



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

**SOUTH BRONX CLASSICAL CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT**

**JUNE 2012**

## Part 1: Executive Summary

### **School Overview and History:**

South Bronx Classical Charter School is an elementary school serving approximately 314 students in grades K-5.<sup>1</sup> The executive director since the school's founding has been Lester Long. The school opened in the fall of 2006 with grades kindergarten through one and is operating under its second charter term, having been renewed in 2011. The school's current charter expires on June 30, 2015. During its current charter the school revised its charter to expand to serve middle school grades, which it will do beginning in the fall of 2013, when it will serve grades K-6. Under the current terms of its charter it will reach K-7 and would expand to K-8 in its next charter term, if approved. The school's Board has also submitted an application for replication to SUNY-CSI, which was at the time of the visit pending approval. The school is currently co-located in a Department of Education (DOE) facility in District 12 at 977 Fox Street in the Bronx.<sup>2</sup>

The school enrolls new students in kindergarten. After the spring 2012 lottery, the school had over 460 students remaining on its waitlist.<sup>3</sup> The student body includes 86.3% Free or Reduced-priced Lunch students, compared to 83% in District 12; 5.4% special education students, compared to 18.3% in the district; and 7.7% English language learners (ELLs), compared to 19% in the district.<sup>4</sup> The average attendance rate to date for the school year 2011-2012 is 95.9%.<sup>5</sup>

The school has received two graded NYC Progress Reports (PRs), receiving a "D" on its 2009-10 PR and an "A" on its most recent PR in 2010-11. At the time of the visit, the school has received results on three NYC DOE School Surveys, receiving Above Average satisfaction ratings in Academic Expectations, Communication, and Safety & Respect and an Average rating in Engagement in 2011. Parent and Teacher participation in 2011 was higher than city-wide averages, with 95% of parents and 100% of teachers completing the survey.<sup>6</sup>

South Bronx Classical Charter School is an independent charter school not associated with a charter management organization (CMO).

### **Annual Review Process Overview:**

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability and Support (CSAS) office 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 the 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.

The following experts participated in the review of this school on June 5, 2012:

- Richard Larios, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSAS
- Debra Schwartzman, Senior Director, NYC DOE CSAS
- Simeon Stolzberg, Consultant to NYC DOE CSAS

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<sup>1</sup> Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 4/1/2012

<sup>2</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

<sup>3</sup> Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 4/1/2012

<sup>4</sup> NYC DOE ATS system as of 4/3/2012

<sup>5</sup> Self-reported by school on Annual Site Visit Data Collection Form dated 4/1/2012

<sup>6</sup> NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

## Part 2: Findings

### Areas of Strength:

- The school has developed a clear, cohesive curriculum and a consistent data-driven approach to instruction.
  - The school has earned a “B” and an “A” on the Student Performance section of its first two NYC Progress Reports.
  - The school’s percentage of students scoring at Level 3 or above on both the NYS ELA and Math assessments significantly exceeded CSD 12 and city-wide averages at their common tested grades 3 and 4 in 2010 and 3, 4 and 5 in 2011.
  - The school met 9 of its 12 charter goals in 2010-11—only one of the three missed goals was academic; the school’s ELA proficiency goal is 80% and only grade 5 exceeded that goal.
  - School leaders and staff have devoted significant time and energy to reviewing and revising the school’s curriculum to align to state and Common Core standards, which they believe has increased the rigor of academic tasks.
  - All courses have scope and sequences and unit plans that guide instructional planning.
  - Regular assessment (see below) is used to monitor academic progress and adjust instruction and curriculum.
  - Leveled text libraries were evident in each classroom to support guided reading, and students were observed engaged with challenging text, such as comparing full Walt Whitman poems in 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes.
  
- The school has a dedicated leadership team and a strongly committed staff.
  - In addition to the Executive Director, the school has a Director of Curriculum and Instruction (DCI) who spends considerable time in classrooms. School leaders and faculty reported frequent observations and feedback. Interviewed teachers were very positive about the quality and helpfulness of feedback from observations, praising the DCI and team leaders.
  - Teacher support is goal-driven and to some degree differentiated. Teachers develop individual professional improvement plans with measurable goals; these goals are inserted into the observation forms used by instructional leaders and thus focus feedback on each teacher’s areas for growth. Formal evaluations are conducted twice per year using a rubric that defines expectations for teacher performance. One interviewed teacher praised the school’s culture as strong and reflective, “We’re never satisfied, always working hard [to improve].”
  - Grade team leaders also provide weekly observations and feedback to their peers and coordinate the instructional planning of each grade level team. They vet curriculum and meet weekly with the school’s Executive Director.
  - The school provides mentoring to support novice teachers. In addition, consultants work to provide general support to teachers and also to develop the leadership capacity of the grade team leaders, some of whom are themselves first or second year teachers.
  
- The school has created a school learning environment conducive to learning.
  - The school is safe and orderly. On the day of the evaluation visit, students were well-behaved and respectful in classrooms and public spaces. They transitioned quietly in hallways and were courteous during classroom interactions.
  - The school has articulated clear expectations for student behavior, as evidenced by numerous posters throughout the school related to rules, character traits and behaviors in a “no excuses” school.
  - The school has devoted significant time to establishing norms for classroom management, which benefits many of the teachers with limited classroom experience. Many teachers effectively used routines and procedures to manage students, such as techniques for gaining attention and transitioning between activities. Students appeared to have internalized these expectations and were consistently compliant with teacher’s directions. There was some

- evidence of students using accountable talk. For instance, some upper grade students began their answers with “You make an excellent point...” or “I disagree because...”
- Throughout the day of the visit most students were on task and many teachers effectively re-directed students if they lost focus. The school is using Doug Lemov’s *Teach Like a Champion* techniques to increase student engagement.
  - The school has a Dean of Students who works with teachers to norm the school culture and develop consistency in discipline. She also is a primary contact between the school and parents.
  - The school has a character education class taught by the Dean of Students that focuses on the school’s Six Pillars: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. The Six Pillars are featured in displays around the school and highlighted in the Family and Student Handbook.
  - The school has a clear discipline system, including color coded stop-light charts in each class and a buddy system for sending misbehaving students to another teacher’s classroom.
- The school has established a data-driven culture.
    - The school administers a wide range of assessments, including Fountas and Pinnell (F&P), Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and TerraNova. Teachers also administer regular interim assessments and unit tests, which are being revised to better align to the curriculum and Common Core Learning Standards.
    - Data is present throughout the school. A “War Room” used by the Executive Director and for teacher team meetings has the following data on its walls: attendance, suspension and tardy rates, DIBELS results from 2010-12, and TerraNova results from 2008-11. Each student’s multiple F&P results from this year is charted by class, which informs intervention levels.
    - Staff indicated that they use assessment results to identify topics and skills for re-teaching and students for various levels of intervention. Data also informed curriculum development and instructional planning. Teachers reported frequent analysis and use of data.
  - The school provides resources to meet the needs of at-risk students.
    - The school has a number of staff members devoted to at-risk students. In addition to a special education teacher, each grade has a learning specialist who provides targeted instruction for students in need of additional support.
    - Some students receive double and triple doses of guided reading and other literacy instruction. A daily “re-teach” period provides an opportunity for teachers to provide targeted supplemental instruction based on assessed need.
    - Services for students with disabilities are primarily provided through pull-out strategies during non-core classes. The school’s Child Study Team meets bi-weekly.
    - The school provides a summer school for students who have not mastered course requirements by the end of the school year.

### **Areas of Growth:**

- The school should continue to work towards meeting its charter goals.
  - The school missed only three of its 12 goals, missing its proficiency goal for ELA, its attendance goal, and its student retention goal.
    - The school had a very strong academic year in 2011 and anticipates positive results this year. It should continue its efforts to improve instruction and monitor progress using its assessment system and make any adjustments based on the 2012 results.
    - Attendance is up to date and the school should continue working with parents and students to ensure its stay at this level to meet the charter goal.
    - The school has a general sense of its student attrition related to a mobile, low-income student population but should work to get a better understanding of it in order to take effective measures to increase retention and meet its charter goal in this area.

- The school should continue its efforts to reach compliance with the amended 2010 NYS charter law requirements related to the enrollment and retention of at-risk student populations, specifically students eligible for free or reduced price lunch (FRL), special education students, and English Language Learners (ELLs). The school should monitor its existing strategies and make any necessary adjustments to reach comparable averages to the district in serving at-risk students.
  - While its FRL enrollment numbers are comparable to CSD 12 averages (86.3% at the school compared to 83% in the district), its enrollment of students with IEPs is below CSD 12 averages with a special education population of 5.4%, compared to CSD 12's average of 18.3%, as is the school's population of ELLs (7.7% at the school compared to the 19% in the district).<sup>7</sup>
  
- The school should continue to develop instructional methods and strategies that engage students in higher-order thinking.
  - Generally, lessons reviewed on the day of the visit were purposeful, most classes were appropriately paced, and students were generally engaged by the learning activities. An exception was the students in one class sitting off to the side, apparently as a result of misbehavior in another teacher's class; though these students had work or reflection assignments, in a number of cases these students were sitting idle and not actively participating in learning.
  - The rigor of instruction observed varied and there were missed opportunities to challenge students with higher-order questions or tasks. In some classes students were expected to explain, expand or use evidence from text to support their answers. On the other hand, while students were expected to write a hypothesis in a science lesson, they were not asked to justify their predications. In another class students were presented with a challenging poem, but the teacher then analyzed it for them rather than letting them grapple with the text.
  - The school differentiates instruction primarily via grouping and intervention programs. For example, guided reading using leveled groups is used extensively. Part of the school's mission is advanced mastery, but there were limited opportunities for higher level students to participate in accelerated instruction.
  
- The school should ensure that its professional development program provides teachers with the pedagogical skills necessary to achieve its mission and goals.
  - The school has a large percentage of relatively novice teachers, and teacher turnover has limited the investment of professional development in staff, especially as a large number of replacements have been novice teachers themselves. The school is beginning to recruit outside of Teach of America (TFA) and seek more experienced teachers.
  - Given the relative inexperience of many of the school's faculty members, the school has focused extensively on developing classroom management techniques and basic procedural pedagogy. Several interviewed teachers noted limited focus on subject-specific pedagogy or strategies for meeting diverse students' needs within the general education classroom. As an exception, a consultant has been providing support for implementation of the guided reading program.
  - Grade team leaders are considered a valuable resource by interviewed teachers and provide ongoing support and feedback to their peers. Consultants are working with them to develop their leadership capacity.
  
- The school should continue to increase the stability of its staff to provide continuity and return on investment in professional development.
  - The school continues to have a generally novice teaching staff with high turnover.
  - The school has relied heavily on TFA, which provides generally competent novice teachers but a short-term commitment to the school. School leaders indicated a future shift in hiring practices to recruit teachers more likely to remain with the school; three of seven hires for next year are not TFA.

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<sup>7</sup> NYC DOE ATS system, data pulled April 2012

- The school continue to build its capacity, through leadership development and recruitment, to support its plans for expansion and replication.
  - At the time of the visit a facility had not been secured for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and the school was considering private space or waiting to add 6<sup>th</sup> grade in 2013-14.
  - The school intends to have two Directors of Curriculum and Instruction, one for elementary school and one for middle school grades. Teachers interviewed were not clear about the plans for, or their roles in, the expansion.
  - The school has applied to open a replication school in 2013-14, but had not yet determined how existing staff would be allocated between the two schools.
  - School leaders indicated their openness to hiring staff for the new school early, giving them time to learn the school model and plan for its opening.

## Part 3: Essential Questions and Accountability Framework

### 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 and Support team (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:

- 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
- Parent association meeting agendas and minutes
- Participation at parent-teacher conferences, school advocacy events, participation in academic goal related programs
- Stakeholder (board, parents, staff, students, etc.) interviews

### **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
- Offer defined opportunities for remediation and acceleration
- Have effective strategies and quality instructional programs for addressing students with special needs and ELLs
- Have defined strategies that they can measure and monitor for closing the achievement gap
- 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
- Use a defined process for evaluating curricular tasks, programs and resources for effectiveness and fit with school mission and goals
- Have school calendars and day schedules that provide the time necessary to deliver on the school's mission and academic 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
- Special Education/ELL progress monitoring documentation
- Interim assessment results
- Student and teacher portfolios
- Data findings; adjusted lesson plans
- Self-assessment documentation
- Professional development plans and resources
- School calendar and daily schedules
- DOE School Surveys and internal school satisfaction surveys
- Instructional leader and staff interviews

## 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
- School calendar and class schedules
- Student management plan (code of conduct, school values, discipline policy, positive incentive system, etc.)
- Student attendance and retention rates
- Student discipline data (referral, suspension, expulsion)
- DOE School Survey student results
- DOE School Survey parent and teacher safety and respect results
- Parent complaint/concern information
- Internal 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:

- Have a clearly articulated governance structure, compliant with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations, with clear lines of accountability for the Board, school leadership and all staff
- Have a capable Board of Trustees with appropriate officers, committees, and a purposeful blend of skills and experiences to provide oversight and strategic direction to fulfill the mission and goals of its charter
- Have a Board that is fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, particularly but not limited to open-meeting laws and conflict of interest regulations, and is fully compliant with its Board approved by-laws (number of meetings, quorum, posting of calendar, agenda and minutes)
- Have a defined process for Board reflection on effectiveness, assessing developing needs, and plan

for professional growth

- Have developed a succession plan for board and school leadership, consistent with the charter and Board by-laws, to ensure continuity of direction and leadership over time 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 and, if and when necessary, makes timely adjustments to that structure with proper notice to and approval by its authorizer
- If applicable, school relationship with a charter management organization is identified in charter and supported by a management agreement that spells out services, responsibilities, accountability reporting, performance expectations, and fees
- Have timely and appropriate access to legal counsel
- Implements a process for recruiting, hiring, compensating, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's staff that is clearly defined in staff handbook
- Have instructional leadership staffing and support structures that holds staff accountable for student learning outcomes and provide regular feedback on instruction to teachers, including both formal and informal observations

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

- School charter
- Board by-laws, roster, trustee resumes, calendar of meetings, meeting agenda and minutes
- Annual conflict of interest forms
- Board resources for evaluating school leadership and staff, including rubric/performance metrics
- Board resources for self-reflection and professional growth
- Board development plan
- Board interviews
- Staff roster, job descriptions, staff handbook, operations manual
- School calendar
- Professional development plan for leadership staff
- School leadership and staff interviews

## **2b. School Climate and Community Engagement**

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

- Create and maintain a healthy professional school climate that is collaborative, student centered, and aligned with school mission and values
- Implement flexible, data-driven approach to professional development for all staff
- Encourage professional conversations about effective performance and quality instruction among staff, through, for example, such means as regular and periodic teaming (grade level teams, data days, etc.) and peer observations
- Have systems in place to evaluate professional development effectiveness and provide ongoing support for school-wide and individual initiatives
- Employ an effective means of measuring and monitoring core constituency satisfaction (parent, staff, and, when age appropriate, student), including, but not limited to, the DOE School Survey
- Have effective home-school communication practices and engagement strategies to ensure meaningful parent involvement in the learning of their children
- Engage parents actively in the life of the school, including advocacy, community engagement, and feedback on school policies and initiatives
- Develop strong community-based partnerships who support and advocate for the school

- Have a clear procedure for parents and staff to express concerns to school leadership and the Board, as appropriate, including a clearly articulated escalation path to authorizer

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
- Internal satisfaction surveys
- Staff handbook
- Student retention and wait list data
- Staff retention data
- School Professional Development Plan and staff feedback on professional development events
- Resources for evaluations and observations, scheduled opportunities for professional collaboration, staff feedback on professional development events
- Leadership, staff, parent, student interviews
- Student and staff attendance rates
- Parent/Student Handbook
- Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences
- Parent association meeting calendar and minutes
- Community partnerships and sponsored programs
- Parent and community feedback via public hearings, renewal calls to parents, etc.
- Community outreach documents (newsletters, announcements, invitations, etc.)

## **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 student enrollment and retention targets
- Maintain annual budgets that meet all short- and long-term financial responsibilities with available revenues
- Provide rigorous oversight of financial and operational responsibilities, as school leadership and Board levels, in a manner that keeps the school's mission and academic goals central to short- and long-term decision-making
- Have clearly established policies and procedures for overall fiscal and operational health of the school (onboarding of all new staff, record-keeping, processing requests of HR services, application and enrollment calls, visitors, volunteers, etc.)
- Maintain effective internal controls of finances to ensure integrity of financial management and a proactive approach to mitigating risk
- Receive consistently clean financial audits
- If applicable, have strong, accountable partnerships with management organizations and other partners and significant vendors to support delivery of charter school design and academic program
- Ensure a safe, clean and appropriately resourced educational facility with all appropriate services specified in charter and mandated by appropriate law and regulations
- Have appropriate insurance coverage

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

- School budget, P&Ls, and monthly/quarterly cash-flow reports
- Financial leader(s) job description, resume and accountability documents
- Financial and operational organizational chart
- Financial audits
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) for significant partnerships and vendor relationships
- Operational policies and procedures, including training resources
- Staff turnover and retention records
- Secure storage areas for student and staff records
- Policies/protocols for maintaining secure records
- Required facility documents (lease, certificate of occupancy, fire and safety inspections, etc.)
- School safety plan
- Appropriate insurance documents

### **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, if appropriate, as modified in approved revisions to their charter, including but not limited to mission, academic program, school organization, grade configuration, enrollment, goals, etc.
- Ensure that up-to-date charter is available on request to staff, parents, and school community
- 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
- Annual Site Visit reports
- Board meetings, agendas and minutes
- Leadership, Board, staff and community interviews
- Public hearings (renewal or material revision hearings)

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

Schools in substantial compliance with federal and state law:

- Meet all legal requirements for Title I and IDEA regulations and reporting

- Meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for FRL, ELL and Special Education students to those of their district of location<sup>8</sup> or are making documented good faith efforts to reach comparable percentages for enrollment and retention
- Implement school policies related to student discipline and promotion and retention that are fully compliant with laws and regulations related to students with disabilities and due process regulations
- Conduct an independently verified fair and open lottery and manage with integrity enrollment process and annual waiting lists
- Employ 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
- Family/Student handbook
- Student discipline records
- Parent complaint/grievance records
- Lottery policy, resources, and records; enrollment procedures and records
- Demographic data (school, district, and other as appropriate)
- Staff roster, fingerprint clearance for all staff, certification status of all instructional staff

### **3c. Applicable Regulations**

Schools in substantial compliance with applicable regulations have:

- 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 NYC DOE CSAS, and where required, received CSAS 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 with Board, staff, parents, students or others, as appropriate

<sup>8</sup> School-specific targets for enrollment and retention are to come from NY State Education Department

## 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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Charter (replication) Application
- 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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- 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:

- Renewal application narrative, including performance results and analyses of the current charter term
- Renewal application revised charter submission, including mission, program description, governance, organization, budget, etc. for new term
- Leadership and board interviews
- Contracts or Memos of Understanding (MOUs) with partners or important vendors