

# EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

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## BEDFORD STUYVESANT COLLEGIATE CHARTER SCHOOL

Visit Date  
May 11-12, 2010



CONDUCTED BY CLASS MEASURES  
ON BEHALF OF THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE



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# EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

## BEDFORD STUYVESANT COLLEGIATE CHARTER SCHOOL

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Bedford Stuyvesant Collegiate Charter School (Bed-Stuy Collegiate) was visited by an external school inspection team from Class Measures on behalf of the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the Institute) on May 11 and 12, 2010. The school opened in 2008 and at the time of the visit served 138 students in grades 5 and 6.

The school administers formative and summative assessments in all core academic areas that are aligned to the school's defined curriculum and the state standards. The primary assessments used for student placement and curricular modifications are interim assessments developed by the Uncommon Schools Network (the Network). These assessments are commonly administered across the Network to students in grades 5 and 6. These assessments are based on the school's learning objectives for each subject, which are based in the state standards. Subject areas included in these assessments are mathematics, English language arts (ELA), science and history. These interim assessments are administered four to five times a year. Teachers come together to commonly score interim assessments using Network developed rubrics. Data from assessments are made available to teachers and staff through the school server. Teachers receive training in the use of assessment data and meet periodically to modify instruction in keeping with student progress. In addition, this data is used to identify students for placement in support programs. Data is used to guide annual modifications to the curricula.

Bed-Stuy Collegiate has a well documented curriculum in place that is aligned horizontally and vertically and to state standards for all subject areas. The school and Network curriculum documents and materials are accessible to teachers. Teachers use common templates for lesson plans and the development of unit plans. Teachers turn in lesson plans to the co-director of curriculum and instruction (CDCI) on a weekly basis and receive feedback. Teachers review and revise the curriculum weekly and a major review is conducted by the CDCI on an annual basis.

Teachers demonstrated good content knowledge and grade level competency in all classes observed and instruction was rigorous. Differentiated instruction was achieved through leveled classes. Differentiation was also observed to be particularly in evidence in literacy classes. Students were well engaged with lessons in most classrooms. Some classes provided students with instruction that promoted higher order thinking.

Instructional leadership at Bed-Stuy Collegiate is based on a co-director model that teams the CDCI and the co-director of operations (CDO) as the managers of the school. Instructional leadership was strong and leaders held high expectations for teachers and students. Teachers received abundant professional development, including a three week summer orientation. Teachers were observed and evaluated on a regular basis and received feedback. Teachers developed personal goals at the beginning of the year in collaboration with the principal.

Services for at-risk students requiring academic or behavioral support are delivered through two formal mechanisms: the student support team (SST) which meets weekly to develop and maintain individual support plans for students. The student support office (SSO) is another group that meets weekly to monitor the effectiveness of and modify classroom and school-wide interventions. Support programs, both for individual students and group interventions, are reassessed following the administration of the

interim assessments. Differentiated instruction is provided to students through homogeneously grouped classrooms as well as through the literacy program. Support for students also is available through homework help, afterschool tutoring, and Saturday school. Support staff for struggling learners include a special education coordinator (SEC) and a social worker.

Bed-Stuy Collegiate has created a well documented discipline program that is implemented consistently school wide. Infractions and their consequences are detailed in the Student and Family Handbook for 2009-2010. All members of the school community are well informed about the program. The dress code and other behavioral expectations are well enforced and students were observed to be well-behaved. There is a well developed merit and demerit system in place. Parents are kept informed regarding their child's behavior through a data dashboard distributed every two weeks that contains information that includes behavioral and attendance data and homework compliance information. All stakeholders reported that the school was safe.

Professional development provided to teaching staff is focused on improving the pedagogical skills of teachers. Teachers receive three weeks of professional development prior to the beginning of school. In addition, teachers receive professional development twice weekly, including a session on Wednesday afternoons when students are released early to allow teachers to meet for two hours. Teachers also have full day professional development following receipt of the interim assessment data. These full day sessions are provided to both allow teachers to receive traditional professional development as well as to collaborate over student data.

The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter. Stakeholders were familiar with the mission.

According to survey data reviewed by the team and interviews, parents and students were satisfied with the education their child was receiving at Bed-Stuy Collegiate. Parents and guardians particularly appreciated the school's celebration of the individual strengths of students. Parents and students reported that teachers believed that students could succeed and would help them improve. The school meets its attendance goals.

The school has sufficient organizational capacity to manage the school efficiently. The co-director model provides additional operational support for the CDCI allowing for stronger instructional leadership. The school is aware of the increasing demands of a growing school and hired a dean of students this year and has plans to hire a dean of curriculum and instruction next year. School leaders within the Network meet monthly to share curricula, assessments, and prospective teaching candidates. The Network provides resources online for teachers and leaders in the Network.

The team reviewed a variety of documents, including board meeting minutes and bylaws. An interview was also conducted with seven of the board members. The board was found to be in compliance with New York State Public Meeting Laws. The co-directors have not been evaluated formally by the board, although the Network's managing director works closely with the CDCI and provides the board with ongoing feedback on her performance. A self-evaluation of the board is planned for June, 2010. Board members receive and review student data and other information regarding progress towards school goals.

## SCHOOL DESCRIPTION<sup>1</sup>

### Opening Information

	Name	Date
Chartered Name	Collegiate Charter School	October 26, 2007
Revised Name	Bedford Stuyvesant Collegiate Charter School	June 9, 2008

### Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	October 26, 2007
Date Initial Charter Approved by: Board of Regents	January 15, 2008
School Opening Date	September, 2008

### Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades At Location	District
2008-09 through present	800 Gates Avenue Brooklyn, NY	All	New York City CSD 16

### Partner Organizations

	Partner Name	Partner Type	Dates of Service
Current Partner	Uncommon Schools, Inc.	Charter Management Organization	2007-Present

### Current Mission Statement

The mission of Bedford Stuyvesant Collegiate Charter School is to prepare each student for college.

### Current Key Design Elements

• A longer school day and year;
• Double periods of English and math daily, as well as an hour each of science and history for all students;
• Tutoring and Saturday school;
• Emphasis on college, including meetings with a college advisor and frequent college visits;
• Calm, composed and disciplined environment, including a strictly enforced dress code, and merit/demerit and rubric systems;
• Explicit instruction in literacy skills;
• Targeted curriculum focused on basic skills;
• Frequent school-wide assessments; and
• Strong family involvement.

<sup>1</sup> The information in this section was provided by the SUNY Charters Schools Institute.

## School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment <sup>2</sup>	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2008-09	81	NA	75	5	5	184
2009-10	158	NA	138	5-6	5-6	184

## Student Demographics

	2008-09 <sup>3</sup>		2009-10	
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 16 Enrollment	Percent of School Enrollment <sup>4</sup>	Percent of NYC CSD 16 Enrollment <sup>5</sup>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	1%	0%	
Black or African American	95%	84%	93%	
Hispanic	4%	13%	7%	
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	1%	1%	0%	
White	0%	1%	0%	
Multiracial	0%	0%	0%	
<b>Special Populations</b>				
Students with Disabilities <sup>6</sup>				
Limited English Proficient	0%	3%	0%	
<b>Free/Reduced Lunch</b>				
Eligible for Free Lunch	70%	74%	71%	
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	15%	6%	14%	

<sup>2</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.)

<sup>3</sup> Source: 2008-09 School Report Cards, New York State Education Department.

<sup>4</sup> Source: 2009-10 Demographics and Limited English Proficient Percentages calculated from BEDS reports submitted at the beginning of the school year. BEDS reports do not include Free/Reduced Lunch status; statistics given were provided by the schools.

<sup>5</sup> Aggregated District data not yet available for 2009-10 school year.

<sup>6</sup> New York State Education Department does not report special education data

**Current Board of Trustees<sup>7</sup>**

<b>Board Member Name</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Position/Committees</b>
Alex Boxill	2009-2012	Trustee
C.J. Cash	2008-2011	Trustee
John Greenstein	2007-2010	Treasurer
Bob Howitt	2008-2011	Trustee
John Kim	2008-2011	Chairman
Linton Mann III	2009-2012	Trustee
Brett Peiser	2008-2011	Secretary
Reemah Sen	2009-2012	Trustee
Eileen Shy	2009-2012	Trustee
Cindy Helen Brea	2009-2012	Trustee

**School Leader(s)**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>School Leader(s) Name and Title</b>
2008-09	Mabel Lajes-Guiteras, Principal; Melissa D’Agostino, Director of Operations
2009-10	Mabel Lajes-Guiteras, Co-Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Melissa D’Agostino, Co-Director of Operations

**School Visit History**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>Visit Type</b>	<b>Evaluator (Institute/External)</b>	<b>Date</b>
2008-09	First Year Visit	Institute	March 26, 2009

<sup>7</sup> Source: Institute Board records.

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## BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

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### Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?

#### **Benchmark 1B: Use of Assessment Data**

Bed-Stuy Collegiate regularly delivers assessments to students that are aligned to the school's curriculum framework and the state performance standards. The school administers the Terra Nova assessments as well as the New York State mathematics, ELA, science and social studies assessments. In addition, the school assesses students using Network developed interim assessments in mathematics, ELA, science and history that are linked to the objectives identified in the school's curriculum. Interim assessments are administered four to five times a year. These assessments are commonly administered at all schools in the Uncommon Schools Collegiate Network and are the school's primary formative assessment.

Following the administration of the interim assessments, all teachers in the Network come together to co-grade student tests using rubrics common to all Network schools. The results from the interim assessments are stored on the school server and teachers may access the data, which is presented in Excel files. Teachers reported that they had received training on how to access and use data. On the Friday following the interim assessments teachers meet at the school to review student data and revise lesson plans. The CDCI meets one-on-one with teachers at this time to discuss data and modifications to instruction.

The CDCI uses student data to review and revise the curriculum during the summer. Information from student performance is used to inform the selection of professional development topics as well. Data from interim assessments are also used regularly to place students in support programs such as tutoring or Saturday school and every student's participation in this program is reassessed according to his or her progress, or lack thereof, following each assessment. Students may place out of support programs at this time, modifications to the support programs may be made, or students may be moved to a more intensive support program depending on the results from the assessments.

Parents receive information on progress reports showing student progress on the interim assessments. Teacher advisors also send out data dashboards to parents every two weeks showing academic and other student data such as attendance history, behavior history and homework compliance data. Parents do not receive data on overall school progress related to its academic goals.

Board members receive data packages prior to meetings that contain dashboards with student achievement information, as well as other information such as student attrition data and financial information. The board receives information allowing for comparison between the progress of students at Bed-Stuy Collegiate with other schools in the Network. The board monitors student data in order to measure progress towards school goals.

#### **Benchmark 1C: Curriculum**

The team reviewed three sources of curricular information: 2009-2010 curriculum documents provided by the school, several lesson plans from classes that were observed, and the teacher handbook (The Red Book). In the 2009-2010 curriculum folder, the courses of study for mathematics, history, science and

English (Reading and Writing) were well-defined, aligned vertically and horizontally and aligned to the state's standards. The CDCI reported that some commercial texts are used as resources in history (History Alive!), and that MacMillan-McGraw-Hill science booklets/leveled readers support the science curriculum. In addition the school participates in the Accelerated Reader program mainly as a means to assess students' comprehension of their independent reading. The school's social worker and two teachers also developed the character education curriculum for grades 5 and 6, which is taught by advisors to small groups of advisees for one class period per week.

Two sections in The Red Book address curriculum development. In the section entitled "Our Design," seven core components that impact curriculum design and delivery are listed: focus on literacy, focus on basic skills, early and frequent assessment, additional time, emphasis on college, provision of structure and order, and family involvement. In a separate section entitled "Designing Lessons," the school states that "curriculum development is an important part of what every teacher does" and the school documents and monitors this work carefully. Teachers must have their lesson plans approved on a weekly basis by the CDCI. The principal reported that she provides feedback to teachers on each lesson plan and this was supported during teacher interviews. All of the nine lesson plans reviewed by the team were developed using the curriculum alignment template and were aligned to the school's curricula.

According to the CDCI, the curriculum is reviewed throughout the year by teachers at their weekly meetings; a full review takes place during the summer by the CDCI with the participation of some teachers. Grade level chairs and the CDCI assure horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment. At this time assessment results are reviewed and curricular changes made. One example cited by the CDCI is the introduction of more non-fiction literature after a review of data revealed a weakness in this area.

Teachers reported that they have access to the Network's curricular resources and work with grade level colleagues as they develop curriculum. In addition, the school supplies numerous resources for teachers to use. These include anthologies from various publishers, Marilyn Burns mathematics resources, and other curricular planning materials.

The curriculum supports the school's mission of preparing students for college. The school is also aware that some students enter grade 5 with below-grade level reading skills. To meet this need, while maintaining the same learning objectives for all students, it has differentiated its curricula somewhat. For example, novels with easier readability levels are used in English classes where lower ability-level learners are grouped.

### **Benchmark 1D: Pedagogy**

Teachers demonstrated good subject matter and grade level competency in the lessons observed by the team. For example, in science and literature classes teachers used the correct terminology for the subject area and expected students to do the same during classroom discussions. Upon review of documents provided by the school documenting teacher licensure and highly qualified status, the team found all teachers are highly qualified in their fields.

Instruction was found to be rigorous, although examples of lessons that promoted higher level cognitive skills were not frequently in evidence. Examples of strong instruction included a lesson comparing a grade level appropriate novel, *My Brother Sam's Dead* to a Robert Frost poem. This comparison included examination of similarities between narrators and the poem/story in general. Teachers in some classrooms promoted academic rigor by challenging students. Homework assignments were well designed and promoted student thought. In one classroom students were asked to read an "Egyptian

Cinderella story” and compare it to the traditional version. This activity involved the use of a graphic organizer. In science, students were asked to differentiate between a plant cell and an animal cell using two models. In most classes, mathematics followed a teacher driven model with students using mostly worksheets. Instruction and lesson plans were aligned to the school’s curriculum and the New York State standards and performance indicators. Expectations for student learning were conveyed through the posting of objectives on the board in the classrooms. Students were observed being asked by teachers to read the objective and following the lesson students were sometimes asked to reflect on the lesson and whether it worked or not.

Differentiation within the school is accomplished primarily through homogeneous grouping within classrooms. Students below grade level are placed into class groups of smaller size than students performing closer to grade level in order to provide more individualized instruction. Differentiation was particularly in evidence within literacy classrooms through the use of leveled readers and various behavioral strategies. Students were observed to partner with a peer in most classrooms. The use of differentiated instruction was minimal in mathematics classrooms.

Students were observed to be focused and on task during instruction and teachers effectively used the SLANT protocol (Sit up straight, Listen, Ask and answer questions, Nod for understanding, and Track the speaker) to bring students back to the lesson when they were off task. Learning time was used effectively in all classrooms observed. Teachers maintained appropriate pacing for lessons and transitions were smooth. Teachers were observed to use timers in classrooms to keep students on pace during activities.

### **Benchmark 1E: Instructional Leadership**

BSC uses a co-director model. There is a CDO and a CDCI. They divide their responsibilities according to their titles and they share oversight of school culture with the dean of students.

The leadership team stated that high expectations for both students and teachers are delineated by the mission of the school, which is to prepare all students to be successful in college. Expectations for parents and students concerning their academic responsibilities in partnership with the school are detailed in the Student and Family Handbook 2009-2010. The CDCI stated that from the first day of teacher orientation the emphasis is on curriculum and the important role it plays in accomplishing the school mission. Teachers stated that they are held accountable for providing strong instruction to students. Teachers submit lesson plans twice weekly and receive feedback on them prior to lesson delivery. Teachers are observed at least weekly and are provided feedback by the CDCI through email. The team reviewed examples of the written feedback to teachers from the CDCI on formal observation forms and it included the following categories: something great that caught my eye, quick hit, and moving toward the goal.

There is a teacher evaluation system in place that begins in August during orientation when teachers are asked to fill out a self evaluation. Teachers are asked to identify two to three of their greatest strengths and two to three goals for growth within four performance areas: planning and preparing curriculum and instructions; managing the classroom and classroom environment; focusing on student learning; and professionalism and concern for students. Teachers may also list goals outside the performance areas if appropriate. Target expectations for each goal performance area are included in the evaluation and each teacher meets with the CDCI after the goals are set to discuss and finalized goals and target expectations. Following the independent development of goals by the teacher, the CDCI has a one on one meeting with each teacher to discuss and review the goals. The inspection team reviewed sample teacher self-evaluations and mid-year evaluations. At mid year, there is a formal evaluation done by the

CDCI for each teacher based on the performance standards, which includes evaluation of the progress of the teacher towards his or her goals. The team found that the evaluation process in place was a thoughtful process focused on performance goals and designed to improve teacher effectiveness and professional growth. The team found the process encouraged teacher ownership of their professional development.

Teachers interviewed stated that they were supported by leadership and Network staff. They said the CDCI provided instructional leadership by modeling lessons and co-teaching. They also stated that each Wednesday teachers receive a survey that asks them to note one thing that is going well for them and also to discuss any issues they may have. The CDCI responds to the surveys and also might meet with a teacher to address any concerns. All instructional leaders from the Network meet to review the academic program and collaborate to assess the needs of each Network school.

### **Benchmark 1F: At-Risk Students**

Two formal school groups are in place to identify students who require academic or behavioral support. The SST consists of teachers who meet bi-weekly to develop and update academic and behavioral student support plans. The SEC organizes and hosts these meetings. Student support plans are generated by this group for implementation by the general education staff. A second group, the SSO, meets weekly to review the effectiveness of classroom and school wide interventions. Participants in this group include the CDCI, the dean, the SEC, and the social worker. The SSO also makes referrals to the committee on special education. These team meetings determine what level of intervention is needed for each student

Bed-Stuy Collegiate provides a number of resources and programs to improve the academic and social skills of both students with disabilities and struggling regular education students. These services are provided through push-in and pull-out models by the SEC and a social worker. Academic intervention services in mathematics and reading are provided to students whose assessment data and classroom performance indicate a pattern of poor performance or failures, or whose parents and/or teachers refer them. These services take place daily during regularly scheduled ELA and mathematics classes. These students may also be blended in groups with students on individualized education programs (IEPs) who are also serviced by the SEC. The current student caseload for the SEC is approximately 15 students on IEPs and 19 on other academic or behavioral support plans.

Student support plans, academic or behavioral, are implemented for 30 days, after which the SSO, teachers, and parents meet to assess the plan's effectiveness. If all agree that adequate progress is not being made, a referral may be made to the committee on special education. The SEC attends weekly teacher meetings, works with teachers in the classrooms, and consults with them as needed.

The IEPs of in-coming students are reviewed by school staff, parents, and the special education committee. The goal of the committee, according to documents provided by the school, is "to determine the necessity to amend the IEP so that its present level of performance and goals reflect the student's current academic, behavioral, and therapeutic needs and Bed-Stuy Collegiate's innovative academic program." Prior to implementation, general education teachers and service providers meet with the special education coordinator to insure understanding of IEP goals and compliance with IEP requirements. The SEC reported that the Network provides him with "a huge amount of resources" and support in matters regarding special education. One example was a computer program that enabled him to track all of the progress of all of the students on IEPs.

Students are homogeneously grouped into homerooms. These smaller class sizes for the lower achieving groups enable teachers to provide more individual student attention. During the team’s visit, class size varied from 24 to 12 students. In addition, in reading, the groups are further reduced with some students working with other staff members in guided reading programs. Classroom teachers are required to provide tutoring after school to students who request it or who are recommended for this support by the teachers. After school homework help sessions are also available. According to the social worker, there is also a therapeutic homework session once each week for students who need help with organization or other homework issues. Saturday school is available for students who require extra help or whose poor attendance requires extra class time.

In the advisory program, classroom teachers and some other staff members such as the social worker function as advisors to small groups of 8-10 students. Two separate groups, one for boys and one for girls meet once a week with the social worker and one teacher to provide guidance on adolescent issues. Currently there are no English Language Learners (ELLs) at Bed-Stuy Collegiate, but a small group is expected next year and plans are in place to provide support services if students qualify next fall.

### **Benchmark 1G: Student Order and Discipline**

The team found that the school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship through school wide systems designed to ensure student order and discipline. Bed-Stuy Collegiate has a documented disciplinary policy delineated in the Student and Family Handbook for 2009-2010. The introduction to the code of conduct states that students and families have the right to attend a safe and orderly school. The code of conduct lists over 40 infractions and associated consequences that are ordered into three categories with increasing degrees of severity. Penalties and procedures for infractions have a range of options from oral warning to expulsion.

Classroom behavior and expectations are clearly stated in the handbook. Students are expected to use a quiet professional voice when on school grounds. Rules include: students are to line up in orderly and silent fashion, no food or drink except water is allowed in the classroom, students are to be seated at the beginning of class and immediately begin the “Do Now” portion of the lesson and students are expected to follow the SLANT protocol while in class.

The classrooms observed by the team were well managed and focused on learning. Observations by team members confirmed that, while the school is focused on teaching and learning and meeting its mission, it realizes that students would not progress unless structure and order existed in both the school and classrooms. Information on the school website reinforced this expectation: “Students need a safe and orderly environment to be productive. Bed-Stuy Collegiate creates a calm, composed, and disciplined environment to maximize the amount of time on task...”

The two methods the school uses to foster this atmosphere are a dress code and a merit and demerit system. All students are required to wear a school uniform. Students reported that whenever they are in that uniform they represent their school and school behavior expectations apply. There is also a strong merit and demerit system in place entitled STRIVE. Students earn merits for exhibiting the school’s values of scholarship, tenacity, respect, introspection, veracity, and effort. Merits are tracked and students can use accumulated merits to bid on various prizes. Students earn demerits for rule infractions. Merits and demerits are reported on the bi-monthly progress report for each student. Demerits are also averaged school wide so that parents and students can see where they stand in comparison to other students. Additionally, each class receives a rubric score from 0-4 that assesses the performance of the whole class for that lesson block. These rubric scores are tallied at the end of every week and classes

with high scores receive rewards. Team members observed teachers using the merit and demerit system during classroom observations.

Students interviewed stated that the school was safe because misbehavior is not tolerated. They stated that the detentions and demerit system helps make the school safe. The students and parents both said that behavior problems are addressed quickly. Students noted that there are security guards at the entrance of the school. The school has added the positions of dean of students and a social worker this year to support students and teachers and the school culture. The team observed these staff members in classes during observations.

### **Benchmark 1H: Professional Development**

Bed-Stuy Collegiate has implemented a professional development program that focuses on improving the pedagogical skills of its teachers. According to the CDCI, the professional development program focuses on supporting teachers in delivering the best curriculum with the best instructional strategies, and teachers interviewed by the team feel supported by the professional development and resources offered by the Network. The school is still in a developmental stage and continues to hire new teachers. The CDCI indicated four new teachers were hired this year and, like last year, she tries to meet the individual professional development needs of teachers through multiple classroom observations, review of lesson plans, and one-on-one discussions. The CDCI also stated professional development is an important part of setting high expectations for teachers through the development of professional development goals.

There are three weeks of staff orientation in August before school opens. Some of the professional development is provided across the Uncommon Schools network and some is school based. The first week of the summer program focuses on an overview of the academic program, introduction to state exam analysis, and the Uncommon School's vision. In addition, there are sessions in data driven instruction, backwards planning and how to write a great lesson plan. Week two focuses on the Doug Lemov teaching taxonomy and its application in the classroom, using pacing guides, model teaching strategies, and classroom management techniques. The third week is a combination of school culture sessions, advisory, and grade level meetings as well as individual work time.

The staff meets for professional development each Wednesday afternoon from 2:30 – 5 p.m. Before the staff meets, the CDCI asks them to fill out a survey that asks what one thing is going well for them or what they are struggling with and isn't working. The CDCI responds to each teacher by email and sometime follows her email by setting up a meeting to offer further assistance

At the Wednesday meetings, staff configure themselves in a variety of ways. Staff can meet as a whole school and focus on topics that affect all classrooms such as pacing and engagement, rigor and questioning and bringing inspiration into the classroom. Teachers meet as grade level teams and cover such topics as building relationships, building community and setting academic and cultural goals. They can also meet in departments. Topics listed in the professional development calendar include: literacy roll out, engagement strategies in history and science and math open response questions. There are also four to five professional development days during the year to review assessments.

Teachers videotape and review their lessons with colleagues. They visit other schools to view best practices and conduct peer observations of each others classrooms. These meetings provide time for SST activities. According to the CDCI and the teachers interviewed teachers may request to attend conferences on their own such as the national math conference.

## **Renewal Question 2**

### **Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?**

#### **Benchmark 2A: Mission and Key Design Elements**

The mission of the Bedford Stuyvesant Collegiate Charter School is to prepare every student for college; Bed-Stuy Collegiate provides instruction in keeping with the mission and designed to promote student success through a curriculum that is well documented and aligned to the state standards. There is a strong support system in place for students who may be struggling academically that includes tutoring support, homework help, an advisory program, and more intensive interventions as necessary.

#### **Key Design Elements**

- Both the school day and school years are extended, with classes beginning at 7:45 a.m. and dismissal occurs at 4:30 p.m. except on Wednesdays when there is a shortened day for teacher professional development. Students are in attendance for 190 days per year.
- Following review of the school's daily schedule and classroom observations, it was confirmed that students receive two hours of instruction daily in both mathematics and ELA. In addition, students also receive a full hour of science and social studies instruction daily.
- Through interviews with the CDCI and teachers it was confirmed that a data-driven tutoring program is in place and available to all students. Saturday school is also available for students requiring more intensive interventions or for students whose absences require time to make up instructional time.
- The school is strongly focused on its mission to prepare students for college. All stakeholders interviewed were aware of this. Student class groups are named after the college or university their homeroom teacher attended. College is discussed on a regular basis in classrooms.
- The inspection team found a school with well defined and enforced behavior policies and well behaved students. A merit and demerit system was in place and student attire adhered to the dress code.
- Students attend two hour-long blocks of ELA instruction daily. This time is broken into a writing section and a second hour that is devoted explicitly to literacy instruction. Literacy instruction includes differentiated instruction through leveled readers to support all student needs.
- The curriculum is designed by the school in alignment with the state standards and is adjusted following the review of student assessment results. This process allows for the identification of skills students need to acquire for success and allows for the incorporation of these skills in the instruction within the classrooms.
- Beyond state and other standardized assessments, Bed-Stuy Collegiate interim assessments developed by the Network are administered 4 to 5 times annually in mathematics, ELA, science and history. These assessments are common across grade levels within the school and are used for formative modifications to instruction as well as for placing students in support services.

- Bed-Stuy Collegiate promotes strong family involvement through open communications between parents and teachers, including a monthly parent newsletter. Open houses and orientation programs also provide information to parents and involve them in the culture at the school. A parent group was formed last year, which is playing an increasing role this year. In addition, the parents have a liaison in the social worker who works closely with the parent group.

### **Benchmark 2B: Parents and Students**

Students and parents reported a high level of satisfaction with the school. In the 2008-2009 New York City Department of Education School Survey, 100 percent of responding parents (32) stated that they were satisfied with the education their child had received. Forty-four percent of all school parents surveyed responded. This was validated by the two parents who were interviewed by the review team. The survey results and interviewees revealed positive attitudes about teacher communication, high expectations for student achievement, and safety. Particularly valued by both parents interviewed were the school's acceptance and celebration of students' individual skills and talents. They stated that although the academic program was highly structured, they found that teachers believed that students could succeed and that teachers would "pull it out of them." Students interviewed echoed these feelings, noting that "teachers push you." Referring to a teacher, one student said, "I passed because of him."

Parents and students provided numerous examples where support was provided to help a student gain control of behaviors or develop stronger academic skills. During the site visit, the review team observed the collaboration of the dean, the social worker, and the CDCI as they supported youngsters struggling with behavioral issues. Both interviewed parents stated that it was easy to contact teachers and the co-directors with any questions or concerns via telephone or email. A parent group was formed last year and was a little more active this second school year. At times co-directors have attended meetings, but the social worker was identified as the individual who worked most closely with the parent group.

Bed-Stuy Collegiate produces a monthly parent newsletter entitled, "Bed-Stuy Collegiate Family Update." The April edition contained reminders of important dates, recognition of staff and students for work well-done, and tips and strategies to help students succeed on state exams. The school maintains a high daily rate of attendance. Attendance rates for the 2008-2009 school year averaged 95 percent. The school lost eight students to attrition for school year 2008-2009, representing a ten percent loss.

### **Benchmark 2C: Organizational Capacity**

Bed-Stuy Collegiate is located in New York City school district 16, and shares space in the building with two other public schools. One school is MS 267 Math, Science and Technology, a grade 6-8 school with an enrollment of approximately 313 students. The second school is La Cima Charter School, a K-2 school with an enrollment of approximately 200 students. Bed-Stuy Collegiate has a detailed written policy in place relative to the sharing of space with the other schools. The following are examples of the tenants of this policy: students will exhibit professional and courteous behavior whenever walking in other parts of the building; students must respect the authority of the staff from the other schools; and if a student has a negative interaction with any member of the MS 267 or La Cima school communities, they should immediately inform a Bed-Stuy Collegiate staff member.

Bed-Stuy Collegiate opened in August 2008 serving 75 students in grade 5. The school added grade 6 last year and now serves 138 students. The CDCI indicated the plan was to expand to grade 8. Grade 7 will be added next year and student enrollment and staff will increase, according to interviews with the co-directors. As a result of adding grade 7, the school will hire approximately four additional staff.

Presently, the school has thirteen teachers. To handle the additional workload associated with adding grade 6 this year, the school added grade level chair positions and will do the same when grade 7 is added next year. The school hired a dean of students this year and will add a dean of curriculum and instruction next year.

According to documentation provided to the team, the school's academic personnel included two grade 6 mathematics teachers, one grade 6 history teacher, one grade 6 science teacher, one grade 6 writing teacher, one grade 6 reading/ELA teacher, a grade 5-6 special education teacher, two grade 5 mathematics teachers, one grade 5 science teacher, one grade 5 history teacher, one grade 5 writing/ELA teacher, and one grade 5 reading/ELA teacher. In addition, the school has a CDCI, a CDO, a social worker, a dean of students, an operations associate, and a special projects coordinator. According to information provided to the team, all but two teachers at Bed-Stuy Collegiate was certified and all had attained highly qualified status.

The CDCI had set expectations and standards with students, parents, and teachers to accomplish the mission and meet school academic and cultural goals. School goals and accountability plan goals have been identified and the CDCI indicated a process was in place to monitor accountability plan goals. This process included unit and interim assessments and exit tickets. In addition, she stated that she sets separate goals, which are oriented to the course content and school culture. These goals are created collaboratively with staff during professional development sessions in August. The team was provided a document that included twelve academic and cultural goals. Examples of these goals are: at least 50 percent of the students will score in the 50th percentile on the ELA Terra Nova at the end of grade 5; at least 90 percent of the students will score above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on the ELA Terra Nova at the end of grade 6; and the attendance rate will be 95 percent or higher.

The current partner of Bed-Stuy Collegiate is Uncommon Schools, a non-profit charter management organization that now manages a broad network of charter schools including four collegiate charter schools in Brooklyn and two more to open during the summer of 2010. In all, Uncommon Schools manages 16 schools in New York City, New York state and New Jersey. The schools are grouped geographically so that school leaders and teachers can easily collaborate. Uncommon Schools has implemented a dual leadership model in its schools that has clear lines of authority and responsibility. Each school has a principal or a CDCI and a CDO and adds support staff such as deans as grades are added and enrollment increases.

The basis of this model is that not one person can be knowledgeable in all areas in a sustained way, according to an Uncommon Schools interviewee. This model allows the CDO to focus on school operations while the CDCI can focus on academic matters such as instruction and assessment. The overall goal is to have 100 percent of the classrooms be "rigorous and joyous." The CDCI indicated school leaders of the Uncommon Schools Collegiate Network (the Network) meet once per month with an agenda and also share curricula, assessments, and prospective teaching candidates. There are collegiate wide computer servers for sharing information and each school stores lesson plans on the school server, which other schools can access.

The Network and Bed-Stuy Collegiate collaborate on hiring teachers and other staff. Using a twelve member recruitment team, the Network recruits, screens resumes, and provides candidate information to the schools that have openings for consideration. The school's academic leader is responsible for hiring teachers. The CDCI indicated two teachers from last year were not renewed for this year and one other teacher had moved and would not be returning. Two teachers were on improvement plans this year and will be renewed for next year.

According to the managing director, the authority of the co-directors follows the Network structure. In other words, Uncommon Schools provides guidance on some issues that apply across the board to all Uncommon Schools. An example of this is teacher pay scale, which is approximately 15 percent higher than the New York City teachers' pay scale. Some guidance is applicable to subgroups of the Uncommon Schools Network and may be related specifically to the collegiate schools (middle schools), with guidance provided through common applications, interim assessments, and curriculum scope and sequences for most subjects. Also, some schools have programs specific only to that site such as advisory programs or specific methods of conducting teacher observations and providing feedback.

Students are admitted via a lottery, which the school holds each April. The principal indicated that the school received 461 applications for 81 open positions for next year. The school provides an admission preference for siblings and for students who live within the school district. The school makes students and families aware of the lottery through community outreach days, canvassing the community, by distributing flyers and applications at local shopping centers and stores, and by providing admission information to local community organizations. Five students left the school last year, according to interviewees. Students left for a variety of reasons, including transportation problems and the acceptance of admission to another school.

The school's management and board communicate regularly with parents, school staff, and students. The school publishes a well designed, 47 page student and family handbook, which includes information on issues related to students and parents, including behavioral expectations, a description of the open meeting law, and the process a parent would follow to adjudicate a concern. School communication with parents regarding expectations and school culture begins at the time of the lottery and continues through the registration process and two summer orientation programs, which include discussions on student testing and the rules of the schools. The parents of current students help in the orientation by sharing their own experiences in the school. The school also publishes a family newsletter entitled the Bed-Stuy Collegiate Family Update, which includes a section on important dates such as Back to School night and a section for shout-outs that includes celebrating the number of merits a student has received. The CDCI sends a morning email to staff. Each teacher is an advisor to eight to nine students and makes calls to families approximately every two weeks to discuss any problems the student may be having. The board primarily communicates through board meetings to which the public is invited. Board meeting minutes are also published and made available to the public.

### **Benchmark 2D: Board Oversight**

The school and Uncommon Schools each have a board of trustees. According to the school's by-laws provided to the team, the number of trustees shall be not less than seven or more than 13. The powers of the board are described in the by-laws. Examples of specific powers include electing and removing trustees; borrowing money and incurring debt; carrying out the business of the charter school; and indemnifying and maintaining insurance.

Seven members of the board were available to be interviewed by the team. Board membership included a parent representative. In terms of the skills prospective members need to bring to the board, interviewees were primarily looking for new members who would be committed board members and whose educational philosophy was aligned with the educational philosophy of Bed-Stuy Collegiate and Uncommon Schools. A review of the backgrounds of board members showed members had experience in technology, media sales, management, non-profit leadership, finance, law, education, and finance.

When queried about the mission of the school, the board members interviewed knew that the mission of the school was to prepare the students for college. Board members indicated that they received packets of student achievement data prior to each board meeting and the co-directors of curriculum and instruction and operations make a presentation on the data. The data presented to the board includes student achievement and assessment data, attendance and attrition data, and financials. The data include comparisons with other collegiate schools. For example, at the June 10, 2009 board meeting the CDCI discussed the school's state mathematics exam scores, and updated the board on staff recruitment. The CDO presented the April 30<sup>th</sup> financial reports and explained the Budget Variance Summary. At the September 23, 2009 board meeting, the board was presented with the 2009-2010 school goals that the board discussed with the CDCI. These goals included performance goals on standardized tests, attendance goals, and family satisfaction goals. At this same meeting, the CDO reviewed the school's year-end report card including the grade 5 retention rate, the drop in attendance due to a temporary spike in student illness during May and June, and student performance on the Terra Nova assessment.

The board members interviewed stated that they keep a close eye on the data presented to them, but recognize the school is still in a developmental stage. The board has noticed that attendance has dipped below the benchmark of 95 percent in certain months, but this was attributed to high levels of illness and a tardiness issue. Through the comparison of this school with other collegiate schools, they have also noticed a correlation between the age of the school and assessment result trends. In other words, the longer a school has been in existence the better students perform when compared to other collegiate schools.

The board has not made any financial or organizational decisions that have impeded the school in meeting its mission. Board members indicated that each Uncommon School is in a different financial situation and has different financial needs. The managing director and board members indicated finances were monitored closely. School leaders were involved in the budget process and both co-directors received monthly financial reports from Uncommon Schools.

The board members interviewed indicated the board has not evaluated the co-directors in writing, although the managing director does work closely with the CDCI and provides the board with feedback on her performance. The board indicated a self-evaluation by board members was planned for June. In addition, Uncommon Schools asks school leaders to submit an evaluation of its performance, followed by a self-evaluation by Uncommon Schools. Results are provided to the school board at its December meeting. Board members stated the evaluation of Uncommon Schools was a rigorous process.

## **Benchmark 2E: Governance**

The board has developed and approved the mission and academic goals included in the school's accountability plan as well as school goals related to success on the state ELA and mathematics examinations. Board members indicated that the system in place to assure that goals and priorities are met is provided through the academic and management structure developed and implemented by Uncommon Schools. The board relies on the managing director and chief operating officer of Uncommon Schools, in collaboration with the co-directors of the school, to implement and monitor systems to meet school goals and priorities. The board members indicated they hold all academic and operations leaders accountable.

According to information provided to the team, "the school is governed by a board of trustees that brings community, educational, and professional perspectives to maintaining a viable and thriving school."

Bed-Stuy Collegiate membership includes ten trustees and has approved by-laws. The by-laws for Bed-Stuy Collegiate were voted on and approved on June 11, 2008. At this meeting, the board also approved the hiring of the principal, the school personnel policies, and the school code of conduct. The by-laws include articles which describe a process for election, eligibility, term of office, removal, resignation, vacancies, and compensation. The board members interviewed indicated the board uses several methods to fill vacancies, including board search services, such as one provided by the Robin Hood Foundation. Prospective board members are interviewed by the executive committee and visit the school.

School and board policies are in place. School policies for students and parents are outlined in the Student and Family Handbook 2009-2010; board policies are reflected in the by-laws; and teacher policies are reflected in a document entitled the Red Book 2009-2010. According to a review of the by-laws, the board holds bi-monthly meetings. Board minutes reviewed by the team showed board meetings were held at Bed-Stuy Collegiate in June 2009, Kings Collegiate Charter School in September 2009, and at Joho Capital in New York City in June 2008. The by-laws allow the meetings to be held at the corporation's principal office or at any other place designated by the board. The board adheres to the New York State public meeting law, and a detailed description of the open meeting policy is included in the 2009-2020 Student and Family Handbook. This policy identified twelve components including: the calendar of all scheduled board meetings will be posted at the school as soon as it becomes available; to the extent possible, the schools will publicly post notices of board meetings; and minutes of the public meeting will be available to the public upon request

According to board members interviewed, board members can hold dual membership on the Uncommon Schools and the Bed-Stuy Collegiate boards. One member of the Bed-Stuy Collegiate board also is a member of the Uncommon Schools board; however, the member indicated he recuses himself on votes that may cause a conflict of interest, such as in financial or contract matters. The team was provided a four page conflict of interest policy that included seven articles, including articles on procedures for addressing conflicts of interest, determining whether a conflict of interest exists, and violations of the conflict of interest policy.

Board members indicated a grievance process was in place at the school. A review of the Student and Family Handbook 2009-2010 showed that it included a section entitled "Addressing Concerns," which detailed the procedures to follow if there was a concern about school policy or a complaint against the school for violating state law or the school's charter. A review of these procedures showed that the board and all staff were accessible as part of the complaint process.

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## METHODOLOGY

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The two-day renewal inspection site visit was conducted at Bed-Stuy Collegiate during the period from May 11 to 12, 2010. The renewal inspection team (the team) conducted interviews with the CDCI; the CDO, the dean of students, the Uncommon Schools managing director of collegiate charter schools, the Uncommon Schools chief operating officer, the special education coordinator, and a social worker. The team used a portion of the State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks to guide the evaluation process.

In addition, the team conducted the following focus groups of school community representatives:

- A board of trustees' interview with seven current members.
- A teacher focus group consisting of six teachers.
- A student focus group consisting of six students representing grades 5-6.
- A parent focus group consisting of two parents.

The team conducted 12 classroom observations in grades 5 and 6. The observations ranged in length from 20 to 30 minutes. Two ELA lessons were observed, four mathematics lessons, two science lessons, two history lessons, and two reading lessons were observed. Team members kept running records of their observations using a classroom observation evidence worksheet.

The documents and data reviewed by the team before, during, and after the site visit included the following:

- Organization chart
- School improvement or strategic plan
- List and calendar of formative and summative assessments
- Copies of data analyses and summaries
- Description of student support programs
- Student and family handbooks
- Faculty and staff handbooks
- Professional development program documents, schedules, and course lists
- Board minutes and by-laws
- Teacher planning time and meeting schedules
- Teacher evaluation tools
- Classroom observation tools
- Job descriptions of school leaders and instructional staff
- School classroom schedules and map
- Teacher roster and certification, including highly qualified status
- Parent surveys and newsletters
- School data to include waiting list, enrollment, student teacher and attrition data
- Sample lesson plans
- Sample student work
- Sample evaluations of teachers, school leaders, and management organizations
- Curriculum documents

The external school evaluation was conducted by an experienced team of educators from Class Measures. Their biographies follow:

**Christine Brandt** has been an educator for many years, serving as a classroom teacher, special educator, administrator, and principal. She began her career as a Middle School teacher of English, French, Moderate Special Needs, and Reading. She moved into the administrator ranks as a Special Education Director at the Middle School level. For 18 years she served as principal, first in Wellesley, then in Dover, Massachusetts. In addition, she worked with the Somerville Charter School as their Lower School Coordinator. Currently, she mentors and supervises aspiring school administrators in both regular and special education. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association and is their Federal Liaison and Legislative Chair. She earned her undergraduate degree from Regis College, and her graduate degrees from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell in Reading and Learning Disabilities and from Northeastern University in Education Administration.

**Jeanne Simons, Director of Educational Development.** She worked previously as a high school mathematics teacher and in mathematics reform in urban school districts as a Targeted Mathematics Specialist with the Massachusetts Department of Education. She is a content and pedagogical expert in mathematics. She has experience in the development of coaching programs, effective differentiation, assessment and the formative usage of data, and in developing and providing professional development for teachers and leaders across a variety of reform topics. In addition, she has been involved in the development of a variety of technology-based educational initiatives, most recently providing educational support in the development of one of the first online teacher licensure programs in the Middle East. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from the California Institute of Technology and a Masters of Education in Mind, Brain and Education from Harvard.

**James Hearn**s is the Vice President of Professional Services for Class Measures. In that capacity, he manages the Class Measures school evaluation and inspection process and all school and district inspection/evaluation/review contracts, participates as a team member on site visits, and edits and writes reports. Jim has over twenty-five years of experience in state government policy and budget analysis, performance auditing, program evaluation, and University teaching. Jim served as a School District Examiner and Field Coordinator for the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, completing over forty school and district reviews in Massachusetts. For almost a decade, Jim held the position of Senior Policy Analyst for the Senate Post Audit and Oversight Committee of the Massachusetts State Senate. In that capacity, he completed a number of performance audits and policy reviews, including a comprehensive review of the Massachusetts adult correctional education programs. Jim is a former member of the Executive Committee of the National Legislative Program Evaluation Society. From 1982 to 1996, he served as an Adjunct Lecturer in Health Management at University College at Northeastern University. Jim earned his Bachelors Degree in Business from Boston College and holds a Master's Degree in Business from Suffolk University.

**Melanie Gallo** has been an educator for 35 years. A member of the National School Reform faculty, she has been a teacher and a school director. She has been a founder of two schools: a school in New Hampshire and a charter school in Massachusetts. She has been recognized by the College Board for excellence in teaching AP English and is the author of Senior Project in Creating the Good High School by Mackin/Silva. She is a trained Critical Friends coach and has served on the Board of the Massachusetts Drama Guild. She is currently on the graduate school adjunct faculty at Fitchburg State College. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and a Master's degree in Education from Fitchburg State College. She is at present a Leadership Consultant for Class Measures.