



Charter School Annual Site Visit Report
Charter School Office
2009-2010

CONEY ISLAND PREPARATORY
CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

MARCH 2010

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Coney Island Preparatory Charter School is a Middle and High School school serving approximately 88 fifth grade students in the 2009-2010 school year.¹ The school opened in 2009 with fifth grade. It has plans to grow to serve students grades five through twelve.² It is currently housed in 2315 Surf Avenue, Brooklyn, New York in District 21.³

The school population comprises 39.8% Black, 26.1% Hispanic, 28.4% White, and 5.7% Asian students. 76.1% of students are designated at Title I.⁴ The student body includes 5.6% English language learners and 28.1% special education students. Boys account for 47.2% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52.8%.⁵

The school is in its first year of operation and has not yet received a state/federal accountability designation.

Annual Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter School Office conducts an annual site visit of New York City Department of Education authorized charter schools in order to assess three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a viable organization; and is the school in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The visits are conducted by representatives of the New York City Department of Education Charter School Office Accountability Team and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the principal and school leadership team. Subsequently, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. 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 following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Robert Galli, Education Consultant, Charter School Office
- Tyler Whittenberg, Analyst-Charter School Accountability, Charter School Office

¹ NYC DOE ATS system

² NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

³ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

⁴ Demographic Data drawn from NYC DOE ATS System; Title I percentage from 2008 NY State Report Cards

⁵ Student Demographic data is inputted by school staff into the ATS enrollment database and summarized by NYC DOE staff.

Part 2: Findings

What the school does well

- The school provides several structures to accelerate all students (general education, special needs and English Language Learners) beyond grade level.
 - Students participate in an extended school day and year.
 - Classes begin at the end of August and last until the end of June.
 - The regular day begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m.
 - This represents 42% more learning time over traditional public schools.
- A college preparatory mission and vision is heavily emphasized.
 - The first day of school for 5th graders was focused on students beginning their college journey.
 - College readiness skills are incorporated into daily classroom activities and units of study.
 - Test preparation, performance based instruction and several internal assessments maintain the school's focus on student progress and achievement.
 - With a 5-12 grade structure, the school promotes the importance of transitioning from elementary to middle to high school and then a natural extension of graduation into college.
 - Classroom activities promote higher order thinking skills. Student tasks require critical thinking which promotes high expectations. These activities include Total Recall, Pride Day, Spelling Bee, Pride Dollars and Personal Student Growth Charts.
- The school fosters a safe and comfortable learning environment which encourages academic success.
 - Exit and entry areas are staffed with security personnel who request appropriate identification.
 - Students are provided with bright, structured classrooms coupled with school-wide behavioral and dress code expectations that are uniformly enforced.
 - Behavioral expectations are made explicit by the posting of Kohlberg's *Six Levels of Moral Development* in all classrooms.
 - A noise meter is displayed in all classrooms to ensure proper student behavior in all activities and to teach students how to monitor their own behavior.
- The school culture supports a consistent academic approach to teaching and learning.
 - Instructional strategies are tailored to the educational needs of students
 - Individual and daily tutoring sessions are provided to students who need additional support.
 - Small group instruction sessions are utilized to reinforce reading skills.
 - Wilson Reading Program is used to improve reading comprehension skills for students performing below grade level.
 - Classrooms contain wall postings and libraries to enhance the school's curriculum: wall hangings remind students of processes of familiar academic tasks: literary analysis of characterization and story structure, mathematical diagrams, number functions and pivotal questioning techniques.
- School maintains a connection to parents and community leaders.
 - Parents receive a weekly checklist on student progress.
 - Parents can log on to *Teacher Ease* from home for up to date information on student progress and assignments.
 - Family workshops are offered during the year.
 - A structured process is in place to resolve parental concerns.
 - Parents have easy access to contact teachers (cell phone, e-mail).

- Local leaders are invited to school functions and meetings.
- The school is in good financial condition and maintains appropriate internal controls.
 - The school possesses \$707,097 in current assets and \$224,049 in current liabilities at the time of this review.
 - The school has stable enrollment and a positive projected cash flow for June 2010.
 - The school exercises appropriate internal controls of its financial systems.
- The school board is providing adequate and balanced oversight.
 - The Board and school leaders have worked seamlessly during challenging times regarding school facilities.
 - Board gets adequate reporting and data to have meaningful dialogue at board meetings.
 - Board is working on recruiting additional board members with real estate expertise.

What the school needs to improve

- Involving parents in the mission of the school through the Family Partners in Education needs continued development. This development would be enhanced by developing more strategies to increase parental involvement. This could include offering workshops to parents that are responsive to their needs as well and encouraging parents to participate in classroom activities.
- To further support and ensure high academic achievement for all students, school can develop additional ways to differentiate instruction.
 - In classes visited, students were not observed working in groups to solve problems or asked to share multiple perspectives. In addition, students were not asked to demonstrate higher order thinking by presenting projects both individually and in groups.
 - Students were not observed drawing conclusions based upon evidence and were not required to demonstrate their understanding through extended writing (research a topic, prepare a report, share ideas) which would support the development of analytical thinking skills.
- Continue expanding the school's Board's roster and committee structure to diversify skill sets and delegate tasks to committees.

Part 3: Framing Questions

FRAMING QUESTIONS:

Throughout the Renewal Process and the life of each school's charter, the NYCDOE Charter School Office uses the following framing questions to monitor Charter School success:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
2. Has the School Been a Viable Organization?
3. Has the School Been in Compliance with All Applicable Laws and Regulations?

Annual Site Visit Rubric:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
 - Academic Goals and Mission
 - School components and curriculum align together and holistically support the mission
 - School has high academic expectations and employs strategies for the full range of students served by the school, including those at risk and those with special needs
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - The educational plan is flexible and is adjusted to meet the performance levels and learning needs of all enrolled students
 - School implements programming to address the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs
 - Teachers demonstrate the use of differentiated instructional techniques to support the varying ways by which students learn
 - School has implemented programming for students who need remediation or acceleration
 - School Culture
 - The culture is strong, intentional, supportive and sustainable and promotes student learning
 - The school motivates all students and respects the diversity of learners and cultures in the community
 - School offers programs, activities or support services beyond academics to address students' social and emotional needs
 - School calendar and day are set to provide extra supports to ensure that students are able to meet and exceed academic goals
 - Schedule for communication to parents/students is timely and allows for due process, includes strategies to prepare students for transitions and strategies for those students who are not on schedule, presents a clear and fair system that complies with students' due process rights
 - Structures that foster the development of authentic, sustained, caring, respectful relationships among all stakeholders within school
 - Behavioral expectations and social supports that reflect the school's mission and comply with all applicable laws and regulations
 - Assessment
 - Establishes a culture of continuous improvement and accountability for student learning
 - Develops assessments that shape and inform instruction on an ongoing basis and develop data that's used to gauge student, teacher and school progress through formative and summative assessment
 - Student learning measured with multiple forms of assessments/metrics
 - Develops educational goals and performance metrics that are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission and Time-Specific
 - Develops assessments that are appropriately aligned with curriculum, instruction, and adopted standards

- Provides evidence of how data will influence instruction, professional development and curricular adjustments
 - Parent Engagement
 - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
 - Capacity to communicate effectively with parents and families
 - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
2. Is the School a Viable Organization
- Governance Structures and Organizational Design
 - School has articulated appropriate roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structure for school community members (including Board of Trustees and school leadership)
 - An accountability structure that provides effective oversight of the educational program and fiscal components of the school is in place and utilized
 - Board regularly reviews a data dashboard of student achievement and fiscal management that forms the basis for Board discussions and decisions
 - Board has diverse skill set that lends itself to strong educational / operational oversight
 - Board has an articulated process for ongoing policy development, Board member development and self-evaluation
 - Organizational charts are aligned with mission; roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
 - Board has developed essential strategic partnerships with organizations that support the mission of the school
 - Community Support
 - School Leadership demonstrated responsiveness to the unique needs and interests of the community to be served
 - School has established a presence in the community and has buy in from community members
3. Is the School in Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations
- Special Populations
 - Well-defined plan and sufficient capacity to service the learning needs of Special Education students, English Language Learners
 - School adequately addresses the academic and non academic needs of students in need of remediation, students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and gifted students
 - There is a coherent plan for meeting the non-academic needs of students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and other populations
 - School employs a process to identify students at risk of not meeting expectations and creates intervention plans and follow up
 - School demonstrates a comprehensive recruitment, enrollment and retention approach that is sensitive to the diverse needs of students
 - School admission policy and lottery preferences serve to create a student body that reflects community demographics and give a preference to community school district residents
 - Safety and Security
 - School is well maintained
 - Transitions and student gatherings are orderly and well supervised
 - Expectations for student behavior are well known and are enforced fairly
 - School is current with all safety recruitments and drills.
 - AED machines are in operation and school staff is trained in CPR