



Charter School Renewal Report
Charter Schools Accountability and Support
2011-2012

**JOHN W. LAVELLE PREPARATORY CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT**

MAY 2012

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School is a middle/high school serving approximately 218 students in sixth through eighth grade in the 2011-12 school year.¹ The school opened in 2009 and plans to expand to grade 10 during its current charter term (ending April 2014), with eventual plans to expand to grade 12 by adding one grade per year.² John W. Lavelle changed locations before the start of the 2011-12 school year to a privately leased facility in district 31. Its student body includes 75.5% students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, 2.3% English Language Learners, and 31.4% special education students.³

The school has experienced an increase in student attrition over the past two years, with 5.7% turnover in 2010-11 and 8.8% attrition in 2011-12.⁴ There are currently 310 students on its waitlist.⁵ The school's average attendance rate for school year 2011-12 is 95%.⁶

Because this is only its second year in operation, the school has only received one middle school progress report (in 2010-11), for which it earned an overall grade of A, with B's in Student Progress and Student Performance and an A in School Environment.⁷ The school's test scores have been consistently below district and city average, although they have risen in both ELA and Math. In 2011, 37.7% of students tested as proficient in ELA (compared to 43.9% in the city and 51.6% in the district) and 54.6% in Math (compared to 57.3% in the city and 65.3% in the district). In 2010, 32.3% of students tested as proficient in ELA (compared to 42.4% in the city and 49.3% in the district) and 40.9% in Math (compared to 54% in the city and 61.0% in the district). The school is currently in good standing with regard to state and federal accountability measures.⁸

John W. Lavelle Charter School is an independent charter school not associated with a charter management organization (CMO) or other parent organization. It had previously partnered with the Verrazano Foundation to provide financial management services; however, this partnership ended in 2011 and was codified with a charter revision approved by the NYC DOE in October 2011.

Annual Review Process Overview:

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) office of Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) conducts an annual site visit of charter schools authorized by the NYC DOE. The site visit is designed to address three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization; and is the school in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations? To ascertain matters of sustainability and strategic planning, we also ask about the school's plans for its next charter term. The visits are conducted by representatives of CSAS and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the school leadership team. Afterward, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators and teachers. Areas of evaluation include, but are not limited to: academic goals and mission; curriculum and instruction; school culture and learning environment; assessment utilization; parent engagement; government structures and organizational design; community support; special populations; and safety and security. The site visit is intended to provide a snapshot of the school and reflects what was observed at the time of the visit.

¹ Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (5/10/12)

² NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

³ NYC DOE ATS system, April 2012; the school's self-reported numbers (5/10/12) are similar to those from the ATS system pull: 71% students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (154 out of 218), 2.2% English Language Learners (5 out of 218), and 32.1% special education students (70 out of 218)

⁴ Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (5/10/12)

⁵ Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (5/10/12)

⁶ Self-reported on school's Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form (5/10/12)

⁷ NYC DOE Progress Report webpage: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm>

⁸ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

The following experts participated in the review of this school on May 31, 2012:

- Gabrielle Mosquera, Director of Oversight, NYC DOE CSAS
- Rick Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSAS
- Jessica Fredston-Hermann, Analyst, NYC DOE CSAS
- Dr. Elihu Feldman, Senior Special Education Program Review Specialist, NYC DOE Division of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

Part 2: Findings

Areas of Strength:

- The school has a committed, mission-driven leadership and staff that employ a reflective set of instructional structures, interventions, and classroom features to reach learners at all levels.
 - The school has maintained continuity of leadership and staff over its three years of existence.
 - The school earned an A on its first NYC Progress Report, receiving Bs for Student Growth and Student Performance.
 - The school outperformed city proficiency (Level 3 and above) averages for the grade levels it serves in Math and for Grade 6 in ELA. In addition the Grade 7 Math proficiency levels increased from 40.9% in 2010 as 6th graders to 60.3% in 2011 as 7th graders.
 - The school implemented several ELA supports this year in response to 2010-11 NYS ELA exam results. Three teachers were trained in the Orton-Gillingham program, which serves approximately 30 6th and 7th grade students. Those students whose ELA exam results were in the bottom third of the school's assessment results receive additional help in the forms of Classroom Inc., which meets twice a week, as well as Achieve 3000. Additionally, the school changed its schedule to incorporate the Orton-Gillingham offering into the instructional day, thereby making it accessible to struggling students who also utilize yellow bus service after school. (Students attend during their additional Movement period, which allows them to still meet required PE hours while being able to benefit from this additional support.)
 - Classrooms observed on the day of the visit featured two or more adults working in various levels of collaboration to deliver instruction, resulting in rich opportunities for individual attention and small group instruction.
 - Each student has an Individual Improvement Plan that is coded as red, yellow, or green depending on a student's interim assessment results. Students collaborate with teachers to establish two personal goals related to reading, writing, or math that are calibrated to these colored tiers.
 - The school implemented the Danielson teacher observation model this year and also began using a lesson plan template that specifies planning for paraprofessionals as well as methods of differentiation.
 - The school introduced an 8th grade honors program offering three Regents classes (Living Environment, American History, and Algebra) that included a 25-week field research component covering six life science modules. It also added a Drama program to fulfill the Arts component of its charter as well as to further bolster its ELA support (one Drama teacher is double-certified in ELA).
- The school has cultivated a safe and orderly learning environment.
 - In the majority of classrooms observed, students were on task and responsive to teacher direction. Additionally, the few behavioral incidents observed were quickly addressed and resolved without disruption.
 - The school uses a positive incentive system for discipline that compiles points that students can use toward lunch and other rewards, and this year has begun implementing an in-school suspension policy geared more toward academic intervention than

punishment. Students are given an in-school suspension after four referrals within the span of a month to the school's ACE lunch program, where students sit with a teacher monitor and complete reflective assignments regarding their actions. Parents are notified of every ACE referral, and the school's midwinter PD focused on implementation of the referral process. Teachers interviewed on the day of the visit stated that they employ multiple classroom interventions before making an ACE referral. While the school's suspension numbers have increased from the previous year, school leaders and teachers attribute this to both an increase in incoming students as well as more consistent enforcement of the school's disciplinary and suspension policies.

- The school hired a social worker and Special Education coordinator this year to provide additional behavioral and administrative support. The social worker addition was praised in teacher interviews, with one teacher referring to her as being "a huge benefit" in coordinating with parents and supporting classroom management, while another observed that her ability to peer-mediate between students was so helpful that students themselves were seeking her out for assistance.
- The school has cultivated a strong professional environment with demonstrated continuity and collaboration among its leadership and staff.
 - Interviewed teachers spoke positively about school collaboration, one noting that "Lavelle is unique because it's so collaborative...Professional Development is very supportive and teachers support one another."
 - Interviewed teachers liked the Danielson framework and the system of informal and formal evaluations, one noting that the latter never "feels formal" and another saying they don't "feel scary" but helpful.
 - The school had virtually no teacher attrition from the prior year to the current one.
 - The school has provided leadership opportunities for teachers, with several becoming grade team leaders or assuming other school leadership roles.
- The school has a strong base of parent and community support, and has worked to strengthen its parent communication.
 - The school had a 94% participation rate from parents on its 2010-11 NYC DOE School Survey, and a 100% participation rate from both teachers and students. Further, parents' scores in each category (Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement, and Safety & Respect) ranged from 8.3 to 8.7—well above average. Teacher scores were similarly high across all categories (8.2 to 9.0), although student scores were less so (6.9 to 7.9).
 - The school implemented several communications changes this year in response to parent concerns. These include: a discussion of student progress expectations that begins during registration, when students are assessed for placement; the addition of a "promotion progress" category on student report cards; and weekly robo-calls to all parents/guardians recounting the school's progress that as well as upcoming school events. The school plans to give parents access to the PowerSchool program beginning in September 2012 so they may immediately access homework assignments.
 - The school has established partnerships with several community organizations, including but not limited to: the Staten Island Zoo and Snug Harbor Botanical Garden, which hosts student research projects; the College of Staten Island, Touro College, and Wagner College, St. John's University, and Empire State College, all of which are sources for student teachers and student observers; St. Paul's Nursing School, which (along with Wagner College's nursing program) made improvements to the school's Wellness curriculum; and the YMCA (as mentioned above).
- The school's finances and operational practices appear sound.
 - Despite the costs associated with its move into a private facility and a decline in its number of special education students, at the time of the visit the school had retained a positive cash balance that was consistent with its budget forecast from the beginning of the school year.

- The school has demonstrated continuity in its operational staff.
- The school's move to a private facility appears to have been executed with minimal operational struggle, limited mainly to the realignment of a city bus route that enables it to stop at the school, which was accomplished with support from parents, the community, and local political support.
- The school serves a high-need student population at a rate comparable to, and in some cases higher than, that of its district of location (CSD 31).
 - According to an April 2012 pull of ATS data, the school's student body is comprised of 75.5% students eligible for Free or Reduced-priced Lunch (FRL), compared to 50.8% in CSD 31. It also serves 31.4% students with special needs compared to 19.2% for CSD 5—though this is a decrease from the previous year and should be monitored to ensure it remain above or at district averages.
 - According to the same source, the school's population of English Language Learners (ELLs) is 2.3%, which is slightly lower than, but still comparable, to CSD 31 (5.6% ELLs).

Areas of Growth:

- The school should continue to refine its instructional practices as well as continue its efforts to achieve a consistent level of instructional rigor and differentiation designed to successfully meet the needs of all learners.
 - While the school received an overall A on its Progress Report and Bs for Student Progress and Student Performance, the school's ELA % at Level 3 or above declined from Gr 6 (2010) to Gr 7 (2011), 32.3% to 26.2% and the 2011 7th grade ELA scores were below city averages.
 - All of the school's 2011 grade 6 and 7 Math and ELA proficiency scores were below district averages. The school does serve a more at-risk population than its district (significantly higher percentage of students identified as FRL and with IEPs), but it should continue to build on its success to close the gap between the school and district and between the school's performance and its own charter goals.
 - Classrooms observed on the day of the visit varied in the effectiveness of implementation of the co-teaching model and in their use of differentiation, with some using parallel teaching or other means where both/all adults were actively involved in delivering instruction and providing instructional support and others where one teacher dominated instruction and the other adult(s) watched and waited. Some classes had differentiated learning activities and others were predominantly whole group instruction with all students completing the same activities without variation for different learner needs. The school should continue advancing its co-teaching model, supporting implementation with additional professional development and instructional leadership feedback to teaching teams.
 - Observed classroom discussion were mostly teacher-led with few examples of student to student discussion, some use of cold-calling, higher level questioning, and accountability for evidence or explanation of thinking. Most questions were basic comprehension and lacked follow-up. The school should continue its Backward Design focus on big questions and supporting questioning strategies and practices that engage students in meaningful discussions of the big questions related to their units of study.
 - Other instructional practices, such as regular checks for understanding after instruction or lesson conclusions, and pacing designed to promote efficiency and engagement, were not consistently observed in visited classrooms. The school should continue to use professional collaboration and instructional support structures, including Danielson framework, to establish common expectations and norms for instruction at Lavelle Prep.
 - While some evidence of student use of technology was observed in displays of student work, visitors did not see any instances of students using technology. The school should consider ways that technology can assist in meeting instructional goals.

- The school should continue its work to improve its systems of assessing student progress with greater consistency of implementation.
 - In an effort to build a strong assessment program, the school continues to make adjustments, replacing NWEA MAP with Scantron's assessment system, for example. As it does so the school should be clear to staff and students on the purpose of each assessment, how it supports instruction, and how teachers and students can most effectively use assessment data (formal and informal, formative and summative, standardized and unique to each classroom) to monitor progress, adjust instruction in a timely manner and help all students succeed.
 - Informal assessment practice in classrooms observed on the day of the visit varied in its use of routines such as exit slips and, as noted above, regular and meaningful checks for understanding.
 - The school's practice (mock) assessments are also evolving in response to changes in the state assessment. Whether put together in-house or purchased from a vendor, the assessments should be reliable and useful in identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses for instructional response and helping the school monitor progress toward mastery on state standards.

- The school should continue to focus on building a strong student culture focused on student ownership of learning.
 - While students were largely on-task in observed classrooms, examples of students fully engaged in their learning were not common and some students needed coaxing to participate in assignments and instructional time was lost in these instances until their lack of involvement was noticed by one of the adults in the room.
 - The school has taken a number of actions to involve students more in the life of the school, including extracurricular activities such as sports and a student council, and should continue these efforts and monitor their effectiveness.
 - The school should continue its efforts to create a consistent learning environment. Many observed classrooms had the same or similar signs around behavioral expectations, such as SLANT, but teachers were inconsistent in holding students accountable to these expectations. Although SLANT signs were commonly observed in classrooms, it was just as common to see students slumped in chairs or not heeding instructions to track the speaker.
 - The school should consider additional strategies for getting students to understand and embrace quality, rigorous work. Some hallways included displays of student work, some with rubrics and feedback provided but it is not clear from classroom observations that students knew the difference between completing an assignment and completing it well.
 - The school has continued to make adjustments to its student management processes and routines and has experienced increased suspensions. The school should monitor the impact of its approach, its communication and support, and make any adjustments that support better outcomes for its approach.

- The school should continue its focus on deliberate planning of school and organizational structures as well as ensuring the effectiveness of its communication tools.
 - The school is continuing to expand within its current charter term and is also considering replication options. It is important that the school's board and leadership are thoughtful about growth, school capacity, and the unexpected challenges involved in both expansion and replication so that each supports and doesn't undermine the other.
 - The school has begun curriculum development work for high school grades, identifying needs for facilities (a lab) and framing out a course catalog, as well as aligning middle school program to college ready expectations (8th grade honors and planning on Regents for 8th grade). The school should continue this vital work, developing its curriculum maps and other instructional planning tasks.
 - The Board and school leadership have worked to improve school communications, as noted above, but interviewed teachers noted that communication home often doesn't yield the desired parent participation and that some parents aren't clear on student

progress despite communication. Others indicated it was a challenge to get parent cooperation with IEP referrals. School leadership should continue to work with staff and involved parents to improve effectiveness of home-school communication, including following up on its plans to launch parent access to PowerSchool.

- The school is continuing to build out its private facility and should monitor progress and financial impact as it does so. Interviewed teachers were generally very positive but had a number of suggestions regarding the space and the school should communicate clearly with staff about plans and priorities as it completes this work.
- The school should continue working with all stakeholders to ensure that needs of special education students are being met and that their records are complete and up-to-date.
 - The school has a productive relationship with the local Committee for Special Education (CSE) but must work to get resolution on delayed evaluations and annual reviews and ensure IEPs are updated.

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Part 3: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

The CSO Accountability Framework

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

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

1. Is the School an Academic Success?

1a. High Academic Attainment and Improvement

Schools that are academic successes have many of the characteristics below:

- Meet absolute performance goals established in school charter
- Meet student progress goals established in school charter
- Are closing the achievement gap for at risk students, including special needs and ELL students
- Are surpassing performance of DOE identified peer-schools
- Are surpassing performance district and city proficiency or better averages
- Are meeting other rigorous academic and non-academic goals as stated in school's charter

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

- Grades 3-8 NYS ELA Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 3-8 NYS Math Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 4 and 8 NYS Science Results (absolute performance, individual student progress, comparative performance to similar schools, home district or city averages, progress for at-risk populations)
- Grades 8-12 NYS Regent Exam Results
- When applicable, NYSAA or other approved alternate assessments results
- HS 4- and 6-Year Graduation Rates (absolute and progress, overall, for at-risk student populations)
- Grades 8-12 College Readiness Credit Accumulation
- Percentage of Students Applying to and Being Admitted to College
- Percentage of Students Taking AP Courses and/or Percentage of Students Passing AP Courses
- Results on state accountability measures
- Charter School Academic and Non-Academic Goals
- NYC Progress Reports

1b. Mission and Academic Goals

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

- Have an animating mission statement that staff, students and community embrace
- Set ambitious academic and non-academic goals that entire school community knows and embraces
- Have processes for regular monitoring and reporting on progress toward school goals
- Have processes for adjusting strategies in support of goals as appropriate in response to monitoring data

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

- Mission statement, charter, external documents (parent and family handbooks, school website, etc.)
- Annual reports, school improvement plans, leadership board reports
- Board agendas and minutes
- Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction surveys
- 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 academic culture that creates high academic and behavioral expectations in a way that motivates students to consistently give their best efforts
- Use a comprehensive approach to student management, including positive behavioral expectations and a clear discipline policy to build and sustain a safe, orderly, and supportive classroom environment
- Provide for safe, respectful, efficient transitions, hallways, cafeteria, yard, etc.
- Have classrooms where academic risk-taking and student participation is encouraged and

supported

- Provide opportunities for students to actively engage in their own learning and in the life of the school
- Have a plan with formal or informal structures or programs in place that provide students opportunities to develop as individuals and citizens (for example: a character education, citizenship, or community involvement or service program).

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

- School mission and articulated values
- 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

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

- Safe and secure facilities with no significant compliance concerns with applicable regulations
- Consistently clean annual audits, up-to-date escrow accounts, and have completed all other financial reporting as required
- Boards that meet requirements for size, meeting frequency, public notice, applicable open-meeting and conflict of interest regulations, as well as complying with NYC DOE CSO's requirements for reporting changes in board membership and securing approval for new board members.
- Informed NYC DOE CSO, and where required, received CSO approval for changes in significant partnerships, such as dropping/replacing a management organization
- Effectively engaged parent associations

Evidence for compliance with applicable regulations may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- School or building safety plan; appropriate inspection documents
- Annual audits, escrow accounts, other financial reporting documents
- Board roster, calendar, agenda and minutes, conflict of interest documents, notification of changes/approval of new member request documents
- Charter revision requests, revised or new contracts
- Parent association calendar of meetings, identified officers, parent association agenda and minutes, parent satisfaction survey results
- Interviews

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