



Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships
2013-2014

**BRONX COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

2013 – 2014 SCHOOL YEAR

Part 1: School Overview

School Information for the 2013-2014 School Year

Name of Charter School	Bronx Community Charter School
Board Chair(s)	Ariel Behr
School Leader(s)	Martha Andrews and Sasha Wilson
Management Company (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 10
Physical Address(es)	3170 Webster Avenue, Bronx 10467
Facility Owner(s)	Private

School Profile

- Bronx Community Charter School (Bronx Community) is an elementary school, which served 312 students¹ in grades K-5 during the 2013-2014 school year. It opened in 2008-2009 and is under the terms of its second charter.
- The school is located in privately operated facilities in the Bronx within Community School District (CSD) 10.²
- Bronx Community enrolls new students in grades K-5.³ There were 250 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2013 lottery.⁴ The average attendance rate for the 2013-2014 school year to date as reported in February 2014 was 94.9%.⁵
- Bronx Community was renewed during the 2012-2013 school year and granted a short-term renewal (two years) with conditions, and is consistent with the terms of its renewal application. The conditions of renewal included:
 - Score C or better in each of the years of the new charter on the Overall Progress Report grade, Student Progress, and Student Performance grades on the Progress Report.⁶
 - Equal or surpass CSD proficiency levels in Math and ELA in testing grades of grade to grade comparisons (e.g., 3rd grade to 3rd grade) during new charter term.
 - If above goals are met during the term, the school can apply to move forward with middle school expansion.
- The school leadership team includes Martha Andrews, Co-Director; Sasha Wilson, Co-Director; and Jeannine King, Director of Student Support. The Co-Directors have been with the school since 2008.
- Bronx Community had a student to teacher ratio of 12:1 in the 2013-2014 school year, and served two sections across all grades 1-5 and three sections of kindergarten, with an average class size of 25.⁷
- The lottery preferences for Bronx Community's 2013-2014 school year included the New York State Charter Schools Act required preferences of returning students, students residing in the community school district of the school's location, siblings of students already enrolled in the charter school, as well as English Language Learners.⁸

¹ Enrollment reflects ATS data from 10/31/13.

² NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Management System database.

³ Self-reported information from school's 2013-14 lottery application.

⁴ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/20/14.

⁵ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/20/14.

⁶ Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, the NYC DOE Progress Report will be replaced with the NYC DOE School Quality Report. The School Quality Report is not graded.

⁷ Self-reported information given on 9/24/14.

⁸ Bronx Community Charter School's 2013-2014 lottery application.

Part 2: Summary of Findings

Essential Question 1: Is the school an academic success?

Overview of School-Specific Data through 2012-2013

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

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Bronx Community Charter School	-	29.4%	39.0%	21.1%
CSD 10	-	37.7%	38.8%	17.6%
Difference from CSD 10	-	-8.3	0.2	3.5
NYC	-	48.1%	50.6%	28.0%
Difference from NYC	-	-18.7	-11.6	-6.9
New York State	-	54.8%	55.2%	31.2%
Difference from New York State	-	-25.4	-16.2	-10.1

% Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Bronx Community Charter School	-	35.3%	47.0%	21.8%
CSD 10	-	45.6%	51.9%	21.4%
Difference from CSD 10	-	-10.3	-4.9	0.4
NYC	-	54.8%	61.3%	32.7%
Difference from NYC	-	-19.5	-14.3	-10.9
New York State	-	64.6%	65.7%	28.9%
Difference from New York State	-	-29.3	-18.7	-7.1

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

Performance on the NYC Progress Report

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade	-	C	D	B
Student Progress	-	F	F	B
Student Performance	-	F	D	C
School Environment	-	A	A	A
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	-	0.0	1.7	1.7

Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals

- According to its 2012-2013 Annual Report to New York State Education Department (NYSED), Bronx Community fully met five of the 13 academic performance goals identified in its charter and did not meet eight of these goals.
 - However, the school made substantial progress toward meeting two of these eight unmet academic goals.

Responsive Education Program & Learning Environment⁹

- The school continues to follow the action plan to raise student achievement that it constructed during its 2012-2013 renewal process. The plan contains many actions that support three main academic aims: fostering a culture of high expectations and accountability, sharpening the school's focus on data, and implementing instructional shifts in literacy.
- In 2013-2014, the school began using assessments from The Achievement Network (A-Net). School leadership stated that while the assessments primarily provide a platform for increased student exposure to rigorous questions grounded in the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), they additionally provide instructors with insight into how students translated what they learned into a standardized test format. After each assessment, school leadership analyzes data across grade levels, sets priorities for next steps, and facilitates teacher use of the data. School leaders report that the majority of Bronx Community students demonstrated growth over the course of all A-Net assessments.
- In 2013-2014, the school developed specific and measureable individual learning goals for students following each assessment period. These goals are communicated to families and students in their narrative progress reports and during family conferences twice a year. Families, students, and teachers plan for how each party will support the student to achieve his or her goal.
- The school added an additional non-fiction reading period to daily classroom schedules in order to build student stamina in reading non-fiction texts.
- Kindergarten and first grade began using the Wilson Foundations program to incorporate daily phonics work into ELA instruction, which school leaders report as having a substantial impact on students' decoding skills.
- In 2013-2014, the school's intervention team was comprised of K-2 and 3-5 literacy teachers, K-2 and 3-5 math teachers, a full-time ELL teacher, and a full-time speech pathologist. The school tracks the progress of students in these flexible intervention groups with both internal assessments and A-Net tests.
- As of February 2014, the school ratified a contract between its instructional staff and the United Federation of Teachers. Board members and school leaders were involved in negotiations towards this contract since the Spring of 2013. The school states that these negotiations were both collaborative and positive and did not involve changes to teachers' hours or responsibilities. The contract codifies a teacher salary scale.
- In 2013-2014, the school's Co-Directors began working with a leadership and data coach to revise and refine use of data at school, deepen the Board's understanding of how and why the school uses data, and develop a data dashboard reporting tool that the Board can readily access.

Representatives of the NYC DOE visited the school on June 3, 2014. Based on discussion, document review, and observation, the following was noted:

- School leadership reported:
 - The school hired a data manager in 2013-2014 to help analyze formative and interim assessment results and build systems for their use in instruction.
 - The school incorporated EngageNY modules into its existing curriculum to address specific needs highlighted by assessment data.
 - The school now presents a data dashboard that covers A-Net and F & P results to its Board as part of meetings. School leaders stated that the Board has become much more actively engaged in data analysis than it had been in prior school years.
 - For the first time, the school began analyzing student data during its summer professional development session. This analysis focused on student growth throughout school year 2012-2013 and helped determine which students would receive tutoring at the start of the 2013-2014 school year.
 - The school retained all of its upper grade (3-5) teachers from 2012-2013 and sees this as evidence that it has succeeded in securing teacher buy-in by balancing its new focus on

⁹ Self-reported information from school-submitted self-evaluation form on 2/14/14.

- academic data with its foundational approach of inquiry- and workshop-based learning that actively engages students.
- The school maintained a budget surplus in 2013-2014 despite moving into a new, privately owned building.
 - Because Bronx Community did not expand to serve middle school grades in 2013-2014 as it had originally intended, the Board was able to allocate financial resources toward lowering class sizes in grades 3-5 from 25 students to an average of 22 to 23 students per class. The school plans to serve 24 students per class in the 2014-2015 school year.
 - Four classrooms in grades K, 3, 4, and 5 ELA and math were observed by members of the visit team and the following was noted:
 - Classes ranged in size from 19 to 23 students and all were co-taught by two instructors. Instructional methods observed included questioning, lead and assist, lead and monitor, parallel teaching, and team teaching.
 - In most classrooms checks for understanding largely consisted of questioning, observation, and class work, although peer review was also observed. The level of questioning in most classrooms ranged from challenging students to demonstrate understanding of concepts through explanation to challenging students to synthesize and evaluate the information taught.
 - Based on debriefs with instructional leaders after classroom visits, most classrooms had instruction that was aligned to the school's instructional model and current academic priorities.

Essential Question 2: Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?

Governance Structure & Organizational Design

After reviewing information and documentation concerning Board turnover, Board minutes, reporting structure, organizational chart, annual accountability reporting documents, Board agendas, and the school's website, the NYC DOE notes the following:

- The Board has six board members, all voting. The Board chair, Ariel Behr, joined the Board in 2009.
- As evidenced from a review of Board rosters, the Board lost one member during 2013-2014.
- As recorded in the Board's minutes, there is a clear reporting structure with school leadership providing regular updates on academic, financial, and operational performance to the Board and its committees.
- Board minutes have been provided via the school's website for inspection by the public.

School Climate & Community Engagement

After reviewing information and documentation concerning leadership turnover, staff turnover, attendance rate, student turnover, NYC School Survey results and response rates, and PTO meetings, the NYC DOE notes the following:

- The school did not experience leadership turnover in 2013-2014.
- The school experienced 13% instructional staff turnover from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014, with four out of 30 instructional staff choosing to leave the school and none not having been asked to return.
- As of February 2014, average daily attendance for students during that school year was at 94.9%, which is lower than the school's charter goal of at least 95%.¹⁰
- Student turnover was 2.6% of students from the prior school year not returning at the start of the 2013-2014 school year, and 1.3% of students left the school between the start of the school year and February 2014.¹¹
- The school reported having a parent-teacher Community Council, as evidenced on its website.

2012-2013 NYC School Survey Results¹²

Categories	Result		Community	Response Rate	Citywide Rate
Academic Expectations	Above Average		Parents	87%	54%
Communication	Above Average		Teachers	91%	83%
Engagement	Above Average		Students	N/A	83%
Safety & Respect	Above Average				

¹⁰ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.

¹¹ Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.

¹² Results are particular to the school type as identified in the 2013 School Survey.

Financial Health

Near-term financial obligations:

- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's current ratio indicated a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school had sufficient unrestricted cash to cover its operating expenses for at least two months without an infusion of cash.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2013-2014 budget to the actual enrollment as of the end of the school year revealed that the school met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY13 financial audit, the school is meeting its debt obligations.

Financial sustainability based on current practices:

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

Annual Independent Financial Audit

- An independent audit performed showed no material findings.

Based on document review and an interview during the June 3, 2014 visit to the school, the following was noted:

- The school moved into a new private facility during the 2013-2014 school year. The increased building expenses are in line with school projections.

Essential Question 3: Compliance with charter and all applicable laws and regulations?

After a review of documentation submitted for the NYC DOE annual accountability reporting requirements for the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE finds the following:

Board Compliance

The Board is out of compliance with:

- The Board's membership size falls outside of the range of no fewer than seven and no greater than 17 members, as outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws.
- The Board held 10 meetings with quorum in 2013. This complies with the number of Board meetings outlined in its bylaws (a minimum of 10 per year), but does not meet the minimum established in charter law, which requires monthly meetings of the school's Board of Trustees (12 per calendar year).0
- Currently, officer positions outlined in the Board's bylaws are filled, with the exception of the Vice-Chair position.

School Compliance

The school is in compliance with (as reviewed during May 2014):

- 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 to the NYC DOE.
- The school has submitted its required immunization documentation and is in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization.
- The school had an application deadline of April 1, 2014 and lottery date of April 8, 2014 adhering to charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1.
- A school leader was trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.
- The school has posted its 2012-2013 NYSED Annual Report and annual audit to its website, as specified in charter law.

The school is out of compliance with:

- The school did not provide data related to required documentation for teacher certification among its 2013-2014 instructional staff.

Essential Question 4: What are the school's plans for the next charter term?

As reported by the school's leadership, the following is noted:

- School leadership reported that it continues to consider extending its grade span to K-8 in its next prospective charter term, but the Board will make a final decision before the school prepares its renewal application.

Enrollment and Retention Targets

As a reminder regarding accountability in the next charter term:

- Amendments to Article 56 of the New York State Consolidated Laws: Education, which relates to Charter Schools, call for charter schools, as a consideration of renewal, "to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets" for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program. The amendments further indicate "Repeated failure to comply with the requirement" as a cause for revocation or termination of the charter.
 - The law directs schools to demonstrate "that it has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students" in the event it has not yet met its targets.
 - The NYC DOE, as authorizer, will annually monitor the school's performance against these targets and the efforts it makes to meet this state requirement.
- In the 2013-2014 school year, Bronx Community Charter School served lower percentages of students with disabilities and English Language Learner students compared to CSD 10 and citywide averages. The school served a higher percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch than the citywide average but a lower percentage compared to the CSD 10 average.

Special Populations

	Free and Reduced Price Lunch					Students with Disabilities					English Language Learners				
	2009 -2010	2010 -2011	2011 -2012	2012 -2013	2013 -2014	2009 -2010	2010 -2011	2011 -2012	2012 -2013	2013 -2014	2009 -2010	2010 -2011	2011 -2012	2012 -2013	2013 -2014
	School	75.8%	79.4%	71.3%	80.3%	84.9%	7.4%	9.7%	13.2%	13.9%	12.8%	4.7%	4.0%	4.9%	7.8%
CSD 10	76.4%	78.9%	79.8%	80.9%	85.5%	19.0%	18.8%	18.0%	18.7%	20.0%	24.4%	24.4%	24.3%	23.2%	22.4%
NYC	62.1%	65.3%	68.1%	69.8%	73.5%	15.9%	15.9%	15.7%	16.1%	17.1%	16.1%	16.1%	15.5%	15.0%	14.7%

Additional Enrollment Information					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grades Served	K-2	K-3	K-4	K-5	K-5
CSD(s)	10	10	10	10	10

Comparisons to both the CSD(s) and City are made against students in grades K-8, 9-12 or K-12 depending on the grades the school served in each school year. Special population figures are as of October 31 for each given school year, with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.