



Charter Schools Institute  
*The State University of New York*

# Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls

---

## School Evaluation Report 2010-11

Visit Date: February 17, 2011

Report Issued: July 8, 2011

Charter Schools Institute  
State University of New York  
41 State Street, Suite 700  
Albany, New York 12207  
518/433-8277, 518/427-6510 (fax)  
<http://www.newyorkcharters.org>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT .....	3
SCHOOL OVERVIEW .....	4
SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT .....	6
Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence	
Conduct of the Visit.....	11
APPENDIX A: RENEWAL BENCHMARKS USED DURING THE VISIT.....	13

## INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (“SUNY Trustees”), jointly with the New York State Board of Regents, are required by law to provide oversight sufficient to ensure that each charter school that the SUNY Trustees have authorized is in compliance with applicable law and the terms of its charter. The SUNY Trustees, however, consistent with the goals of the Charter Schools Act of 1998, view their oversight responsibility more broadly and positively than purely monitoring compliance. Accordingly, they have adopted policies that require the Charter Schools Institute (“the Institute”) to provide ongoing evaluation of SUNY authorized charter schools. By providing this oversight, the SUNY Trustees and the Institute seek to accomplish three goals:

- **Document Performance.** The Institute collects information to build a database of a school’s performance over time. By evaluating the school periodically, the Institute can more clearly ascertain trends, determine areas of strength and weakness, and assess the school’s likelihood for continued success or failure. Having information based on past patterns, the Institute is in a better position to make recommendations regarding the renewal of each school’s charter, and the State University Trustees are better informed in making a decision on whether a school’s charter should be renewed. In addition, a school will have a far better sense of where they stand in the eyes of its authorizer.
- **Facilitate Improvement.** By providing substantive information about the school’s academic, fiscal and organizational strengths and weaknesses to the school’s board of trustees, administration, faculty and other staff, the Institute can play a role in helping the school identify areas for improvement.
- **Disseminate Information.** The Institute disseminates information about the school’s performance not only to its board of trustees, administration and faculty, but to all stakeholders, including parents and the larger community in which the school is located.

This annual School Evaluation Report includes three primary components. The first section, titled Executive Summary of School Evaluation Visit, provides an overview of the primary conclusions of the evaluation team regarding the current visit to the school, summarizing areas of strength and areas for growth. A summary of conclusions from previous school evaluations is also provided, if applicable, as background and context for the current evaluation. The second section, titled School Overview, provides descriptive information about the school, including enrollment and demographic data, as well as summary historical information regarding the life of the school. Finally, in a third section entitled School Evaluation Visit, this report presents the analysis of evidence collected during an evaluation visit conducted in the current school year, with an italicized paragraph that introduces each specific benchmark and provides a summarizing conclusion.

Because of the inherent complexity of an organization such as a school, this Evaluation Report does not contain a single rating or comprehensive indicator that would indicate at a glance the school’s prospects for renewal. It does, however, summarize the various strengths of the school and notes areas in need of improvement as compared to the State University Charter Renewal Benchmarks. To the extent appropriate and useful, we encourage school boards to use this evaluation report in ongoing planning and school improvement efforts.

## **Background**

Institute evaluations of SUNY authorized charter schools are organized by a set of benchmarks that address the academic success of the school, including teaching and learning (e.g., curriculum, instruction, and assessment), and the effectiveness and viability of the school as an organization, including such items as governance and management. Entitled the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks, these established criteria are used on a regular and ongoing basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

While the primary focus of the visit is an evaluation of the school's academic program and organizational capacity, issues regarding compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations may be noted (and subsequently addressed); where the Institute finds serious deficiencies in particular relating to student health and safety, it may take additional and immediate action. However, monitoring for compliance is not the principal purpose of the visit.

This is an analysis of the observations and conclusions from this year's evaluation, along with supporting evidence. Some benchmarks are covered in greater detail than others in an effort to highlight areas of concern at the school and provide additional feedback in these areas. Finally, information regarding the conduct of the evaluation, including the date of the visit and information about the evaluation team, is provided.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT**

The Charter Schools Institute conducted a school evaluation visit to the Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls (“ALHS”) on February 17, 2011. While ALHS is in its first year of operation, the Institute holds all schools accountable for the Renewal Benchmarks with consideration given to its point in the charter period. A school in its first year is expected to have begun to build systems and procedures that would provide a platform for delivering effective instruction to improve student learning and achievement. Based on an analysis of evidence from this evaluation visit, ALHS has made limited progress towards establishing the systems and procedures in its educational program. They are not sufficient to put the school on a trajectory toward meeting the Renewal Benchmarks when the school is scheduled for renewal. This conclusion is drawn from a variety of indicators which are discussed more fully later in the report. Some of the more salient indicators include the following.

### *Academic Success*

#### Areas of Strength

- The school has regular benchmark assessments in core content areas and systematically gathers assessment data.
- Observed instruction is generally grade appropriate and lessons are purposefully planned.

#### Areas for Growth

- Teachers’ execution of lessons is often adversely affected by their lack of effective instructional technique. Many of the lessons fail to engage students and do not meet their objectives.
- The leadership is uncoordinated and lacks a clear administrative structure to support teachers.
- Significant on-going low-level misbehavior detracts from student learning; teachers do not have established classroom management routines that promote learning.

### *Organizational Capacity*

#### Areas of Strength

- The school maintains sufficient enrollment with a robust wait list.

#### Areas for Growth

- The school has disparate systems and procedures preventing personnel from effectively carrying out the academic program.
- Teachers and staff are not clear about their own lines of accountability.

## SCHOOL OVERVIEW

### Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	May 21, 2009
Date Initial Charter Approved by Operation of Law	June 23, 2009
School Opening Date	August, 2010

### Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades	District
2010-11 through present	19 Hackett Blvd. Albany, NY	All	Albany City School District

### Current Mission Statement

The mission of Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls is to prepare young women to graduate from high school with the academic and leadership skills necessary to succeed in college and the career of their choosing.

### Current Key Design Elements

• Single-sex education;
• College preparatory curriculum;
• Safe and disciplined environment;
• Small school size; and
• Dedicated teachers.

### School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment <sup>1</sup>	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2010-11	125	N/A	150	9-10	9-10	

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: SUNY Charter School Institute's Official Enrollment Binder. (Figures may differ slightly from New York State Report Cards, depending on date of data collection.)

**Current Board of Trustees<sup>2</sup>**

<b>Board Member Name</b>	<b>Position/Committees</b>
Margarita Mayo	Chair
Thomas Carroll	Treasurer
Margaret Moree	Secretary
Barbara Pryor	Trustee
Alexander Ma	Trustee
Dorothy Earle	Trustee
Elizabeth Robertson	Trustee
James Vallee	Trustee
Lillian Garland	Trustee

**School Leader(s)**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>School Leader(s) Name and Title</b>
2010-11 to Present	Melissa Jarvis-Cedeno, Principal

**School Visit History**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>Visit Type</b>	<b>Evaluator (Institute/External)</b>	<b>Date</b>
2010-11	First-Year	Institute	February 17, 2011

---

<sup>2</sup> Source: Institute board information.

## **SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT**

### **Benchmark Conclusions and Evidence**

#### **Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.A)**

*Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls (ALHS) conducts regular benchmark assessments in core content areas and systematically gathers assessment data. The school has begun to implement systems for analyzing assessment data to improve student learning. Assessment results are used to identify students for academic intervention services; however, this program is new and its scope is limited.*

Teachers follow a year-long assessment calendar of school-wide benchmark assessments, Regents and the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). The director of data and assessment spearheads the use of a data-driven instructional model, by implementing a series of collaborative meetings with classroom teachers to discuss benchmark assessment results and to develop the teachers' capacity to make instructional decisions based on the results. The actual instructional planning, including 'a battle plan for re-teaching', is framed by ALHS's Data Driven Instructional Plan template. The template contains an action plan with sections for identifying skill deficiencies, as well as plans for reteaching and individual student interventions.

Beginning in January, teachers attend more formalized scheduled department planning meetings; prior to January not all departments met as consistently because of scheduling issues. Up to the time of the visit, the ELA team, for example, has met four times with the director of data and assessment to review SRI benchmark data. Team members also meet individually with the director to plan reteaching and additional strategies for helping individual students. An ELA teacher reports that she and the director of data and assessment have met regularly in January and February to develop benchmark assessments and review data.

The director of data and assessment reports that she focuses in all core subjects on standardizing assessments, including formative assessments, interim assessments, and portfolio work. Every class is expected to have a *Do Now* with a specific design that is intended to serve as a formative assessment tool. These assessments are to be incorporated into lesson plans, demonstrating that the plans reflect students' identified skill deficiencies from previous lessons. Notwithstanding the clear direction, the use of data for lesson planning is not fully implemented.

#### **Curriculum (Benchmark 1.B)**

*ALHS does not have a comprehensive and coherent curriculum in each core subject. The school relies on teachers' ability to develop and implement curriculum with limited oversight of the process.*

During summer professional development, teachers develop curriculum documents with some oversight from school leadership and training on the understanding by design model. All core content areas have a scope and sequence with NYS standards and performance indicators, textbook resources and pacing; however, in some subjects these documents are not sufficiently detailed to guide teachers' planning, resulting in a curriculum that is not comprehensive and coherent within each subject area. Experienced teachers report that they rely on past teaching efforts to guide their

instruction. Some new teachers express difficulty in planning because of a lack of detail in the curriculum documents.

School leadership provides limited oversight of teachers' implementation of the curriculum. Teachers report that the school leadership only reviews lesson plans occasionally. Administrators echo these sentiments and indicate that pacing is not regularly monitored. The director of data and assessment has a limited sense of instructional pacing through her discussions with teachers about developing content for new assessments.

ALHS does not have a process for developing future curriculum. It also has no formal process for revising existing curriculum. The director of curriculum and instruction has begun to consider revising the curriculum but no actual plans are in place. Additionally, the school does not have a procedure for documenting teachers' reflective comments on the implementation of the current curriculum to systematically inform revisions for future years.

### **Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)**

*Adequate instruction is not evident in many classes. Instruction is generally grade appropriate and lessons are purposefully planned, but teachers' execution of the plans is often affected by their lack of instructional expertise.*

Lesson plans are generally complete and well thought out, containing objectives and assessments. The topics covered in the lessons are generally in line with grade-level expectations, corresponding to the courses' state standards and in preparation for the Regents exams. However, many of the lessons do not meet their stated objective and fail to engage students. Lessons are largely teacher-centered: teachers primarily ask recall questions without challenging students or seeking elaboration to answers in order to promote higher-order thinking skills. Some teachers attempt to generate student-to-student interaction as a means of engaging students, but poor student behavior limits its effectiveness. In other classes, while questioning keeps students on task and provides continuity with a previous lesson, the questioning is exclusively teacher-student recall with no student-to-student interaction or class-wide discussion.

Lessons are not well paced in most observed classes. Some teachers cover material very quickly without pausing to ensure student understanding and without giving students sufficient opportunity for practice. In contrast, other teachers stop the lesson repeatedly to deal with individual students who are off task or to answer questions that are not directly relevant to the lesson. This practice prevents them from completing the lesson as planned and from meeting the stated objective. Additionally, in most classes there are limited checks for understanding during lessons. Teachers in some classes use exit tickets or other means to assess student understanding at the end of a lesson, but do not pause during the lesson to assess understanding. As a result, many students seem unable to complete assigned tasks.

### **Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)**

*ALHS's instructional leadership is insufficient to meet the needs of most teachers. While the school is just beginning to develop systems for supporting teachers, there is limited evidence of implementation. There are no criteria for the formal evaluation of teachers.*

While the school leaders have a general plan for supervising teachers by organizing their roles and responsibilities and assigning tasks to members of the team, the leadership lacks a structure for coordinating the daily support of teachers and teachers are unclear about the organization of the leadership. The director of data and assessment and the director of curriculum and instruction are part-time positions, which limits their ability to coordinate with the leadership team and to discuss their observations with each other. The principal has attempted to schedule individual meetings with each member of the leadership team but other responsibilities prevent such meetings from taking place. The director of curriculum and instruction reports that she has no formally scheduled meetings with the principal.

Administrators report that they first began to develop instructional support systems for teachers in mid January after instituting a “restart” of the school culture for both teachers and students. Administrators have developed a protocol for teacher observations and feedback, but its use is extremely limited. The director of curriculum and instruction has only completed five observations using this new protocol. Previously she conducted some brief observations and gave informal verbal feedback, but acknowledges that the limited number is largely due to her part-time schedule. The principal, assistant principal, and director of data and assessment all describe similar experiences with informal observations. Additionally, members of the leadership team report that they have not formally discussed the observations as a group nor have they decided how they would divide responsibility for evaluating individual teachers. The leadership does have conversations about schoolwide issues which have led to some schoolwide changes, but they do not have a coordinated approach for supporting individual teachers. In late January the leadership began providing some additional support to teachers, such as reviewing lesson plans, but these efforts are limited.

The leadership has not yet established criteria for the formal evaluation of teachers. The principal is in the process of developing a rubric for teacher evaluations in conjunction with the school board of trustees, but the rubric has not been finalized. Teachers have not yet received formal observations and are unaware of what criteria would be used to evaluate them. Other members of the administration are unaware of what their roles would be in the formal evaluation process and indicate that the principal has not consulted with them.

Teachers report that school leaders do not provide support for them in content area instruction and that they rely on their departmental peers for support. The school administration has rearranged teachers’ schedules to provide common preparation periods in all subjects (except for math) several times per week. The administrators express hope that teachers are using the common periods for departmental planning. Other than the principal who attends some English department meetings, as she teaches two sections of English, administrators do not typically attend any department meetings.

### **At-Risk Students (Benchmark 1.F)**

*ALHS has a recently introduced academic intervention services (AIS) program to assist academically struggling students; however, the program only serves a limited number of students and the additional support is not sufficient to meet their needs. The school has a clear process to identify students in need of special education services and effectively serves the needs of these students.*

Aside from the limited number of students receiving AIS services, there is no clearly defined process to assist students who are struggling academically in core courses. Differentiation of instruction within classrooms or scaffolding to support students is not evident. Additionally, teachers report that

they do not receive support from school leaders on how to support students struggling academically and rely instead on the advice of colleagues.

Placement in the school's AIS program for 9<sup>th</sup> graders is generally based on a student's 8<sup>th</sup> grade state assessment results. In addition, the school's special education coordinator, who also coordinates AIS, places students who have failed a Regents exam into AIS. The school provides AIS support in math and English Language Arts only. There are not yet any student achievement results to indicate the program's effectiveness.

In contrast to services for struggling students, the school has a clear process to identify students in need of special education services. ALHS employs a special education coordinator who also provides direct educational services and collaborates with general education teachers to offer a continuum of service options for students with special needs including, push-in and pull-out services.

### **Student Order and Discipline (Benchmark 1.G)**

*ALHS is safe and orderly; however, there is evidence of significant on-going low-level misbehavior that detracts from student learning. Teachers do not have established classroom management routines that promote learning. Although the school has a discipline system that is consistently applied, this system continues to lead to a significant loss in learning opportunities for referred students.*

The school has recently had a “reboot” on culture and discipline, intended to reinforce the core values and expectations of learning and scholarship, but these values and expectations are still not fully integrated into the school culture. They are posted in all classrooms throughout the school, but only a limited number of teachers refer to them.

ALHS is safe and orderly; however, on-going low level misbehavior detracts from student learning. Students repeatedly talk loudly, talk back to the teacher, leave their seats during direct instruction and exhibit other misbehaviors, which significantly affect student learning and often interfere with the completion of planned lessons. Some teachers attribute this behavior to students who do not come to school ready to learn; however, the school's mission is to prepare *all* students for college

The school has conducted several sessions for students and teachers to recalibrate the discipline system. This effort has reportedly greatly improved the system's implementation. Teachers indicate that students have a better understanding of the consequences for misbehavior and are more responsive to teacher direction. The school now has individualized schedules for all students so that the same cohorts are not together throughout the day. Although teachers report that the discipline system is more consistently applied than earlier in the school year, it continues to result in significant loss of learning opportunities for students removed from class for behavioral issues. One teacher reports that while school leaders continue to support removing misbehaving students from a room, the practice is a stop-gap measure insofar as it does not address the cause of the acting-out behavior.

## **Professional Development (Benchmark 1.H)**

*ALHS's professional development program minimally supports teachers' classroom management but does not meet teachers' specific pedagogical needs*

The school has intensive summer professional development sessions which cover a wide range of topics, with a focus on management and school culture. The school also has monthly professional development workshops generally led by a member of the school leadership team, as well as departmental data analysis meetings with the director of data and assessment which provide an opportunity for teachers to develop their ability to interpret and use assessment data. Workshops focus on a variety of topics with little continuity between them, although classroom management and student behavior have been covered repeatedly. The workshops are primarily offered to the entire staff and do not address teachers' specific pedagogical needs.

## **Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)**

*ALHS has disparate systems and procedures preventing personnel from carrying out the academic program. Its staffing plan and hiring practices affect the quality of the academic program. Leadership monitors and evaluates the school program and has made significant changes.*

Both teachers and staff are not clear about the lines of accountability. Additionally, both teachers and staff members are unclear about how they are to be formally evaluated. Two of four members of the instructional leadership team are employed part-time in order to conserve resources; however, this deployment affects the continuity of the school's instructional program. Additionally, the school has several long-term teaching vacancies due to mid-year departures. As a result, administrators have assumed teaching responsibilities thereby limiting their time as instructional leaders.

Based on their evaluation of both discipline and academic performance data, the school leadership has made significant changes to the school program. Changes include the introduction of an AIS program and department meetings, as well as a January resetting of the school culture.

## **Governance (Benchmark 2.D-E)**

*The board monitors a variety of school metrics; however, its lack of high school expertise limits its ability to effectively evaluate the school's academic program. The board has not provided the school leader with clear evaluation criteria.*

The board receives reports each month with both academic and non-academic school indicators. Board members report reviewing these data in great detail and asking probing questions of the school leader. The board members also report that they vote on most major changes, such as a recent plan to change the school's schedule, after the principal presented her reasons for the decision. They report generally accepting her recommendations, although they have yet to reach agreement on a formal teacher evaluation system. While they receive a great amount of data on the school, the majority of current board members do not have academic expertise, and those who do, are more experienced with K-8 schools. The absence of high school experience limits their ability to interpret data in order to evaluate performance and determine if incremental progress in a given period of time is sufficient.

The board has set clear goals for the leader during the school's planning year which they report she met. However, they have yet not set goals for her since the school's opening. They report that they

are still identifying relevant criteria and developing the process in order to evaluate her performance at the end of the school year. The principal's contract includes bonuses tied to the evaluation. The principal reports that she has set goals for herself and hopes that they would be similar to the criteria the board decides to use in its evaluation of her.

### Conduct of the Visit

The Charter Schools Institute conducted the school evaluation visit at Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls on February 17, 2011. Listed below are the names and backgrounds of the individuals who conducted the visit:

**Maya Lagana (team leader)** is an Accountability Analyst for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. She is responsible for providing technical support related to school accountability plans and the reporting and analysis of individual school performance. Ms. Lagana joined the Institute as an Analyst for School Evaluation. In this position she scheduled ongoing school evaluation visits, communicated with school team members and administrative staff regarding site visit logistics and requirements, developed and disseminated RFP documents, and coordinated the recruitment and work of consultants. Prior to joining the Institute, Ms. Lagana served as a research intern at New Visions for Public Schools in New York City, where she performed data analysis on school performance and conducted research on a variety of educational issues. In 2008, Ms. Lagana was a Project Manager at Boston Collegiate Charter School in Boston, Massachusetts, where she was responsible for creating and implementing a data organization system as well as analyzing data. During that same year, Ms. Lagana also helped to craft grant proposals and formulate a strategic fundraising plan for Achievement First in Brooklyn, New York. Previously, Ms. Lagana was an Assessment Specialist at the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence in Washington D.C., where she helped to develop teacher certification exams and analyzed item level statistics and demographics information. In addition to her extensive background as an analyst, Ms. Lagana also has experience as a third grade classroom teacher in New York City. Ms. Lagana received her Master of Public Administration degree in Policy Analysis from New York University's Wagner School for Public Service, her Masters of Education degree from Mercy College and her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Carleton College.

**Sean Fitzsimons** is a Program Analyst for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. He supports SUNY's new charter school application process by addressing questions from applicants, reviewing and analyzing new applications, coordinating the review of applications to establish new charter schools by Institute staff and external educational experts, and drafting application summaries and other related documents. Mr. Fitzsimons most recently served as Chair of the Social Studies Department at Manassas Park Middle School in Manassas Park, Virginia where he guided curriculum sequencing and pacing to align the school's courses with state standards, trained and mentored faculty, and designed and implemented courses in Civics and Economics, American Studies, American History, and World Geography. He also taught remedial reading curriculum to special education students and English language learners. Prior to his service at Manassas Park Middle School, Mr. Fitzsimons was an Administrative and Research Assistant at the Embassy of Japan in Washington, D.C. In addition, Mr. Fitzsimons was a visiting instructor at Shanghai Teachers University in Shanghai, China, where he designed and taught curriculum for English language learners. Mr. Fitzsimons received his Master of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction and Secondary Education Social Studies from George Mason University and his Bachelor of Arts degrees

in International Relations and Political Science from the State University of New York, College at Geneseo.

**Ron Miller, Ph. D.** is Vice President for Accountability at the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. He has worked for the Institute since September 2002. Dr. Miller began his career teaching for seven years in New York City public schools and then joined the central offices of the New York City Department of Education, where he conducted evaluative research and organizational studies. As Director of the Office of School Planning and Accountability, he served as the educational accountability officer for the Department. In that capacity, he developed school accountability reports for all city schools and coordinated staff development on the use of the reports for district administrators in the high school and community school districts. In addition, he worked with school leaders to develop their capacity to use data for school improvement. In this role he developed PASS, a school performance review system which was adopted in 600 city schools. Dr. Miller has regularly presented papers at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association and has served as Adjunct Assistant Professor at Teachers College Columbia University and Pace University. He holds an A.B. degree from the University of California at Berkeley and a Ph.D. in Applied Anthropology from Columbia University.

**Paul Wright, Ed. D.** was recently appointed Director of School Evaluation at the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. Dr. Wright will be responsible for the Institute's extensive school evaluation program, overseeing and in many cases leading school evaluation visits by Institute staff as well as coordinating the independent evaluations done on the Institute's behalf. Dr. Wright will lead ongoing efforts to refine the Institute's nationally regarded evaluation protocols and reporting tools; including oversight of the production of the Institute's school evaluation reports which provide valuable information to schools and the public about school progress. He will also coordinate internal staff training on school evaluation. Prior to joining the Institute, Dr. Wright directed Quality Education Partnership, Inc., a national consulting network that conducted evaluations of traditional and charter schools and created strategic management plans for school improvement. The former Development Director for School Design and Strategic Planning of Mesa Public Schools in Arizona, Dr. Wright developed unique schools of choice serving a wide spectrum of learners in coordination with Mesa Public Schools. Dr. Wright also served as Vice President for Student Services at the Leona Group, an Educational Management Organization providing educational services to students throughout Arizona. Dr. Wright received his Ed.D. and his M. Ed. from Arizona State University and his B.A. in Psychology from the State University of New York at Albany.

**APPENDIX A: RENEWAL BENCHMARKS USED DURING THE VISIT**

*An excerpt of the State University Charter Renewal Benchmarks follows.*

*Visit the Institute’s website at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/documents/renewalBenchmarks.doc> to see the complete listing of Benchmarks.*

Benchmarks 1B – 1H, and Benchmarks 2A – 2E were using in conducting this evaluation visit.

<p align="center"><b>Renewal Question 1</b> <b>Is the School an Academic Success?</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Evidence Category</u></b></p>	<p align="center"><b><u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u></b></p>
<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1B</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Use of Assessment Data</b></p>	<p><b>The school has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school regularly uses standardized and other assessments that are aligned to the school’s curriculum framework and state performance standards;</li> <li>• the school systematically collects and analyzes data from diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, and makes it accessible to teachers, school leaders and the school board;</li> <li>• the school uses protocols, procedures and rubrics that ensure that the scoring of assessments and evaluation of student work is reliable and trustworthy;</li> <li>• the school uses assessment data to predict whether the school’s Accountability Plan goals are being achieved;</li> <li>• the school’s leaders use assessment data to monitor, change and improve the school’s academic program, including curriculum and instruction, professional development, staffing and intervention services;</li> <li>• the school’s teachers use assessment data to adjust and improve instruction to meet the identified needs of students;</li> <li>• a common understanding exists between and among teachers and administrators of the meaning and consequences of assessment results, e.g., changes to the instructional program, access to remediation, promotion to the next grade;</li> <li>• the school regularly communicates each student’s progress and growth to his or her parents/guardians; and</li> <li>• the school regularly communicates to the school community overall academic performance as well as the school’s progress toward meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1C</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Curriculum</b></p>	<p><b>The school has a clearly defined curriculum and uses it to prepare students to meet state performance standards.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school has a well-defined curriculum framework for each grade and core academic subject, which includes the knowledge and skills that all students are expected to achieve as specified by New York State standards and performance indicators;</li> <li>• the school has carefully analyzed all curriculum resources (including commercial</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1D</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pedagogy</b></p>	<p>materials) currently in use in relation to the school’s curriculum framework, identified areas of deficiency and/or misalignment, and addressed them in the instructional program;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the curriculum <i>as implemented</i> is organized, cohesive, and aligned from grade to grade;</li> <li>• teachers are fully aware of the curricula that they are responsible to teach and have access to curricular documents such as scope and sequence documents, pacing charts, and/or curriculum maps that guide the development of their lesson plans;</li> <li>• teachers develop and use lesson plans with objectives that are in alignment with the school’s curriculum;</li> <li>• the school has defined a procedure, allocated time and resources, and included teachers in ongoing review and revision of the curriculum; and</li> <li>• the curriculum supports the school’s stated mission.</li> </ul> <p><b>High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teachers demonstrate subject-matter and grade-level competency in the subjects and grades they teach;</li> <li>• instruction is rigorous and focused on learning objectives that specify clear expectations for what students must know and be able to do in each lesson;</li> <li>• lesson plans and instruction are aligned to the school’s curriculum framework and New York State standards and performance indicators;</li> <li>• instruction is differentiated to meet the range of learning needs represented in the school’s student population, e.g. flexible student grouping, differentiated materials, pedagogical techniques, and/or assessments;</li> <li>• all students are cognitively engaged in focused, purposeful learning activities during instructional time;</li> <li>• learning time is maximized (e.g., appropriate pacing, high on-task student behavior, clear lesson focus and clear directions to students), transitions are efficient, and there is day-to-day instructional continuity; and</li> <li>• teachers challenge students with questions and assignments that promote academic rigor, depth of understanding, and development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1E</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Instructional Leadership</b></p>	<p><b>The school has strong instructional leadership.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for student achievement;</li> <li>• the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge, pedagogical skills and student achievement);</li> <li>• the school’s instructional leaders have in place a comprehensive and on-going system for evaluating teacher quality and effectiveness;</li> <li>• the school’s instructional leaders, based on classroom visits and other available data, provide direct ongoing support, such as critical feedback, coaching and/or modeling, to teachers in their classrooms;</li> <li>• the school’s leadership provides structured opportunities, resources and guidance for teachers to plan the delivery of the instructional program within and across grade levels as well as within disciplines or content areas;</li> <li>• the school’s instructional leaders organize a coherent and sustained professional development program that meets the needs of both the school and individual</li> </ul>

<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1F</b></p> <p><b>At-Risk Students</b></p>	<p>teachers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school’s leadership ensures that the school is responding to the needs of at-risk students and maximizing their achievement to the greatest extent possible in the regular education program using in-class resources and/or pull-out services and programs where necessary ; and</li> <li>the school’s leadership conducts regular reviews and evaluations of the school’s academic program and makes necessary changes to ensure that the school is effectively working to achieve academic standards defined by the State University Renewal Benchmarks in the areas of assessment, curriculum, pedagogy, student order and discipline, and professional development.</li> </ul> <p><b>The school is demonstrably effective in helping students who are struggling academically.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school deploys sufficient resources to provide academic interventions that address the range of students’ needs;</li> <li>all regular education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the regular education program;</li> <li>the school provides sufficient training, resources, and support to all teachers and specialists with regard to meeting the needs of at-risk students;</li> <li>the school has clearly defined screening procedures for identifying at-risk students and providing them with the appropriate interventions, and a common understanding among all teachers of these procedures;</li> <li>all regular education teachers demonstrate a working knowledge of students’ Individualized Education Program goals and instructional strategies for meeting those goals;</li> <li>the school provides sufficient time and support for on-going coordination between regular and special education teachers, as well as other program specialists and service providers; and</li> <li>the school monitors the performance of student participation in support services using well-defined school-wide criteria, and regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its intervention programs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1G</b></p> <p><b>Student Order &amp; Discipline</b></p>	<p><b>The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school has a documented discipline policy that is consistently applied;</li> <li>classroom management techniques and daily routines have established a culture in which learning is valued and clearly evident;</li> <li>low-level misbehavior is not being tolerated, e.g., students are not being allowed to disrupt or opt-out of learning during class time; and</li> <li>throughout the school, a safe and orderly environment has been established.</li> </ul>
<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 1H</b></p> <p><b>Professional Development</b></p>	<p><b>The school’s professional development program assists teachers in meeting student academic needs and school goals by addressing identified shortcomings in teachers’ pedagogical skills and content knowledge.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the school provides sufficient time, personnel, materials and funding to support a comprehensive and sustained professional development program;</li> <li>the content of the professional development program dovetails with the school’s</li> </ul>

	<p>mission, curriculum, and instructional programs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• annual professional development plans derive from a data-driven needs-assessment and staff interests;</li> <li>• professional development places a high priority on achieving the State University Renewal Benchmarks and the school’s Accountability Plan goals;</li> <li>• teachers are involved in setting short-term and long-term goals for their own professional development activities;</li> <li>• the school provides effective, ongoing support and training tailored to teachers’ varying levels of expertise and instructional responsibilities;</li> <li>• the school provides training to assist all teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners and other students at-risk of academic failure; and</li> <li>• the professional development program is systematically evaluated to determine its effectiveness at meeting stated goals.</li> </ul>
--	--

<p><b>Renewal Question 2</b>  <b>Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?</b></p>	
---	--

<p><u>Evidence Category</u></p>	<p><u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u></p>
---------------------------------	---

<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 2A</b></p> <p><b>Mission &amp; Key Design Elements</b></p>	<p><b>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stakeholders are aware of the mission;</li> <li>• the school has implemented its key design elements in pursuit of its mission; and</li> <li>• the school meets or comes close to meeting any non-academic goals contained in its Accountability Plan.</li> </ul>
---	---

<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 2B</b></p> <p><b>Parents &amp; Students</b></p>	<p><b>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school has a process and procedures for evaluation of parent satisfaction with the school;</li> <li>• the great majority of parents with students enrolled at the school have strong positive attitudes about it;</li> <li>• few parents pursue grievances at the school board level or outside the school;</li> <li>• a large number of parents seek entrance to the school;</li> <li>• parents with students enrolled keep their children enrolled year-to-year; and</li> <li>• the school maintains a high rate of daily student attendance.</li> </ul>
--	---

<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 2C</b></p> <p><b>Organizational Capacity</b></p>	<p><b>The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school demonstrates effective management of day-to-day operations;</li> <li>• staff scheduling is internally consistent and supportive of the school’s mission;</li> <li>• the school has established clear priorities, objectives and benchmarks for achieving</li> </ul>
---	---

	<p>its mission and Accountability Plan goals, and a process for their regular review and revision;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school has allocated sufficient resources in support of achieving its goals;</li> <li>• the roles and responsibilities of the school’s leadership and staff members are clearly defined;</li> <li>• the school has an organizational structure that provides clear lines for accountability;</li> <li>• the school’s management has successfully recruited, hired and retained key personnel, and made appropriate decisions about removing ineffective staff members when warranted;</li> <li>• the school maintains an adequate student enrollment and has effective procedures for recruiting new students to the school; and</li> <li>• the school’s management and board have demonstrated effective communication practices with the school community including school staff, parents/guardians and students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 2D</b></p> <p><b>Board Oversight</b></p>	<p><b>The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school’s mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school board has adequate skills and expertise, as well as adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school;</li> <li>• the school board (or a committee thereof) understands the core business of the school—student achievement—in sufficient depth to permit the board to provide effective oversight;</li> <li>• the school board has set clear long-term and short-term goals and expectations for meeting those goals, and communicates them to the school’s management and leaders;</li> <li>• the school board has received regular written reports from the school leadership on academic performance and progress, financial stability and organizational capacity;</li> <li>• the school board has conducted regular evaluations of the school’s management (including school leaders who report to the board, supervisors from management organization(s), and/or partner organizations that provide services to the school), and has acted on the results where such evaluations demonstrated shortcomings in performance;</li> <li>• where there have been demonstrable deficiencies in the school’s academic, organizational or fiscal performance, the school board has taken effective action to correct those deficiencies and put in place benchmarks for determining if the deficiencies are being corrected in a timely fashion;</li> <li>• the school board has not made financial or organizational decisions that have materially impeded the school in fulfilling its mission; and</li> <li>• the school board conducts on-going assessment and evaluation of its own effectiveness in providing adequate school oversight, and pursues opportunities for further governance training and development.</li> </ul>
<p><b>State University Renewal Benchmark 2E</b></p> <p><b>Governance</b></p>	<p><b>The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and has abided by them.</b></p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school board has established a set of priorities that are in line with the school’s goals and mission and has effectively worked to design and implement a system to achieve those priorities;</li> </ul>

- the school board has in place a process for recruiting and selecting new members in order to maintain adequate skill sets and expertise for effective governance and structural continuity;
- the school board has implemented a comprehensive and strict conflict of interest policy (and/or code of ethics)—consistent with those set forth in the charter—and consistently abided by them through the term of the charter;
- the school board has generally avoided creating conflicts of interest where possible; where not possible, the school has managed those conflicts of interest in a clear and transparent manner;
- the school board has instituted a process for dealing with complaints (and such policy is consistent with that set forth in the charter), has made that policy clear to all stakeholders, and has followed that policy including acting in a timely fashion on any such complaints;
- the school board has abided by its by-laws including, but not limited to, provisions regarding trustee elections, removals and filling of vacancies;
- the school board and its committees hold meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Law, and minutes are recorded for all meetings including executive sessions and, as appropriate, committee meetings; and
- the school board has in place a set of board and school policies that are reviewed regularly and updated as needed.