



Charter Schools Accountability and Support
2012-2013

**BROWNSVILLE ASCEND CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

2012 – 2013 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: School Overview & History

School Overview and History

Brownsville Ascend Charter School is an elementary school serving approximately 548 students¹ in grades K-4 during the 2012-13 school year. It opened in 2009-2010, and is under the terms of its first charter. The school's projected full grade span upon renewal and approval is K-12, which it's expected to reach in 2018-2019.² The school is located in private³ facilities in Brooklyn within CSD 23.⁴

The table below details the school's performance on the NYC DOE Progress Report.⁵

Progress Report Grade	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Overall				B
Progress				C
Performance				B
Environment				B
Closing the Achievement Gap				1.7

Brownsville Ascend Charter School enrolls new students in grades K through 4. There were 424 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2012 lottery.⁶ The average attendance rate for the 2012-13 school year to date is 97%.⁷

On the 2011-12 NYC DOE School Survey, the school scored Average on the Safety & Respect section, Average on the Communication section, Average on the Engagement section, and Average on the Academic Expectations section. Eighty-three percent of the school's parents and 96.0% of the school's teachers responded to the survey.⁸

The school's Directors changed mid-year, with former Co-Directors both leaving the school. Kelly Bowers, one of the school's previous Co-Directors, left the school to become Director of Academic Development for Ascend Learning, the management organization that manages Brownsville Ascend. Angela Beal, the second of the two Co-Directors moved out of New York State. Erin Swan-Potras, the school's former Dean of Instruction stepped in as School Director for the remainder of the year. The current Director of Operations, Aaron Daly, has been with the school since August 2012.

Brownsville Ascend is part of Ascend Learning, a Charter Management Organization (CMO). The CMO provides design and support of school program, selection and management of school director, financial management and support, and facilities support. The school pays a fee of 9% of per pupil revenues to the CMO for these services.

¹ Enrollment based on ATS data from 3/8/13.

² NYC DOE internal data.

³ NYC DOE internal data.

⁴ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database.

⁵ NYC DOE Progress Report – <http://schools.nyc.gov/progressreport>

⁶ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/26/13.

⁷ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/26/13.

⁸ NYC DOE School Survey – <http://schools.nyc.gov/survey>

Part 2: Annual Review Process Overview

Rating Framework

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) Charter Schools Accountability & Support Team (CSAS) performs a comprehensive review of each NYC DOE-authorized charter school to investigate 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, CSAS inquires about the school's plans for its next charter term.

This review is conducted by analyzing student performance data and collecting and evaluating school-submitted documents during the 2012-2013 school year. The report outlines evidence found during this review.

As per the school's monitoring plan, CSAS may also conduct a visit to a school. Visits may focus on academic outcomes, governance, organizational structure, operational compliance, fiscal sustainability or any combination of these as necessary.

In addition, a school's charter goals are reviewed. The progress that a school has made towards achieving its goals at this particular point during its charter period is noted. However, as this is an interim review before the end of the charter term, progress towards goals is not used as part of this evaluation.

Essential Questions

Is the school an academic success?

To assess whether a school is an academic success, CSAS 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**. If a school does not yet have a NYC DOE Progress Report, it is rated as 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 Framework⁹.

CSAS also 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 Survey,
- Data collection sheets provided by schools,
- Student, staff, and Board turnover,

⁹ http://www.qualitycharters.org/assets/files/images/stories/pdfs/publications/Performance_Framework_Fall_2012_Draft.pdf, page 38-59

- 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, CSAS identifies areas of compliance and noncompliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Staff Representatives

The following staff representatives participated in the review of this school's documents as detailed above and conducted a financially-focused monitoring visit to the school on April 11, 2013:

- Daree Lewis, DOE
- Maria Campo, DOE
- Jose Castro, NACSA Fellow
- Jorge Cruz, DOE

Part 3: Findings

Summary of Findings

Based on CSAS review, the following findings were made. To date, the school:

- has partially demonstrated academic achievement and progress (pp. 5-7),
- has a partially developed governance structure and organizational design (p. 8),
- has partially developed a stable school culture (p. 8),
- is in a weak position to meet near-term financial obligations, but is financially sustainable based on current practices (p. 9),
- is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others (p. 10),
- has plans to continue adding one grade per year, should it be renewed and expansion approved, until it becomes a K-12 school (p.11).

This review included a desk audit, a self-evaluation completed by the school, a financially-focused visit by CSAS staff, and follow up communication via phone and email. CSAS visited the school on April 11, 2013.

Essential Question 1: Is the School an Academic Success?

To date, Brownsville Ascend Charter School has partially demonstrated academic achievement and progress.

- The school has one year of New York State (NYS) assessment data at the time of this report.
- The school received an Overall grade of B on its latest NYC DOE Progress Report, with a C in Student Progress and a B in Student Performance.
- In 2011-2012, the percentage of students in its tested grade (3rd) scoring a level 3 or 4 on the NYS assessments was 59.3% on the ELA assessment and 73.6% on the Math assessment.
- The school's overall proficiency scores were above its district of location, CSD 23, by 30.8 percentage points in ELA and by 43.6 percentage points in Math.
- In 2011-2012, the school earned 1.7 points for the Closing the Achievement Gap section on its NYC DOE Progress Report.

Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals¹⁰

- According to its 2011-2012 Annual Report to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), of the school's 10 academic performance goals identified in its charter, the school met 2, partially met 1, did not meet 2, and 5 were not applicable due to the fact that it was the school's first year of testing and only included one grade.

Based on document review, the following was noted:

- The school is part of Ascend Learning, Inc. a charter management organization (CMO). As such, Brownsville Ascend works with other schools in its network to share best practices.
 - The school, through its affiliation with the CMO, partners with SABIS which provides the curriculum and related resources, such as pacing guides, scope and sequence maps, and student materials.
- The school uses SABIS internal assessments to measure academic growth. The school's primary goal is to have student scores average 85% and higher on their SABIS periodic exams. As of March 2013, the school reported that averages on SABIS ELA and Math assessments were:
 - Grade 1: ELA- 85%, Math- 85%,
 - Grade 2: ELA- 85%, Math- 83%,
 - Grade 3: ELA- 82%, Math- 90%,
 - Grade 4: ELA- 93%, Math- 77%.

¹⁰ Goal analysis is considered a neutral point and is not used as part of the evaluation.

Brownsville Ascend Charter School

Percent of Students Scoring Level 3/4 - Whole School

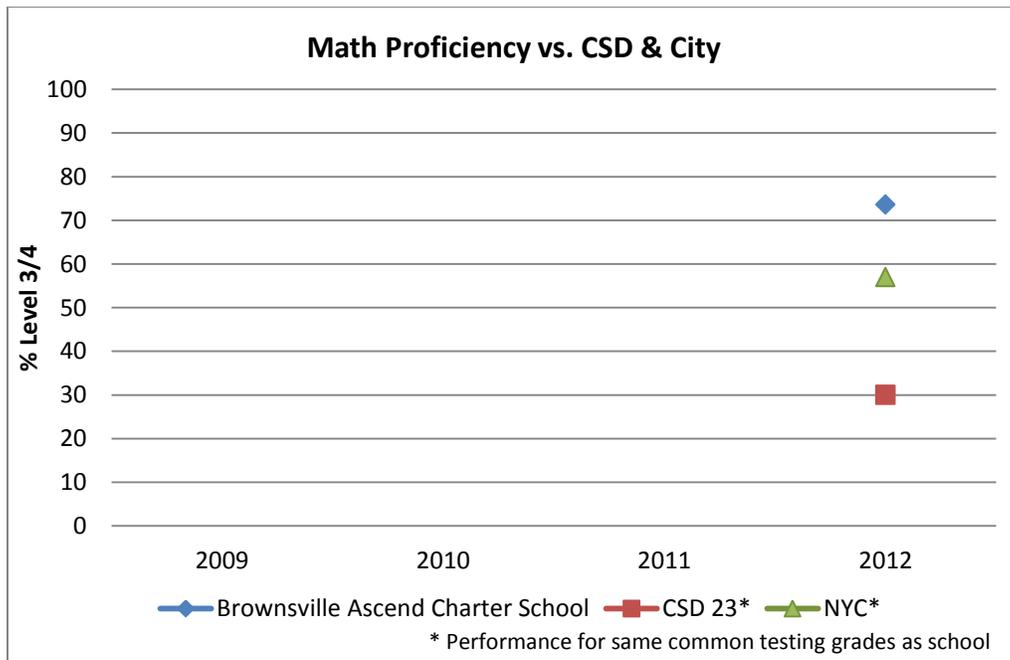
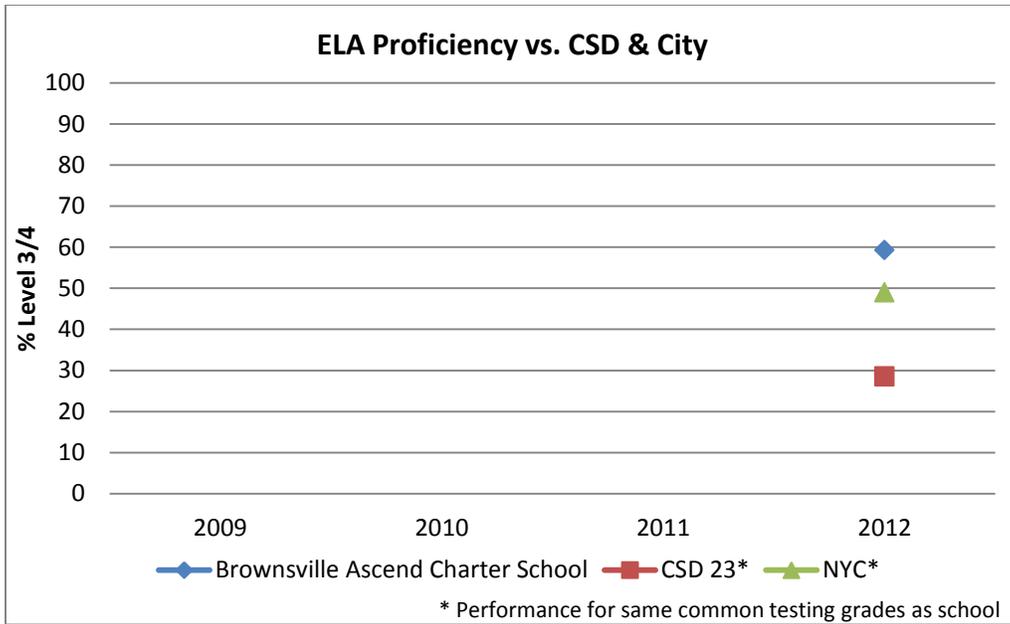
<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Brownsville Ascend Charter School				59.3
CSD 23*				28.5
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Brownsville Ascend Charter School				73.6
CSD 23*				30.0

*CSD data represents common testing grades only for all years presented

Percent of Students Scoring Level 3/4 - By Grade

Grade 3

<u>ELA</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Brownsville Ascend Charter School				59.3
CSD 23*				28.5
<u>Math</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Brownsville Ascend Charter School				73.6
CSD 23*				30.0



Essential Question 2: Is the School a Fiscally Sound, Viable Organization?

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

To date, the Board of Trustees has a partially developed governance structure and organizational design.

- The Board has been stable in membership and leadership, with the Board Chair having been with the school since its founding. The school currently has five members, in keeping with the number of Board Members required by the Board bylaws.
- The Board has not had any turnover in Board members since last school year.
- At the time of the visit, the school was on track to meet the minimum number of board meetings, six, as stated in their bylaws.
- The Board votes consistently demonstrating a quorum, as recorded in the Board meeting minutes.
- Currently, officer positions, as outlined in the Board's bylaws, are filled.
- There are clear lines of accountability between Board and school leadership, as evidenced by the school's organization chart and school leadership's updates on academic performance to the Board and its committees, as recorded in Board meeting minutes.
- It is not clear from the Board meeting minutes if the Board has active committees, as outlined in the bylaws.
- The Board has inconsistently provided CSAS with submission of accountability reporting documents, including its annual report and financial audits, as well as Board minutes.

School Climate & Community Engagement

To date, the school has partially developed a stable school culture.

- The school has experienced leadership turnover with both co-directors departing mid-year. As noted previously, one of the school's co-directors was promoted to the school's management organization.
- Instructional staff turnover was 37%, with 13 out of 35 instructional staff choosing not to return this school year from last year. To date, during this school year, four teachers have left and one has been let go.
- Student turnover was 2% from last school year to the beginning of this school year. Student enrollment was 536 at the beginning of the year and 546 at the time of the visit.
- On its 2011-2012 NYC DOE School Survey, Brownsville Ascend Charter School, compared to elementary schools citywide, received Average in all four sections: Academic Expectations, Communication, Engagement, and Safety & Respect.
- The school's survey participation results were above citywide averages for all constituencies surveyed, parents (83% to 53%) and teachers (96% to 82%).

Progress Towards Attainment of Accountability Goals¹¹

- The school has maintained an average daily student attendance rate of 97%, as of the date of the visit, which is higher than their stated charter goal of maintaining an average daily student attendance rate of at least 95%.

¹¹ Goal analysis is considered a neutral point and is not used as part of the evaluation.

Financial Health

Overall, to date, the school is in a weak position to meet near-term financial obligations but is financially sustainable based on current practices.

Based on the school's 2011-2012 Audited Financial Statements:

- The school is not in a position to meet all of its liabilities in the next 12 months.
- The school can cover less than two weeks of operating expenses without an infusion of cash.
- The school is meeting its enrollment target.
- The school is currently meeting its debt obligations.
- The school is operating at a surplus.
- The school's debt-to-asset ratio indicates that it has more assets than it has liabilities.
- The school has a cash flow that has trended upward over the past three years.
- An independent audit performed showed no material findings.

Based on document review and an interview during the April 11, 2013 visit to the school, the following was noted:

- School leadership reported that the school's upfront construction cost affiliated with the new leased facility, caused a financial strain but the school will be in a better position as enrollment increases.

Essential Question 3: Compliance with Charter and All Applicable Laws and Regulations

To date, the school is in compliance with some applicable laws and regulations, but not others.

The Board is in compliance with:

- The Board's membership size falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws.
- All Board members have submitted financial disclosure forms, included in the school's 2011-2012 Annual Report, and do not demonstrate conflicts of interest.
- The Board has held its minimum number of Board meetings of six meetings annually, holding three as of January 2013, as outlined in its Board bylaws.

The school is in compliance with:

- The school has submitted required documentation for staff-fingerprint clearance and all staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.
- The school has the required number of staff with AED-CPR certification.
- The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents.
- The school provided required safety plan.

The school is out of compliance with:

- The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification but is not compliant with the Charter Schools Act requirements for teacher certification. Twelve out of 39 teachers are not highly qualified.
- The school has not met the required threshold established by the NYC Department of Health of 98.8%, coming short at 98.3%.
- The school has not submitted required accountability document submissions to CSAS on a timely basis.

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 about the school's plans for the next charter term:

- Brownsville Ascend Charter School will be adding middle school grades with the intention of eventually reaching its full grade span of a K-12 school, upon renewal and approval.
- School leadership is in search of additional leadership and instructional staff to support their continued growth. The school has already brought on Erica Murphy, as School Director for the Lower School.

Part 4: 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 & 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:

- 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:

- 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 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

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 NYCDOE 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

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