



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

Brooklyn Prospect Charter School

School Evaluation Report 2009-2010

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INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the “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 New York State 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 charter schools authorized by them. By providing this oversight and feedback, the SUNY Trustees and the Institute seek to accomplish three goals:

- **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.
- **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 SUNY 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.

The Institute regularly collects a range of data about each school’s performance over the course of its charter period, which ultimately contributes to that school’s renewal decision. These data include student performance results, financial audits, any legal records of issues addressed, board meeting minutes, and reports from regular evaluation visits conducted by the Institute (or external experts contracted by the Institute) and other agencies with oversight responsibilities.

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. 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. The third, entitled School Evaluation Visit, presents the analysis of evidence collected during the current evaluation visit. A summary of conclusions from previous school evaluations is also provided as background and context for the current evaluation.

Because of the inherent complexity of an organization such as a school, this School 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 note areas in need of improvement with respect to the school’s performance 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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT

Based on the analysis of evidence from the evaluation visit to the Brooklyn Prospect Charter School (Brooklyn Prospect), the school appears to be making adequate progress towards achieving its mission and meeting the SUNY Charter Renewal Benchmarks considered during this evaluation. Although this conclusion is drawn from a variety of indicators which are discussed more fully later in this report, some of the more salient indicators include the following:

Academic Success

Areas of Strength

- Brooklyn Prospect has an emerging system to gather assessment and evaluation data and is beginning to use it to improve student learning, particularly in English language arts and mathematics.
- Brooklyn Prospect has identified differentiated instruction as a priority and is beginning to implement instruction in some classes that is differentiated to meet the range of learning needs represented in the student population.
- School leaders have implemented a clear and effective teacher evaluation system and teachers were beginning to receive ongoing and targeted support at the time of the visit.
- Brooklyn Prospect has a comprehensive and targeted professional development program.

Areas for Growth

- While Brooklyn Prospect has implemented an effective process for developing its curriculum, the existing curricular documents at the time of the visit are not fully developed.
- Overall, classroom instruction is generally weak. In many classrooms student engagement is low and there is a lack of critical higher-order thinking skills expected of students.
- The absence of effective classroom management strategies on the part of many teachers detracts from student learning. While the school has a discipline system in place, it is not consistently implemented.

Organizational Capacity

Areas of Strength

- Brooklyn Prospect has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program. The school has made a number of significant changes during its first year of operation in response to identified needs.
- The school board has worked effectively to support start-up of the school, to begin implementing a rigorous evaluation process of school leadership and to provide oversight of school operations.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Opening Information

Date Initial Charter Approved by SUNY Trustees	May 30, 2008
Date Initial Charter Approved by Board of Regents	July 29, 2008
School Opening Date	September, 2009

Location

School Year(s)	Location(s)	Grades At This Location	District
2009-10	153 35 th Street, Brooklyn, NY	All	New York City CSD 15

Current Mission Statement

Serving grades six through twelve, Brooklyn Prospect pairs students with excellent teachers in a college preparatory environment using the International Baccalaureate program. We prepare students for success as global citizens and help students develop the love of learning that provides the foundation for personal and professional success.

Current Key Design Elements

• Small group advisory for all students every day;
• Curriculum focused on innovation, inquiry, creativity, expression, critical thinking, problem solving, reflection and teamwork;
• Development of students' skills and habits of mind, focusing on real-world connections and effective learning communities;
• Curriculum based on the pillars of International Baccalaureate program;
• Integrated program that focuses on the development of the "whole person";
• Curriculum infused with 21 st Century skills;
• Foreign language and physical education classes daily for all students;
• Professional development focused on assessment data and differentiation; and
• Culture of all staff as teachers and learners for each other/ sharing best practices.

School Characteristics

School Year	Original Chartered Enrollment	Revised Charter Enrollment	Actual Enrollment ¹	Original Chartered Grades	Actual Grades	Days of Instruction
2009-10	92		100	6	6	185

Student Demographics

	2009-10 ²	
	Percent of School Enrollment	Percent of NYC CSD 15 Enrollment
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0
Black or African American	24	23
Hispanic	35	44
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	5	12
White	34	21
Multiracial	2	0
Special Populations		
Students with Disabilities ³	17	15
Limited English Proficient	1	16
Free/Reduced Lunch		
Eligible for Free Lunch	24	60
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	9	7

¹ 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.)

² Source: 2009-10 State Report Cards, State Education Department.

³ New York State Education Department does not report special education data; all statistics given were provided by the school.

Current Board of Trustees

Board Member Name	Term	Position/Committees
Luyen Chou	5/08-5/10	Chair
Eliza Williams Swann	5/08-5/10	Secretary
Harold (James) Bernard	5/08-5/10	Trustee
Anne Ewing Burns	5/08-5/10	Trustee
Pearl Rock Kane	5/08-5/10	Trustee
Candice Olson	5/08-5/10	Trustee
Roger Gerard Fortune	5/08-5/10	Trustee
Elizabeth Varley Camp	5/08-5/10	Trustee
Judith Hannaway	5/08-5/10	Trustee
Daniel Rubenstein	Ex-officio	Ex-Officio
Tilda Doscher	Ex-officio	Ex-Officio

School Leader(s)

School Year	School Leader(s) Name and Title
2009-10	Daniel Rubenstein, Executive Director

School Visit History

School Year	Visit Type	Evaluator (Institute/External)	Date
2009-10	First-Year Visit	Institute	April 13, 2010

SCHOOL EVALUATION VISIT ANALYSIS AND EVIDENCE

Background

Regardless of the type of visit, Institute evaluations of SUNY authorized charter schools are organized around 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 section of the School Evaluation Report begins with a summary of the observations made and the conclusions drawn during previous visits to the school. This information is used by evaluation teams in preparation for the visit and assists the observers in understanding the accomplishments and challenges the school has faced. Similarly, this information provides the reader with insight into the Institute's inspection of the school's academic program and conclusions from prior visits, including those conducted by external experts on behalf of the Institute. Following this summary is a detailed analysis of the observations and conclusions from this year's evaluation, along with supporting evidence. Finally, information regarding the conduct of the evaluation, including the date of the visit and information about the evaluation team, is provided.

Evaluation Visit Benchmark Analysis and Evidence

Use of Assessment Data (Benchmark 1.B)

Brooklyn Prospect has an emerging system to gather assessment and evaluation data and is beginning to use it to improve student learning.

The school regularly administered assessments aligned to the school's curriculum and state standards. The assessments include the TerraNova norm-referenced exam, mock state tests, and teacher developed unit tests and quizzes. Several teachers also reported using beginning-of-year diagnostic exams to measure students' prior knowledge. The use of informal assessments was less uniform. Some teachers routinely used daily "Do Nows" and "exit tickets," to gauge student understanding while others did not use daily formative assessments. While some teachers used robust strategies to check for student understanding of their classroom instruction, others performed only cursory checks for understanding and accepted a subset of class responses as representative of the whole group's level of understanding.

Brooklyn Prospect's assessment practices were most advanced in using mock state exams in English language arts and mathematics three times per year. Using a Schoolnet program, the school produced item analysis reports at both the student and school level for these mock state exams, which could enable teachers to identify standards in need of reteaching as well as individual students in

need of remediation. Some teachers used these data tools extensively, but most only used them in a perfunctory manner. One teacher reported relying on the results to identify concepts that students had not mastered, which enabled her to revise her lesson plans leading up to the state exam. Other teachers, particularly those teaching subjects other than English language arts and mathematics reported that their data analysis was more informal. For example, a teacher explained that she maintained a set of student portfolios to determine student growth in hard-to-quantify critical thinking. The school leaders also conducted a systematic analysis of student's 5th grade performance on the prior year's state test exam, which they compared to ongoing performance on mock state exams to measure progress.

Teachers and school leaders effectively used assessment results to meet students' needs, especially in English language arts and mathematics. The Terra Nova norm-referenced assessment was used at the beginning of the year to inform grouping across classes in order to ensure a heterogeneous distribution of students. In English language arts, assessment data was used to determine topics and skills that need to be re-taught during small-group center activities. In addition, a teacher also reported using assessment data of student reading levels to differentiate texts for homework. Another teacher reported reviewing exams informally to gain a better sense of student performance and what skills students might be struggling with.

The school regularly communicated student performance to school stakeholders. It distributed report cards at the end of each semester, and two progress reports within each semester. Parents communicated regularly with their child's advisory teacher about behavior and academic performance. At the time of the visit, the school's promotion policy was not yet established. One teacher said that she was "nervous" that there was no policy; she was unsure of the relative weighting of standardized tests and class grades in making promotional decisions. Another teacher was also unaware of the promotional policy, and believed that students who failed some classes would still be promoted.

Curriculum (Benchmark 1.C)

Brooklyn Prospect has not yet fully developed a curriculum for preparing students to meet state performance standards.

Members of the visit team found that the school's general curriculum framework was organized, but its level of completeness varied across subject areas. The process for selecting, developing, and revising the curriculum is heavily teacher dependent. The school had an organized curriculum framework template and guidelines, which it used to develop curriculum maps in all subjects. While the maps contained useful fields for developing a framework, they were often incomplete. The English language arts curriculum was especially incomplete, only containing general topics and texts and without guiding questions, assessments, or standards.

Teachers assumed significant responsibility for what they teach and when to teach it. Teachers were responsible for the development of the maps, as well as the selection of resources to use in teaching the material. They were allowed to select the commercial materials to be used, as well as to develop their own resources. Some teachers reported using the maps as a general guide, and then developing their own materials throughout the school year, with "a lot of moment-to-moment flexibility." One teacher reported generally following the commercial materials selected, with supplementary materials as needed, while another teacher used the state standards as well as the maps as a detailed guide for instructional planning.

Teachers spent a week a week during the summer working on curriculum maps, aligned across subjects, such as linking the scientific method in science to data collection in mathematics. The maps were later revised to conform better to the incoming student population.

Pedagogy (Benchmark 1.D)

The quality of instruction at Brooklyn Prospect during the visit is weak in most classrooms.

Visit team members observed teachers implementing purposeful lessons with measurable learning objectives contained in their lesson plans, though many lessons did not achieve the stated objectives. All observed classes had posted objectives, which were generally discussed with students, although there were instances when students were not clear about an objective. The objectives were often activity-based (e.g., “students will practice note-taking while listening”), rather than skill-based.

In most classes, learning time was not used effectively and this limited students’ ability to master the objective. Much of the class time was spent organizing students into groups, checking homework, and other procedural tasks. In most classes, the majority of students were unable to complete the lesson due to the lack of effective classroom management, poor understanding of the given task and teachers’ ineffectively checking for understanding. Many students did not understand the objective due to the limited nature of the guided practice portion of the lesson. Among the observed classes, one class was exceptional. In this class, the lesson was structured to include a variety of tasks and checks for understanding, which ensured that students mastered the objective.

The level of instruction was generally grade appropriate, but did not promote higher order thinking or problem solving skills. In one class, questions were often low-level, worded so that students could easily identify answers in the text; in another class, students spent the majority of time copying notes from the board, which the students indicated was a common activity. In a few classes students were challenged to think more critically.

Student engagement was low in many classrooms and learning time was often not maximized. For example, in one class the teacher spent a third of the period getting the students settled in groups and setting up activities. Many teachers also did not sufficiently check for understanding at the end of the lesson, and many students thus chose not to participate. While there was some “cold-calling,” it was often targeted at students already paying attention and the same students participated repeatedly. In one class, a group of five students (out of more than 20) answered nearly every question asked while the rest of the class sat silently, often with incorrect or incomplete information on their assignment. Student engagement was particularly low in the collaborative team teaching (CTT) classes across subjects despite the presence of a second teacher in the room. There was little redirection of off-task behavior by either teacher, which negatively impacted the ability of teachers to achieve learning objectives.

The school had identified differentiated instruction as a school priority and in some classrooms differentiated instruction was evident. One section of the school’s single grade was a CTT class in which one teacher traveled with this class to all subject areas. Teachers reported that the CTT teacher often worked with small groups of students to review material or to explain it in a different way.

Teachers reported that they struggled to balance sufficient time for basic practice with extension activities, especially given the wide range of ability levels represented in the student population. One teacher often used tiered assignments or created two versions of an assignment to meet each student at the appropriate level. Teachers discussed the professional development emphasis on differentiated instruction and reported that the administration accepted their different comfort levels with implementing differentiated activities.

Instructional Leadership (Benchmark 1.E)

Brooklyn Prospect’s instructional leadership is developing.

School leaders had high expectations for student achievement. Many teachers had similar expectations; however, other teachers believed that these expectations had been set prior to assessing the current student population and were not attainable in the short run.

The instructional leaders were beginning to provide teachers with targeted support. Teachers reported that the most of this support came from the principal. The executive director described his role as a “resource” to help teachers focus on instruction. The principal’s presence in classrooms varied according to teachers, but teachers all reported that if they were struggling they could go to her for support. At the time of the visit, the principal was reportedly meeting one-on-one with teachers to discuss progress mostly bi-weekly. At some of these meetings the principal set individual goals and expectations for what she would look for during her next observation. The principal also created individual professional development plans for each teacher which she regularly monitored. For example, one teacher reported that her goals focused on teaching students to analyze data, on using formative assessment, and on involving all students in classroom discussions.

Instructional leaders conducted regular evaluations that accurately identified teachers’ strengths and weaknesses. At the time of the visit all teachers had received midyear evaluations and were familiar with the criteria prior to the evaluation. The evaluation form consisted of a rubric organized into the following domains: planning and preparation for learning; classroom management; delivery of instruction; monitoring; assessment; and professionalism. The form also had sub indicators as well as goals for improvement.

At-Risk Students (Benchmark 1.F)

Brooklyn Prospect has clear procedures for identifying students with disabilities and those at risk of academic failure. These procedures are largely informal as a result of the small size of the school.

The school had largely informal procedures for identifying students with disabilities and those who are struggling academically. The staff met weekly to discuss particular students who appeared to be struggling. If it was determined collectively that a student needed to be formally evaluated the special education teachers gathered information from staff and involved parents to discuss a potential special education referral. Additionally, special education teachers regularly discussed struggling students and strategies for meeting their needs with general education teachers. Time during faculty meetings was regularly dedicated to discussing individual students and groups of struggling students. The CTT teacher, who served as the school’s special education coordinator, was responsible for a class for students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs). He hired and coordinated related service providers, and served as the primary liaison with the Committee on Special Education (CSE). Some students also received SETTS services during the afterschool program. Additional services

mandated in a student's IEP were provided through push-in services by the two special education teachers. In observed lessons, the CTT teacher provided students with some individualized academic support, but did more to ensure that students were focused and well behaved.

At the time of the visit, the school had recently begun to hold Saturday school sessions for students who had performed below expectations. The school mainly offered general education students additional support in after-school tutorial groups, which generally consisted of differentiated small-group instruction. The tutorial was mandatory for those students who scored low on diagnostic assessments given at the beginning of the school year. Some students had exited the group based on improved performance; other students have entered based on performance during the year.

The school implemented some informal methods to monitor the progress and success of at-risk students. The special education teacher reviewed assessment data and worked collaboratively with classroom teachers to plan her afterschool SETTS tutorials. Teachers were aware of the students with IEPs in their class and reported that they communicated with the CTT teacher regularly on meeting their needs. The CTT teacher reported that the school did not disaggregate assessment data based on IEP status, and as a result did not have data on the program's effectiveness.

The special education staff compiled IEP snapshots of each student, with pertinent information including pedagogical strategies for each teacher. The CTT teacher provided teachers with support in meeting the needs of at risk students and led a set of professional development activities focusing on engaging students and "meeting them where they are."

Student Order and Discipline (Benchmark 1.G)

While Brooklyn Prospect aspires to promote a culture of learning and scholarship, the absence of behavior management has inhibited the school's ability to achieve this objective.

The school was safe, though some disorder was evident in common spaces during transitions. Students would wait in groups outside of classrooms, talking loudly and jostling each other. For example, two students wrestled over a pen, while the dean of students and other teachers stood by without addressing the students' behavior. Nevertheless, teachers reported that since the dean of students was hired much of the "serious" misbehavior had been reduced or eliminated.

With only a few notable exceptions, teachers did not demonstrate effective classroom management strategies; as a result, misbehavior on many occasions detracted from student learning. Teachers reported that they were expected to use the school's escalating discipline system (warning, conduct card), which provided uniform consequences associated with specific warnings; however, during observed lessons teachers did not use the warnings consistently. While some teachers rarely used them, other teachers used warnings relatively quickly and issued multiple warnings without consequences. One teacher reported that the staff had become more consistent in issuing consequences, but also noted that behaviors which lead to consequences were not consistent across classes.

When discussing student behavior, some teachers referred to students who had "checked out" and indicated that teachers needed to do more to reach and engage these students now that they better understood the student population. One teacher struggled with management, as students consistently spoke out during a lesson and did not pay attention to directions. In this class, one student cursed audibly when given a warning, was given a consequence, and then proceeded to spend the rest of the

period alternating between asking the teacher for forgiveness and continued misbehavior without additional consequences. Other students were shooting their rubber bracelets at each other with no consequences beyond a warning. In other classes, while not seriously misbehaving, students were chatting with neighbors during teacher-directed instruction and independent practice, limiting the effectiveness of the instruction. While it was evident that teachers had attempted to establish routines, they were not sufficiently reinforced and thus activities took longer than they should have (setting up, collecting homework, taking out books, etc.), limiting time for delivering instruction.

When asked about the effectiveness of the school's discipline policy, one teacher reported that he believed that the plan was working insofar as conflicts that might become violent at other schools were not present at Brooklyn Prospect. Teachers reported that the existing system worked for almost all of the students, but that for the "ten percent" for whom it did not, they needed to develop new systems, aside from the behavior contracts or behavior logs completed for some students.

Professional Development (Benchmark 1.H)

The school's professional development program has begun to assist teachers in meeting student academic needs and school goals.

The school had a comprehensive professional development program. Once a month, a professional development session was held on a Friday, often led by the principal, the dean of students, or a teacher. Topics included differentiation of instruction and text coding, which was observed in classes. The school also conducted a summer professional development program, which included curriculum development exercises and workshops on a variety of instructional topics. Teachers were also allowed to attend a wide variety of outside professional development opportunities, most notably content-specific activities. Special education teachers participated in a consortium focusing on the needs of students with disabilities.

The school identified professional development goals for individual teachers, administrators, and the school overall. For teachers, these plans included diagnostic achievement data, student achievement SMART goals (Specific, measurable, attainable, results oriented and time bound), professional development objectives, and related professional development activities. They also included a time frame for achieving goals and required documentation which included a portfolio of accomplishments. Teachers had not yet compiled these portfolios at the time of the visit.

Organizational Capacity (Benchmark 2.C)

The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.

Teachers were clear on the organizational structure and the roles and responsibilities of various individuals that comprise the school leadership team. This team, which included the executive director, principal, director of development and communication, and director of operations and finance met twice each week as a team for approximately two hours to review their school-wide goals for the year and to discuss issues of concern. Goals were school-wide and by department and included a set of metrics.

The school was co-located with a New York City Department of Education high school and housed in a new facility that provided ample room for it to implement the educational program. Classrooms

were rich with instructional materials and teachers overwhelming reported receiving adequate resources.

The school had an effective year-round hiring process, which included internet website postings, attending hiring fairs, and placing advertisements in local newspapers. Existing faculty were to receive a modest bonus if they referred a successful candidate. Teachers reported that the rigorous hiring process had required them to submit a taped lesson of their teaching and had included several rounds of interviews. The school maintained sufficient enrollment of 102 students during its first year of operation. Leaders reported putting an effort into recruiting English language learners, but had none enrolled up to the time of the visit, despite the school's location in a diverse area.

Teachers and administrators were able to identify several important changes that had been made this year in response to observed needs. A dean of students was hired to provide additional time for the principal to provide instructional leadership and to improve the school climate. After the student lottery, the school hired a second special education teacher because of the incoming student population. An assistant director of finance and operations was also hired once the school realized that the workload assumed by the director of finance and operations was not sustainable. The executive director stated that the intent of establishing the large leadership team in the first year of operation was to set a solid foundation.

Governance (Benchmark 2.D-E)

Brooklyn Prospect's board of trustees has worked effectively to support start-up of the school, and to provide oversight of school operations.

The board of trustees had adequate skills, structures and procedures with which to govern the school. It was cautiously optimistic about the school's progress and believed that the members had created a solid foundation to support and oversee the school's operations, governance and compliance, as well as the financial, facility and fundraising needs of the school.

The Board had functioning committees in finance, fundraising, education, and governance and compliance. The education committee conducted quarterly school and classroom visits and noted that the school had greatly improved since their last visit. Each committee chairperson had expertise in the related committee functions.

The executive director, principal, and director of operations and finance provided a report to the board at each regular board meeting. Collectively, these reports provided the board with regular and adequate information in which to provide oversight of the school.

Notably, the development committee reached its start-up fundraising goal and met its year one fundraising goal. As a result, the school was able to implement its third year organizational structure as described above in its first year of operation and enough funds to locate a permanent facility.

The Finance and Audit Committee established policies and procedures, and the chair of the committee worked one-on-one with the director of finance and operations to ensure that budgeting was done correctly and that the school would end the year with a surplus. An eight-year budget was developed for the school to ensure that it had enough resources for the planned new facility and to meet expansion needs.

The school board was developing an extensive appraisal system of the executive director to include a review of his core competencies and overall performance. The performance categories would be based on approximately 13 categories, which were primarily taken from the school's benchmarks, 21st Century Skills, student attendance, and student and parent/guardian satisfaction. The board's executive committee planned to conduct the first appraisal, then share the results with the entire board, and finally conduct a 360 evaluation.

The board also conducted an internal survey of its membership to identify areas of need. The preliminary results included the need to add new members for additional fundraising capacity and to develop effective training for new board members.

Conduct of the Visit

The Charter Schools Institute conducted the school evaluation visit at Brooklyn Prospect Charter School on April 13, 2010. Listed below are the names and backgrounds of the individuals who conducted the visit:

Jason Sarsfield (team leader) is a Senior Analyst for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York, responsible for reviewing school applications, analyzing data to identify critical issues for renewal visit teams, monitoring the development of all renewal recommendation reports and supporting the development, refinement, and revision of internal policies and practices of the Institute's renewal process. Mr. Sarsfield returns to the Institute from the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning in the Bronx, NY, where he supervised the administration of standardized assessments, conducted analysis of student achievement data for purposes of program evaluation, and oversaw the development and submission of reports to state, federal and local agencies. Prior to his service at the Bronx Charter School for Better Learning, he served as a Senior Analyst at the SUNY Charter Schools Institute, where he provided leadership for annual and informal school evaluation visits. Before moving to New York to work for the Institute, Mr. Sarsfield was a contract analyst for the Center for Charter Schools at Central Michigan University, where he evaluated the academic performance of authorized charter schools and provided technical assistance for school improvement initiatives and the analysis of student achievement data. Mr. Sarsfield also served as a teacher and coach for Bad Axe Public Schools in Michigan and was a teacher at a residential high school in rural Alaska. Mr. Sarsfield received his Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education from Northern Michigan University and is a candidate for a Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership from Central Michigan University.

Kevin Flynn is an Accountability Analyst for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. He is responsible for providing technical support related to school accountability plans, as well as the reporting and analysis of individual school performance. Prior to joining the Institute in November 2008, Mr. Flynn served as the Chair of the Science Department at KIPP 3D Academy Charter School in Houston, TX, where he authored curriculum, instructed 7th and 8th grade students, coached peers, and managed the Saturday School program. Prior to his service at KIPP 3D Academy, Mr. Flynn served as a science teacher via Teach For America at the John Marshall Middle School, also in Houston. A recipient of the school's Excellence in Teaching Award, his responsibilities included curriculum development and instruction for at-risk students as well as English Language Learners. Mr. Flynn received his Master's degree in Education, with a concentration in Policy, Organization and Leadership Studies, from Stanford University and his Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences from Cornell University.

Maya Lagana is an Analyst for School Evaluation for the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York. She is responsible for scheduling ongoing school evaluation visits, communicating with school team members and administrative staff regarding site visit logistics and requirements, developing and disseminating RFP documents, and coordinating the recruitment and work of consultants. Ms. Lagana worked for New Visions for Public Schools, Achievement First and Boston Collegiate Charter School while in graduate school. 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 at P.S. 195 through the New York City Teaching Fellows Program. 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.

Jamie Prijatel (External Team Member) has worked in charter and new school start-up and education reform since 2002. She joined the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) in 2002 as the Director of Operations in the Office of Charter Schools. In her role as Authorizer she opened and closed charter schools and created internal systems to support existing schools. Once the Mayor took control of the school system, the Office of Charter Schools merged with the newly created Office of New School Development. Jamie worked with Gates funded school developers to launch new schools throughout the four boroughs. She liaised with various internal and external agencies to ensure schools had a strong operational foundation in place to open and grow academically. Jamie also worked on a macro level in the Chancellor's Office where she and the Chancellor's team oversaw new school openings city-wide. Jamie left the NYCDOE in December 2005 and joined Good Shepherd Services as the Assistant Director of School Development where she helped replicate their first transfer school in Brooklyn. She codified the school model, worked with the school planning team and managed school site renovations. Jamie began working independently in 2007 in Denver with a newly hired Principal and his planning team to reopen a high school. In addition, Jamie worked with Green Dot Public Schools and the United Federation of Teachers to open Green Dot New York Charter School in the Bronx. She continues to work with them on all operational support and compliance issues.

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.

Renewal Question 1 Is the School an Academic Success?	
<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u>
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1B</p> <p>Use of Assessment Data</p>	<p>The school has a system to gather assessment and evaluation data and uses it to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school regularly uses standardized and other assessments that are aligned to the school’s curriculum framework and state performance standards; • 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; • the school uses protocols, procedures and rubrics that ensure that the scoring of assessments and evaluation of student work is reliable and trustworthy; • the school uses assessment data to predict whether the school’s Accountability Plan goals are being achieved; • 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; • the school’s teachers use assessment data to adjust and improve instruction to meet the identified needs of students; • 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; • the school regularly communicates each student’s progress and growth to his or her parents/guardians; and • 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.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1C</p> <p>Curriculum</p>	<p>The school has a clearly defined curriculum and uses it to prepare students to meet state performance standards.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • the school has carefully analyzed all curriculum resources (including commercial materials) currently in use in relation to the school’s curriculum framework,

	<p>identified areas of deficiency and/or misalignment, and addressed them in the instructional program;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the curriculum <i>as implemented</i> is organized, cohesive, and aligned from grade to grade; 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; teachers develop and use lesson plans with objectives that are in alignment with the school’s curriculum; the school has defined a procedure, allocated time and resources, and included teachers in ongoing review and revision of the curriculum; and the curriculum supports the school’s stated mission.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1D</p> <p>Pedagogy</p>	<p>High quality instruction is evident in all classes throughout the school.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> teachers demonstrate subject-matter and grade-level competency in the subjects and grades they teach; 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; lesson plans and instruction are aligned to the school’s curriculum framework and New York State standards and performance indicators; 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; all students are cognitively engaged in focused, purposeful learning activities during instructional time; 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 teachers challenge students with questions and assignments that promote academic rigor, depth of understanding, and development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1E</p> <p>Instructional Leadership</p>	<p>The school has strong instructional leadership.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for student achievement; the school’s leadership establishes an environment of high expectations for teacher performance (in content knowledge, pedagogical skills and student achievement); the school’s instructional leaders have in place a comprehensive and on-going system for evaluating teacher quality and effectiveness; 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; 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; the school’s instructional leaders organize a coherent and sustained professional development program that meets the needs of both the school and individual teachers;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 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.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1F</p> <p>At-Risk Students</p>	<p>The school is demonstrably effective in helping students who are struggling academically.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school deploys sufficient resources to provide academic interventions that address the range of students’ needs; all regular education teachers, as well as specialists, utilize effective strategies to support students within the regular education program; the school provides sufficient training, resources, and support to all teachers and specialists with regard to meeting the needs of at-risk students; 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; all regular education teachers demonstrate a working knowledge of students’ Individualized Education Program goals and instructional strategies for meeting those goals; 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 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.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 1G</p> <p>Student Order & Discipline</p>	<p>The school promotes a culture of learning and scholarship.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school has a documented discipline policy that is consistently applied; classroom management techniques and daily routines have established a culture in which learning is valued and clearly evident; 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 throughout the school, a safe and orderly environment has been established.
<p><u>State University Renewal Benchmark 1H</u></p> <p>Professional Development</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school provides sufficient time, personnel, materials and funding to support a comprehensive and sustained professional development program; the content of the professional development program dovetails with the school’s mission, curriculum, and instructional programs; annual professional development plans derive from a data-driven needs-assessment

	<p>and staff interests;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professional development places a high priority on achieving the State University Renewal Benchmarks and the school’s Accountability Plan goals; • teachers are involved in setting short-term and long-term goals for their own professional development activities; • the school provides effective, ongoing support and training tailored to teachers’ varying levels of expertise and instructional responsibilities; • 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 • the professional development program is systematically evaluated to determine its effectiveness at meeting stated goals.
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Renewal Question 2 Is the School an Effective, Viable Organization?	
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<u>Evidence Category</u>	<u>State University Renewal Benchmarks</u>
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<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2A</p> <p>Mission & Key Design Elements</p>	<p>The school is faithful to its mission and has implemented the key design elements included in its charter.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stakeholders are aware of the mission; • the school has implemented its key design elements in pursuit of its mission; and • the school meets or comes close to meeting any non-academic goals contained in its Accountability Plan.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2B</p> <p>Parents & Students</p>	<p>Parents/guardians and students are satisfied with the school.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has a process and procedures for evaluation of parent satisfaction with the school; • the great majority of parents with students enrolled at the school have strong positive attitudes about it; • few parents pursue grievances at the school board level or outside the school; • a large number of parents seek entrance to the school; • parents with students enrolled keep their children enrolled year-to-year; and • the school maintains a high rate of daily student attendance.

<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2C</p> <p>Organizational Capacity</p>	<p>The school has established a well-functioning organizational structure with staff, systems, and procedures that allow the school to carry out its academic program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school demonstrates effective management of day-to-day operations; • staff scheduling is internally consistent and supportive of the school’s mission; • the school has established clear priorities, objectives and benchmarks for achieving its mission and Accountability Plan goals, and a process for their regular review and revision;
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<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2D Board Oversight</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has allocated sufficient resources in support of achieving its goals; • the roles and responsibilities of the school’s leadership and staff members are clearly defined; • the school has an organizational structure that provides clear lines for accountability; • the school’s management has successfully recruited, hired and retained key personnel, and made appropriate decisions about removing ineffective staff members when warranted; • the school maintains an adequate student enrollment and has effective procedures for recruiting new students to the school; and • the school’s management and board have demonstrated effective communication practices with the school community including school staff, parents/guardians and students. <p>The school board has worked effectively to achieve the school’s mission and provide oversight to the total educational program.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school board has adequate skills and expertise, as well as adequate meeting time to provide rigorous oversight of the school; • 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; • 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; • the school board has received regular written reports from the school leadership on academic performance and progress, financial stability and organizational capacity; • 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; • 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; • the school board has not made financial or organizational decisions that have materially impeded the school in fulfilling its mission; and • 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.
<p>State University Renewal Benchmark 2E Governance</p>	<p>The board has implemented and maintained appropriate policies, systems and processes, and has abided by them.</p> <p>Elements that are generally present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • 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.