meetings and made several oversight visits to the school, including its Annual Site Visit on May 22, 2012. At the end of the probation term, the NYC DOE noted the following:

- The Board and school leadership was cooperative with the NYC DOE and successfully addressed or resolved most of the probation terms fully.
- The school revised its lottery policies and procedures, engaging a third party vendor to conduct ALCS's lottery electronically and certify that it was conducted in a fair and transparent manner.
- ALCS revised its operational manual, revised job descriptions, and hired a Director of Finance and Operations to comply with its charter and the terms of probation.
- The ALCS Board recruited new members to its Board to improve its capacity and expertise, activated critical committees, conducted an internal needs assessment and received some professional development in response.
- The ALCS Board met 12 times in 2011-2012 and over the course of the year became more and more proactive in terms of the agenda, reporting out on committee work, and responding to school leader reports.

ALCS was removed from Probation status as of a letter from the NYC DOE dated September 18, 2012. However, the NYC DOE continued to monitor ALCS during the 2012-2013 school year under a Notice of Concern issued on the same date. The Notice of Concern was issued to continue monitoring the efficacy of its operational and oversight reforms.

The NYC DOE conducted operations-based monitoring visits to the school on March 7, 2013 and June 18, 2013 and also conducted a monitoring visit to the school's regular Board meeting on February 28, 2013. In addition, ALCS received an Annual Comprehensive Review (ACR) that included a desk audit

and a self-evaluation completed by the school. The resulting ACR report determined that ALCS had been able to sustain operational and oversight practices necessary for effective school management and governance. The NYC DOE did not renew the Notice of Concern when its term ended at the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

The Board has been in compliance with:

- Required number of monthly meetings. The school's bylaws indicate that the Board hold six meetings a year. In year three of the charter term, the NYC DOE required the Board to hold monthly meetings as a condition of the school's Probation. The Board held the required number of monthly meetings throughout its charter term, as evidenced by the Board Yearly Meeting Schedule and the posted meeting minutes.
- Submission of required Board documents. All current Board members have submitted conflict of interest and financial disclosure forms and do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.¹²
- Availability of minutes and agendas. The Board has 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.
- Submission of required accountability documents. The Board has provided timely submissions of accountability documents to the DOE.

The Board has been out of compliance with:

- Membership size. The Board was not in compliance with required minimal membership size during 2010-2011 as outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws, although it has been since 2011-2012.

The school has been in compliance with:

- Submission of required documents. The school is in compliance with AED/CPR certification requirements.
- Fingerprint clearance. Over the charter term, all staff have the required fingerprint clearance.
- Certification of instructional staff: Staff is either certified or highly qualified, and those that are not, fall under the requirements outlined in the NY State Charter Schools Act. A school can have no more than 5 teachers or 30% of the teaching staff uncertified, whichever number is lower.
- Insurance requirements. The school has submitted all appropriate insurance documents.

¹² Source: New York State Education Department Annual Report

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

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

- The school applied to serve middle grades (6-8) in the next charter term and has proposed an increase in its elementary school enrollment as well.
- The school is working to identify a facility, public or private, to accommodate their proposed expansion plans.
- To oversee and develop middle grades, the school plans to promote its current Assistant Principal to the Principal role once the school begins serving grade 8. As part of its proposed expansion, the school also plans to hire a Dean of Student Discipline and Academics and additional Operations staff members.
- The school plans to implement bimonthly meetings with parents of students who have IEPs in order to better monitor and discuss the students' progress.
- In response to the 2010 amendments to NYS Charter Schools Act requiring schools to attract and retain percentages of students who are designated as Free and Reduced Lunch learners, Students with Disabilities, and English Language Learners, the school is making demonstrated efforts to attract and retain these students.
 - The school has established outreach measures, such as creating translations of school materials into multiple languages, making available translators at school events, and advertising the school through various media outlets, in order to ensure compliance with the 2010 amendments.

The school's approval to begin its proposed grade expansion in 2014-2015 is contingent on its securing and presenting to NYCDOE an executed lease or contract by March 31, 2014, suitable temporary private facility space. In addition, ALCS must develop and submit a plan to the DOE no later than July 1, 2014, for a permanent private facility that would accommodate its projected increased enrollment.

If the school expands as conditionally approved it would serve 400 students (350 students in the public facility and 50 students in the private facility) in grades K-6 in 2014-2015 and serve a maximum of 500 students, grades K-8, by the end of its second charter term. Beginning in school year 2015-2016, when the 100 student cohort of current fourth graders moves to middle school, and continuing thereafter, the public facility will house 300 students in grades K-5. During the term, ALCS will have an enrollment in its public space of between 300 and 350 students in not more than 14 sections with no additional space available beyond its current (2013-2014) space allocation. After 2014-2015, the school will use at maximum 12 sections in the public space. If private space is not secured, the grade expansion is denied and the school will continue to serve just grades K-5, with a total authorized enrollment of 350 students in 2014-2015 and 300 thereafter.

During its second charter term ALCS will be split-sited with grades K-5 being housed at its current public facility at 677 East 141st Street in CSD 7 in the Bronx and its upper grades at a private facility at a Bronx location to be determined.

Part 5: Background on the Charter Renewal Process

Statutory Basis for Renewal

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

- Improve student learning and achievement;
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system;
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance based accountability systems by holding the schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.¹³

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.¹⁴

A school seeking renewal of its charter must submit a renewal application to the charter entity to which the original charter application was submitted.¹⁵ 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;
- A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private;
- Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school including the charter school report cards and certified financial statements;
- Indications of parent and student satisfaction.

Where the 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.¹⁶

¹³ See § 2850 of the Charter Schools Act of 1998.

¹⁴ See §§ 2851(4) and 2852 of the Act.

¹⁵ See generally §§ 2851(3) and 2851(4).

¹⁶ § 2852(5)

Part 6: Authorizer Responsibility Under the NY State Charter Schools Act and the DOE Accountability Framework

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

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

(a) A report of the progress of the charter school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in the charter.

(b) A detailed financial statement that discloses the cost of administration, instruction and other spending categories for the charter school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools, both public and private. Such statement shall be in a form prescribed by the Board of Regents.

(c) Copies of each of the annual reports of the charter school required by subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty-seven of this article, including the charter school report cards and the certified financial statements.

(d) Indications of parent and student satisfaction. Such renewal application shall be submitted to the charter entity no later than six months prior to the expiration of the charter; provided, however, that the charter entity may waive such deadline for good cause shown.

(e) The means by which the charter school will meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets as prescribed by the board of regents or the board of trustees of the state university of New York, as applicable, of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program which shall be considered by the charter entity prior to approving such charter school's application for renewal. When developing such targets, the board of regents and the board of trustees of the state university of New York shall ensure (1) that such enrollment targets are comparable to the enrollment figures of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the charter school is located; and (2) that such retention targets are comparable to the rate of retention of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the proposed charter school would be located.

The NYC DOE may recommend four potential outcomes for charter schools applying for renewal: full-term renewal, renewal with conditions, short-term renewal, or non-renewal.

Full-Term Renewal

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

Renewal with Conditions

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

Short-Term Renewal

In cases where a school is up for renewal of its initial charter and has fewer than two years of state-assessment results, a renewal of three-years or fewer may be considered. In limited circumstances, a school not in its initial charter or in its initial charter with more than three years of state assessment data, may be considered for a short-term renewal.

Non-Renewal

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

The CSAS Accountability Framework

To help NYC DOE authorized charter schools better understand what we mean by success for charter schools, the NYC DOE's Charter Schools Accountability & Support (CSAS) has developed an Accountability Framework build around four essential questions for charter school renewal:

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

| 1. Is the School an Academic Success? |
|---|
| 1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement |
| Schools that are academic successes have many of the characteristics below: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet absolute performance goals• Meet student progress goals• Are closing the achievement gap for at risk students, including special needs and ELL students• Are surpassing performance of DOE identified peer-schools• Are surpassing performance district and city proficiency or better averages• Are meeting other rigorous academic and non-academic goals as stated in school's charter |
| Evidence for success might include, but not be limited to, the following depending on school configurations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grades 3-8 NYS ELA Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)• Grades 3-8 NYS Math Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)• Grades 4 and 8 NYS Science Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)• Grades 8-12 NYS Regent Exam Results• When applicable, NYSAA or other approved alternate assessments results• HS 4- and 6-Year Graduation Rates (absolute and progress, overall, for at-risk student populations)• Grades 8-12 College Readiness Credit Accumulation• Percentage of Students Applying to and Being Admitted to College• Percentage of Students Taking AP Courses and/or Percentage of Students Passing AP Courses• Results on state accountability measures• Charter School Academic and Non-Academic Goals• NYC Progress Reports |
| 1b. Mission and Academic Goals |
| Schools with successful missions and goals have many of the characteristics below: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have an animating mission statement that staff, students and community embrace• Set ambitious academic and non-academic goals that entire school community knows and embraces• Have processes for regular monitoring and reporting on progress toward school goals• Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring data |

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

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

1c. Responsive Education Program

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

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

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

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

1d. Learning Environment

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

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

- Have a formal or informal character education, social development, or citizenship program that provides opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens

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

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

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

2a. Governance Structure and Organizational Design

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

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

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

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

2b. School Climate and Community Engagement

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

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

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

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

2c. Financial and Operational Health

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

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

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

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

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

3a. Approved Charter and Agreement

Schools in substantial compliance with their charter and agreement have:

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

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

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

3b. Applicable Federal and State Law

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law have:

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

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

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

3c. Applicable Regulations

| |
|--|
| <p>Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and secure facilities with no significant compliance concerns with applicable regulations • Consistently clean annual audits, up-to-date escrow accounts, and have completed all other financial reporting as required • Boards that meet requirements for size, meeting frequency, public notice, applicable open-meeting and conflict of interest regulations, as well as complying with NYC DOE CSAS’s requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members. • Informed NYCDOE CSAS, and where required, received CSAS approval for changes in significant partnerships, such as dropping/replacing a management organization • Effectively engaged parent associations |
| <p>Evidence for compliance with applicable regulations may include, but not be limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School or building safety plan; appropriate inspection documents • Annual audits, escrow accounts, other financial reporting documents • Board roster, calendar, agenda and minutes, conflict of interest documents, notification of changes/approval of new member request documents • Charter revision requests, revised or new contracts • Parent association calendar of meetings, identified officers, parent association agenda and minutes, parent satisfaction survey results • Interviews |

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

4a. School Expansion or Model Replication

In anticipation of a new charter term schools may be considering various growth options: replication, expansion to new grades or increased enrollment or altering their model in some significant way. Successful schools generally have processes for:

- Conducting needs/opportunity assessments
- Forming Board and leadership committees or subcommittees to investigate options, develop action plans, ensure capacity and resources are aligned, etc.
- Engaging school community in articulating charter revisions (or a new charter in cases of replication) to address the proposed growth plans
- Ensuring that the final proposal is ambitious but realistic in its plans
- Creating a well-reasoned and documented prospective for the school’s new charter term and, if applicable, a new charter proposal (for replication)

Evidence for likely success in planning for school growth in a new charter term may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and Board interviews

4b. Organizational Sustainability

Successful schools consistently perform despite change. While there is no single path for ensuring sustainability, successful schools often have the following features:

- School anticipates organizational opportunities/needs and plans for resource development (human resource policies for growing your own talent, for example, or fundraising or budget management to take care of anticipated capital needs and to mitigate risks for the unexpected, or board development to bring new talent or specific needs-based expertise to the school)

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

- Board roster and resumes
- Board committees and minutes
- School organization chart
- Staff rosters
- Staff handbook
- Leadership and staff interviews
- Budget

4c. School or Model Improvements

Successful schools are thoughtful about the continued appropriateness of school design features and elements of their models. They:

- Review performance carefully and even if they don't make major changes through expansion or replication, they are careful to adjust elements to ensure continued and improved success.
- Develop plans to improve the school learning environment, including improving their facilities to expand program offerings and/or developing new partnerships to further the school's mission.

Evidence for successful improvements to a school's program or model may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Application Part I: Retroactive Analysis, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Application Part II: Prospective Analysis, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- MOUs or contracts with partners

Appendix A: School Performance Data

| % Proficient in English Language Arts | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
| Academic Leadership Charter School | - | - | 62.5% | 23.2% |
| CSD 7 | - | - | 27.6% | 9.6% |
| Difference from CSD 7 | - | - | 34.9 | 13.6 |
| NYC | - | - | 49.0% | 27.7% |
| Difference from NYC | - | - | 13.5 | -4.5 |

| % Proficient in Math | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
| Academic Leadership Charter School | - | - | 70.8% | 48.9% |
| CSD 7 | - | - | 36.4% | 12.0% |
| Difference from CSD 7 | - | - | 34.4 | 36.9 |
| NYC | - | - | 57.0% | 34.2% |
| Difference from NYC | - | - | 13.8 | 14.7 |

All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

| % of Third Graders Proficient in English Language Arts | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
| Academic Leadership Charter School | - | - | 62.5% | 19.4% |
| CSD 7 | 30.5% | 28.9% | 27.6% | 10.3% |
| Difference from CSD 7 | - | - | 34.9 | 9.1 |
| NYC | 46.5% | 48.1% | 49.0% | 28.1% |
| Difference from NYC | - | - | 13.5 | -8.7 |

| % of Third Graders Proficient in Math | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
| Academic Leadership Charter School | - | - | 70.8% | 50.0% |
| CSD 7 | 36.2% | 33.7% | 36.4% | 11.8% |
| Difference from CSD 7 | - | - | 34.4 | 38.2 |
| NYC | 54.3% | 54.8% | 57.0% | 33.1% |
| Difference from NYC | - | - | 13.8 | 16.9 |

All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

| % of Fourth Graders Proficient in English Language Arts | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
| Academic Leadership Charter School | - | - | - | 31.1% |
| CSD 7 | 26.6% | 32.0% | 28.7% | 9.0% |
| Difference from CSD 7 | - | - | - | 22.1 |
| NYC | 45.6% | 51.0% | 52.4% | 27.2% |
| Difference from NYC | - | - | - | 3.9 |

| % of Fourth Graders Proficient in Math | | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
| Academic Leadership Charter School | - | - | - | 46.7% |
| CSD 7 | 36.6% | 41.1% | 43.2% | 12.2% |
| Difference from CSD 7 | - | - | - | 34.4 |
| NYC | 58.4% | 62.3% | 65.7% | 35.2% |
| Difference from NYC | - | - | - | 11.4 |

All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself serves.

Appendix B: NYC DOE Progress Reports

NYC DOE Progress Reports

[2011-2012 Academic Year](#)

[2012-2013 Academic Year](#)

NYC DOE Accountability Reports

[Annual Site Visit Report 2009-2010](#)

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

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

[Annual Comprehensive Review \(ACR\) 2012-2013](#)

Appendix C: Private Facility Planning

Conditional Plan Outline

February 17, 2014--draft lease for temporary site reviewed by NYC DOE private space committee review; facility must:

- Have certificate of occupancy
- Adequate space for ALCS's needs for 2014-2015, 2015-2016, with options and capacity to extend beyond 2015-2016 should that be required.
- Capacity to extend the lease should include a right of first refusal for ALCS.

March 31, 2014: temporary private space lease or contract signed. **The school must meet this deadline to proceed with expansion in 2014-2015 school year or will postpone expansion to following year (with planning timeline described herein to be adjusted for 2015.)**

April 2014—lottery for 2014-2015 school year includes applications for expanded enrollment seats.

July 1, 2014-draft plan submitted to NYC DOE for private space committee review for permanent facility acquisition/leasing and development, including:

- Proposed or scheduled purchase/lease signing date
- Construction / renovation requirements
- Proposed start and end dates for any construction/renovation
- Identified project manager for ALCS

August 1, 2014: temporary private space is ready for occupancy.

September 1, 2014: revised/final plan submitted to NYC DOE private space committee for permanent facility acquisition/leasing.

Ongoing—monitoring of progress, with minimally quarterly updates from board to NYC DOE on plan progress, development of permanent private facility to ensure timely readiness and/or development of private facility contingency plans.