



# Charter Schools Institute

*The State University of New York*

## KIPP STAR College Prep Charter School Third-Year Inspection Report

### I. INTRODUCTION

The third-year inspection is part of a comprehensive accountability system for charter schools authorized by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York. The inspection during the school's third year of its charter provides an independent assessment of the school's progress toward its academic and organizational goals.

The third year inspection complements the yearly reviews conducted by SUNY Charter Schools Institute (CSI) staff and takes into account the school's own annual reports of progress toward the targets defined in its Accountability Plan. The visit provides an independent assessment of the school's progress and provides recommendations for gathering and presenting valid and reliable evidence to the authorizer as the school prepares to apply for charter renewal in its fifth year of operation. The recommendations represent the experienced opinions of the inspection team and are intended to offer the school guidance for enhancing the evidence base for its renewal application.

### II. CONDUCT OF THE VISIT

The inspection of KIPP STAR College Prep Charter School was conducted on March 29-30, 2006 by an independent team of experienced educators from SchoolWorks, Beverly, MA.

- **Aretha Miller**, Director of Marketing, SchoolWorks: Aretha has five years' experience leading charter school renewal and site visits. Prior to joining SchoolWorks, Aretha worked as a special education teacher in Boston Public Schools for eight years and spent three years developing and implementing programs that support at-risk youths in traditional and alternative educational settings.
- **Zita Samuels, Team Member**: Ms. Samuels, a consultant with SchoolWorks, is a professional grant writer and program evaluator. Previously, she had a long career as a program administrator in the public schools of Somerville, MA.
- **Karl Smith, Team Member**: Dr. Smith, a consultant with SchoolWorks, has been an English teacher and is now a middle school principal in Rhode Island. He also chairs NEASC middle and junior high school accreditation visits.
- **Linda Hall, Team Member**: Ms. Hall, a consultant with SchoolWorks and other organizations, has been a classroom teacher, building principal and central office administrator in Philadelphia. She has also been an administrator of an educational management organization.

The team used the school's Accountability Plan goals as the guide for their examination, along with the set of framework questions included in the inspection protocol to assess the school's academic and organizational effectiveness. Prior to the one-and-a-half-day visit, the team reviewed the school's documents, including its annual *Accountability Progress Report*, its original charter application and reports from previous informal site visits by the SUNY Charter Schools Institute. At the school, the team interviewed school administrators, Board representatives, staff, parents and students, and visited classes to understand the efforts the school is making to achieve its academic and organizational goals.

This report is organized in two parts. *Part I: School Progress Report*, offers the team's judgments about the school's effectiveness at meeting the broad goals defined in the charter school law (Education Law §2850(2) (a-f)):

- improving student learning and achievement;
- increasing learning opportunities for all students (particularly students at risk of academic failure);
- encouraging the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- creating new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- expanding parental choice in public schools; and
- moving from a rule-based to performance-based accountability system by holding schools accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

The judgments of the team are organized into three categories: academic program, organizational viability and unique programmatic areas. The framework for the progress report discussion is shown in **Appendix A**.

The second section of the report, *Part II: School Accountability Plan – Assessment and Recommendations*, reflects the team's assessment of the quality of the school's measures of its progress and offers suggestions for enhancing the evidence base on which renewal decisions will be made at the school's fifth year of operation. A brief rationale for the inspection team's recommendations is presented in narrative form, along with a summary table, in **Appendix B**.

### III. SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) STAR (Success through Teamwork, Achievement and Responsibility) College Prep Charter School of New York, New York, commenced operations in September 2003, with an enrollment of 90 students in grade 5. The school has added a grade each successive year, and has a current enrollment of 245 students in grades 5-7. Two hundred and twenty four students (91.4 percent) are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches. There are 17 special education students (6.9 percent) and no English language learners (ELLs). For the 2005-2006 school year, 384 students applied to the school. Of these, 96 new students were admitted, primarily to grade 5. The student population is African-American and Latino. The attendance rate for the 2004-2005 school year was 97 percent. There are generally 25-28 students per class.

The school's mission is to ensure that all students develop the knowledge, academic skills and character traits to succeed in college preparatory high schools, colleges, and the competitive world beyond. The school is partnered with the KIPP Foundation through a trademark and services agreement. The KIPP Foundation provides quality control, operational support, assistance with fiscal management and professional development in content areas. KIPP helped the school secure its facility and charter. While the KIPP Foundation is national in scope (and headquartered in San Francisco), the school is part of a network of four KIPP schools in New York City, including KIPP Bronx Academy Charter School, one of two original KIPP schools. The school receives additional support, including extensive back-office and leadership and teacher training through this network, as well as many other services.

The school year begins with a mandatory one-month summer session in July. During the 207-day school year, instruction is provided from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Thursday and until 4 PM on Fridays. The school is also in session for four hours on selected Saturdays, primarily for extracurricular activities. The school day includes homework help, tutoring and extracurricular activities, some of which are provided after school from 5:00 - 7:00 PM. The curriculum is built upon the KIPP Network Five Pillars (high expectations, choice and commitment, more time on task, power to lead and focus on results) and draws from a variety of curriculum materials, such as Delta Science, Saxon Math, History Alive and the Reader's Workshop. School leaders report, however, that they are not wedded to any text series. The school is equipped with a science lab, a technology lab (with 30 up-to-date computers), a music room and a resource room.

The school's original faculty consisted of five teachers and four other professional staff. The staff now has 21 professionals, including administrators, classroom teachers, a learning specialist, music teacher, social worker, a high school placement counselor and a technology teacher. There is also a security guard and a secretary. The school's principal and assistant principal are among the school's founders. The principal is a graduate of the KIPP School Leadership Program, which is run by the KIPP Foundation. Two members of the current teaching staff have also been at the school since its inception. The principal serves leadership and management roles, while the assistant principal functions as the director of instruction.

**PART I: SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT**

**I. ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

**QUESTION 1: To what extent have the students attained expected skills and knowledge?**

- 1. Test results for two consecutive years show that a majority of students at KIPP STAR are performing on the advanced and proficient levels in mathematics and English language arts on the New York City Citywide Tests and that the percentage of students at or above proficiency far exceeds peer schools.**

Two years of testing data show that fifth and sixth graders at KIPP STAR College Prep Charter School (KIPP STAR) significantly outperformed their peers in the local school district and region on the New York City English language arts (ELA) and mathematics Citywide Tests.

In 2004, 66 percent of fifth graders at KIPP STAR demonstrated proficiency on the ELA Citywide Test, compared to 29 percent of fifth graders in Community School District (CSD) 5 and 39 percent of fifth graders in Region 10. In 2005, 77 percent of fifth graders (an 11 percent increase over 2004) demonstrated proficiency on the ELA test, compared to 59 percent of their peers in CSD 5 and 63 percent of their peers in Region 10. In addition, fifth graders at KIPP STAR outperformed fifth graders citywide on the ELA test for two consecutive years.

The performance of the first cohort of sixth graders at KIPP STAR is comparable to that of their peers in grade 5. In 2005, 72 percent of sixth graders at KIPP STAR demonstrated proficiency on the ELA test, compared to 37 percent of sixth graders in CSD 5 and 41 percent of their peers in Region 10. Sixth graders at KIPP STAR also outperformed their peers citywide.

**Table 1: Percent of Fifth Graders Scoring Levels 3 & 4 on the New York City English Language Arts End-of-Year Test**

	2004		2005	
	Number (N)	% scoring levels 3 & 4	Number (N)	% scoring levels 3 & 4
<b>KIPP STAR</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>77</b>
CSD 5		29		59
Region 10		39		63
New York City		49		69

**Table 2: Percent of Sixth Graders Scoring Levels 3 & 4 on the New York City English Language Arts End-of-Year Test**

	2005	
	Number (N)	% scoring levels 3 & 4
<b>KIPP STAR</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>72</b>
CSD 5		37
Region 10		41

New York City		48
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The performance of fifth and sixth graders at KIPP STAR on the New York City mathematics Citywide Test is comparable to their performance on the ELA test in that they outperformed their peers in CSD 5, Region 10 and citywide.

**Table 3: Percent of Fifth Graders Scoring Levels 3 & 4 on the New York City Mathematics Citywide Test**

	2004		2005	
	Number (N)	% scoring levels 3 & 4	Number (N)	% scoring levels 3 & 4
<b>KIPP STAR</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>72</b>
CSD 5		21		33
Region 10		30		44
New York City		39		54

**Table 4: Percent of Sixth Graders Scoring Levels 3 & 4 on the New York City Mathematics End-of-Year Test**

	2005	
	Number (N)	% scoring levels 3 & 4
<b>KIPP STAR</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>84</b>
CSD 5		21
Region 10		33
New York City		41

**2. Test results for two consecutive years on the SAT 10 indicate that a majority of students at KIPP STAR are performing at or above national norms.**

The spring 2004 and 2005 results for fifth and sixth graders on the reading, language and mathematics subtests show that they are performing at or above the norm on the Stanford 10 assessment. In spring 2004, fifth graders scored 50.5 NCEs (Normal Curve Equivalent) in reading, 60.8 NCEs in language, and 71.6 NCEs in mathematics. In 2005, the second cohort of fifth graders at KIPP STAR significantly performed better than their peers in the first cohort. Students in this group scored 55.5 NCEs in reading, 73.6 NCEs in language and 85.7 NCEs in mathematics.

The performance of the first cohort of sixth graders at KIPP STAR was very strong on the SAT 10 assessment. In 2005, sixth graders scored 61.6 NCEs in reading, 81.7 NCEs in language and 91.8 NCEs in mathematics.

**Table 5: SAT 10 Results in NCEs for Grades 5 & 6**

Grade	Spring 2004				Spring 2005			
	Number	Reading	Language	Math	Number	Reading	Language	Math
5	85	50.5	60.8	71.6	81	55.5	73.6	85.7

6	NA	NA	NA	NA	81	61.6	81.7	91.8
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**QUESTION 2: What progress have students made over time in attaining expected skills and knowledge?**

- 1. The performance of KIPP STAR students on the SAT 10 shows that they made notable progress in reading, language and mathematics from fall to spring of the past two years.**

Sixth graders who have attended KIPP STAR for two years demonstrated consistent gains on the SAT 10. The gains that students made on the SAT 10 ranged from 2.59 NCEs in mathematics to 5.78 NCEs in language. The scores from the spring 2004 and 2005 administrations of the SAT 10 show that KIPP STAR has achieved its Accountability Plan goal, to have students show a gain from spring to spring on the SAT 10.

**Table 6: KIPP STAR Grade 5-6 Cohort Results (N = 72) on the SAT 10 in NCEs**

Subject	Spring 2004	Spring 2005	Gain
Language	62.69	68.47	5.78
Mathematics	74.49	78.26	3.77
Reading	52.54	55.13	2.59

**QUESTION 3: Does the school's instructional program meet the needs of diverse students?**

- 1. KIPP STAR's core curriculum is aligned with state standards and teachers are expected to adhere to the school's scope and sequence and pacing guide.**

KIPP STAR's written curriculum guide currently consists of grade level standards in English language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and technology for grades 5 through 8. For each subject, the standards cover several different skills, topics and/or concepts. In English language arts, these include vocabulary, reading, comprehending text (both expository and imaginative), English language conventions, writing, and listening and speaking. In mathematics, the standards are numbers, operations and qualitative reasoning; patterns, relationships, and algebraic thinking and processes; and problem solving in grades 5 and 6. For grades 7 and 8, the curriculum expands (in addition to the topics for grades 5 and 6) to include mathematical concepts such as functions and linear functions. School leaders use a similar approach to develop school-wide curriculum guides for social studies, science and technology across the grades. According to the assistant principal who is in charge of curriculum, the frameworks selected for KIPP STAR's curriculum guide were from the states of New York and California.

The curriculum guides also contain grade-level scope and sequence pacing guides for either month-long segments (writing, music, technology) or nine-week segments (reading, mathematics, social studies, science) for grades 5-7. Although the curriculum frameworks are in place for the incoming 2006-07 eighth grade, the scope and sequence has not yet been developed.

Teachers report that they submit weekly and three-week plans to the assistant principal, who provides feedback and ensures that the scope, sequence and pacing guides are followed. Weekly assessments in all content areas (including reading, spelling and grammar) are required.

Teachers are expected to participate in professional development conducted during the summer. During the summer of 2005, this training consisted of models of teaching and learning; Bloom's taxonomy; lesson planning; subject matter grade-level standards; data analysis; information on expectations for lesson plans; and, a self-checking guide to teaching excellence.

To support the school's goal of providing increased time for teaching and learning, students in both grades 5 and 6 are provided with 90 minutes per day of mathematics, reading and writing instruction each with a different teacher. Grade 5 students are also scheduled for an additional 45 minutes of mathematics or reading each day. Science and social studies are each taught for half the year and are scheduled for 90-minute time periods. All students have a 45-minute block for Life Skills, which includes culture building, development of social skills and conflict resolution. In grade 7, students have 90 minutes daily of both mathematics and English language arts and an additional 30 - 45 minute literature circle. They also have a 90-minute block for technology or science. For the most part, classroom groups are heterogeneous, although there is a homogeneous guided reading group in grade 5.

The inspection team noted that in all classrooms, the aim of the lesson – along with a “do now” activity for the beginning of every class – is posted. All students move from teacher to teacher for their content area classes. In general, students are polite, well-behaved and engaged in classroom work. Teachers consistently encourage them to use proper terms and vocabulary in their responses to questions – particularly in mathematics classes. In focus groups, teachers also reported that certain skills are expected of students in each grade across subject areas. For example, writing expectations are not only for writing class. Students are held accountable for the same writing skills in social studies or science.

## **2. In general, teachers are implementing strategies that address the needs of diverse learners.**

Based on conversations with the school's teachers and leaders, the needs of students at diverse learning levels are met primarily through after-school tutoring by subject area teachers and with the support of the learning specialist. In addition, students are sometimes pulled from electives for tutoring in core content areas. Students can call teachers at home with questions about homework.

Classroom teachers reported that they also make accommodations for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for test taking. Some students, for example, are permitted to use their notebooks to answer questions in the weekly quizzes and tests. One teacher stated that she has created different levels of tests in an effort to address the diverse learning needs of the students in her class. According to the teacher, although the tests might look different for some students, they are still being assessed against the same standard. Peer tutoring – in which students help each other – is sometimes employed. The learning specialist employs a

combination of “push-in and pull-out” strategies for supporting students with special needs. The school also has access to occupational, physical and speech therapy for students who require these services.

Teachers stated that they also help individual students when they are doing independent work in the classroom. One teacher said that, while some students are reading independently, she sometimes reads with students who are struggling with the material. Members of the inspection team observed teachers redirecting students during independent work periods and providing assistance when needed. In addition to the students’ 90-minute reading period, reading strategies are taught in the content area classes of science and social studies to help ensure that all students’ instructional levels are addressed. Science classes consist of both lectures and lab work, which help meet the needs of students with different learning styles.

Notwithstanding the reported support for individual students, during the time of the visit, the inspection team gathered only limited evidence of differentiation of instruction in the classroom to accommodate divergent learning styles. During the visit, the inspection team observed primarily whole-class instruction that was not differentiated. Also, student work samples examined did not show modifications for students achieving at different levels. There were, however, a few observed instances of paired sharing and students working in groups on a research project. Students were engaged in their classes. There was a high level of participation as they answered the teacher’s questions and they raised their hands for assistance, when needed. In some cases, students were encouraged to look for the answers to questions in their subject area binders. Teachers were liberal with positive feedback to students for appropriate behavior and good academic work. In interviews, teachers reported that they encourage students to do their best every day.

**QUESTION 4: Do the school’s standards reflect the implementation of high academic expectations?**

**1. The written curriculum being used by teachers is appropriate for all students. As implemented, however, the curriculum does not consistently reflect high academic expectations throughout the school.**

The school has consistent blackboard configurations, which may be seen from class to class, that include agendas, objectives and “do now” activities. Wall charts posted in classrooms reflect the expectations for the subject taught in each room. In the writing classroom, for example, there are posters on the writing process, a chart showing the organization of a five-paragraph response, guidelines for good note taking and the content of a persuasive essay.

The school climate is conducive to learning. There are high expectations, which are nearly uniformly attained, for appropriate student behavior. Teachers have well-established routines that result in very little down time in the classroom. In general, teachers use the 90-minute time blocks well, with smooth transitions between activities.

Teachers check for student understanding and have aims posted for each lesson. However, academic rigor at a high school/college preparatory level and high expectations were not

observed consistently across the school in all classes. The inspection team noted that there was evidence that some teachers were not diligent about activating students' prior knowledge. For example, some teachers did not spend time reviewing the concepts and/or skills that were addressed in previous lessons as a way of helping students get ready for the lesson that was going to be covered in the class. As a result, some students became confused because they did not know how to integrate the new information they were acquiring with what had been previously taught. In contrast to instances in which teachers did not review previous lessons, an English teacher began with a thorough review. In the class, students were working on "compare and contrast" essays and were asked to quote examples of "personification" and a "metaphor," the teacher took the time to review the concepts and vocabulary with the class before giving them the assignment. This made it possible for students to get on track quickly with the assignment. In a science class, students were asked to explain the strategies they used to solve a problem.

The school's principal asserted that the school is working on developing a uniform set of expectations for academic rigor. She noted, however, that the school plans to cover the issue directly with teachers in the 2006-2007 school year.

Despite the fact that there is significant time on learning, the work samples examined by the inspection team consisted mainly of worksheets that did not show a specific relationship to the standards by indicating an aim or objective, did not provide opportunities for students to demonstrate problem solving or higher-order thinking skills (such as analysis or synthesis of information), and did not address questions that probe more than simple factual comprehension. Many questions were multiple-choice or required simple recall only. Only the quizzes appeared to be graded. Daily work, including homework, was generally not graded and did not appear to provide constructive feedback to students.

## **II. ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY**

### **QUESTION 1: Are students and parents satisfied with the work of the school?**

#### **1. Students at KIPP STAR are very pleased to be at the school and have internalized the school's academic and behavioral expectations.**

From interviews with students and classroom observations, the inspection team learned that KIPP STAR's focus on high academic achievement is one that is shared by students at all levels. Students are clear as to why they are at the school. They come to school primed and ready to learn. Students interviewed all say and believe that their efforts will lead them to good high schools, to college, and to "a better life." They understand that their homework is important for their overall success in attaining their goals. Older students enjoy working with younger ones as mentors and role models. Students also praised field trips to places such as Utah, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. They like the school's casual uniforms, which consist of T-shirts and sweatshirts in college colors.

Students were able to describe the “paycheck” system used for behavioral management. All students start with \$50 each week, with deductions for infractions of behavioral expectations outlined in the Commitment to Excellence. After a certain amount is deducted, students are “on the bench,” which limits participation in extracurricular activities and requires them to wear their school shirts inside out. They are given a set of tasks to complete in order to re-join the “team.”

Students spoke highly of their teachers and recognized the effort of the teachers and how they are vested in their overall success. Teachers were observed to greet individual students as they entered their classrooms and then shake hands with them as they left. Students interviewed reported that they feel safe at the school. Those who had been there from the beginning said that there have been no fights. They also stated that they learn more at KIPP STAR than in their previous schools and have more fun. They also enjoy the summer session and Saturday school.

To support the development of a positive school climate, there is a weekly celebration called Songfest that helps build community and reinforce the school’s expectations and academic goals for the students. The “STARs of the Week” are recognized at this time.

## **2. KIPP STAR’s emphasis on high academic achievement and preparation of students to enter competitive and selective high schools makes the school an appealing educational alternative for parents.**

Members of the inspection team met with a group of nine parents representing all three grades of students in attendance at the school. For the most part, they originally learned about the school through word-of-mouth and friends whose children attend the school or through on-line information when looking for alternatives to the public schools in Harlem. Parents agreed that KIPP STAR – with its emphasis on admission to selective high schools and subsequent college enrollment – will give their children better options for the future. They agreed that the school has higher expectations for youngsters than the local public schools.

Parents are very happy with the school and were effusive about teachers’ efforts to support their children’s learning and the positive relationships established among teachers and students. Home-school communication is good. Parents appreciate the fact that children can call their teachers with questions about homework. A regularly-published newsletter informs them of events at the school. The school provides parents quarterly reports on student progress. A parent survey conducted at the end of the 2003 - 2004 school year showed a very high level of satisfaction among parents. (The team did not review the data from the 2004-2005 parent survey and so cannot comment on their level of satisfaction with the school.) Parents also volunteer to help at special events and on field trips.

Upon enrollment, parents are required by the school to sign a statement of commitment to the school’s policies and procedures, including the expectation that they will sign off on students’ two-hour daily homework requirement and weekly assessments, as well as to ensure that students are in school and ready to learn. Parents report that their children’s attitude is better than in their previous schools: they are reading more, have increased self-confidence and are functioning at a higher academic level.

Parents' concerns about the school include the lack of time for their children to engage in physical activity, particularly on days when there are late special events at the school. Also, they would like to see an art teacher, in addition to the music teacher, on staff. More generally, they would like to see more integration of the arts into the daily curriculum to develop students' artistic abilities.

**QUESTION 2: Are systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the academic program and to modify it as needed?**

**1. There is limited evidence to show that data are analyzed and used to support and enhance classroom instruction.**

According to the school's leaders, teachers are expected to use their weekly assessment data to plan instruction and determine what they need to re-teach in their content areas. Teachers claimed that they use assessment results both to determine what to re-teach and to identify students who need tutoring. The school's leaders indicated, however, that only about 75 percent of the teachers are currently proficient in the use of this data. The use of data-driven differentiated instruction is a component of the teacher performance evaluation rubric.

The assistant principal works with teachers who need support with instructional planning. She reviews unit assessments with teachers to help them analyze the results with the goal of building teachers' proficiency in analyzing data to make meaningful decisions about instruction. Based on the assessments, teachers will generally re-teach if 85 percent of the students in a class do not demonstrate mastery and will provide individual tutoring for students.

In examining student work, the inspection team noted that student writing portfolios contained examples of teacher-created rubrics. There were weekly quizzes in all subjects, as well as two benchmark assessments. The benchmark assessments were interim assessments developed by teachers at KIPP STAR that are designed to help teachers monitor students' progress toward the standards outlined in the school's scope and sequence. In addition, teachers told the inspection team that they grade one homework assignment and one classroom assignment each week to monitor ongoing student progress. Also, teachers stated that they have had professional development on using and assessing data, as well as in constructing tests and homework assignments.

A review of the weekly assessments shows that they were largely limited to questions that rely on simple recall of facts. Most of the questions called for short-answer responses (multiple choice or fill in the blanks). Very few called for answering open-response questions that might probe for higher-order thinking skills. Most of the assessments consisted of reading and writing activities. There appeared to be limited use of authentic assessments and project-based learning activities.

The results of Science Research Associate (SRA) reading program and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) testing are used to place students with the learning specialist, who conducts an item analysis of the assessments to determine the help that students need in the literacy skills

of phonics, fluency and comprehension. The administration analyzes assessment data for accountability purposes; teachers do not appear to use it consistently for instruction.

## **2. School leaders consistently monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the school.**

The school's leaders report that new teachers are monitored and given feedback more frequently than those who have been at the school for a longer time. When hiring new teachers, they attempt to find individuals with subject-matter expertise, with at least two years of previous experience, and who are prepared for the hard work and long hours required at the school. All teachers are expected to have or to be working toward New York State teacher certification.

Teachers reported that they are observed informally three times each week for five to ten minutes and receive short verbal feedback. There is also a formal teacher observation protocol. Each formal teacher evaluation is followed by a review of the teaching rubrics. A plan to support areas for improvement of the individual teacher's work is developed, which is followed up with progress reports through the remainder of the school year. In some cases, the assistant principal conducts observations that include scripting of an entire lesson. Teachers reported that they find this feedback to be helpful. Teachers also have the opportunity to observe other teachers in the school and to visit other schools – in particular, the KIPP Bronx Charter School – to observe teachers in the classroom. New teachers reported that this has been especially useful.

Teachers are required to complete weekly lessons that are submitted to the assistant principal. They are also expected to have a three-week plan for their subject area that is accompanied by specific teaching and learning objectives. Teachers use a lesson-planning template with clear criteria. Each lesson plan should include the following components and be aligned with the KIPP STAR curriculum: objective, do now, motivation, guided practice, independent practice, closure, assessment and homework. Lesson plans examined by the inspection team generally included all or nearly all of these required components.

The principal and assistant principal reported that they sometimes provide demonstration lessons for teachers who need them. Struggling teachers are given formal observations more frequently than those who appear to be working well with their students. At the end of the year, however, all teachers are reported to have a formal observation and conference. Prior to these observations, the assistant principal reviews the evaluation rubric with teachers and sets goals for the observation. Teachers also set professional development goals in September. These are reviewed at mid-year and at the end of the year to review performance. Both teachers and school leaders described this system for teacher supervision.

Grade level teaching teams meet once a week for 45 minutes and have an extended three-hour meeting monthly. This meeting gives teachers an opportunity to share information about students and curriculum. The assistant principal leads the sixth grade group and also attends the monthly meetings to monitor teachers' efforts. According to the school's leaders, underperforming teachers have been given many supports but, in at least one case, the teacher was dismissed. The class is now taught by a permanent substitute, assisted by a tutor. The school is planning, next year, to have more vertical team meetings by subject area.

A review of agendas and meeting notes for fifth and sixth grade staff meetings held in recent months found a wide array of topics discussed including: school culture, expectations and the Commitment to Excellence; classroom logistics (e.g., binder organization, homework folders and policy) and blackboard configurations; the student rewards system and concerns about individual student behavior; updates from the social worker on students being followed; classroom accommodations for students with IEPs; community service plans; and, plans for the weekly Songfest and upcoming class trips.

The performance of the school's leaders is monitored by the Board of Trustees and by the KIPP Foundation. The superintendent of the New York City KIPP Schools – who is also a Board member – is on site one day each week to provide feedback and technical assistance regarding the school's academic program and operations. He is also the liaison for parental concerns. Another Board member monitors accounting, finances and legal compliance. A third Board member serves as a community liaison and oversees the recruitment process. The Board views its role as supporting the school's mission and vision, supporting the director (the school's principal), and acting as her sounding board. Although the school has had the same principal since its inception, the Board has not yet developed a formal process for evaluating the performance of the principal. As such, the board is not fully carrying out its oversight responsibility. In its absence, the principal may not be afforded a clear understanding of the board's collective expectations. Without an annual performance review in which a set of specific goals are mutually developed and subsequently reviewed and refined, the board is missing an opportunity to link the leader's performance to the school's Accountability Plan and to enhance her professional development as school leader.

Some Board members have relationships with high-performing high schools and are expected to leverage those relationships to help the school's students win acceptances. Among the challenges articulated by Board members are continuous improvement of the school, engaging parents, hiring and retaining high quality teachers and fundraising.

### **III. UNIQUE PROGRAMMATIC AREAS**

#### **QUESTION 1: Are the school's mission and vision clear to all stakeholders?**

##### **1. All stakeholders clearly articulate the school's mission to prepare students for selective high schools, colleges and for the world beyond.**

All stakeholders – including students, teachers, parents, administrators and the Board – could speak about the school's mission and expectation that all of the school's graduates will attend quality high schools that will prepare them for college. In focus groups, the teachers reported that to support the mission, students go on visits to boarding schools and day schools to inform them about the possibilities and choices that will be available to them if they achieve at high levels. Teachers have also been encouraged to visit high-performing schools to learn about expectations and practices that could be adapted at KIPP STAR. New teachers are provided with several days of professional development to train them in the school's mission, curriculum and expectations.

The teachers reported they believe that the school is pushing students further than those in the public schools and that their work reflects the school's high expectations.

In addition, each teacher's classroom is named for the college that he/she completed to give students a sense of identity with specific colleges. To reinforce the mission, college banners and motivational quotes from both modern and classical authors are scattered liberally around the building in hallways, on the walls of classrooms and in the school's offices. The student uniforms (colored t-shirts and sweat shirts) reflect the colors of quality colleges. The fifth grade wears blue for Columbia; the sixth grade wears gray for NYU; and the seventh grade wears crimson for Harvard and Morehouse. Seventh grade students have been on trips to various colleges, including Haverford, Duke, Harvard, MIT and Columbia.

Students' work is posted in hallways, as are the names of students who have earned recognition for quality work such as "subject STARS," "STARS of the week" or members of the "millionaires," "billionaires" or "trillionaires" clubs. The KIPP STAR commitment chart for students, parents and teachers is posted liberally throughout the building as a constant reminder of the school's expectations. One fifth grade class was observed to begin with students chanting *Climbing the Mountain to College*.

In interviews, teachers referred to the school as a "learning organization" where "you are challenged to take it to the next level." One member of the founding staff stated that, although the school keeps changing, the mission stays the same and defined the school as "a work in progress."

## **QUESTION 2: Are the school's special programs meeting expected targets?**

### **1. School leaders have put key systems and processes in place to prepare students to complete for slots in selective high-performing high schools.**

KIPP STAR's high school transition counselor has begun to work with seventh grade students and their parents to guide youngsters through the application and admissions process to selective high schools. All seventh grade parents and students have met individually with the counselor to learn about the various options for high school and about required placement tests. The counselor also works with students to develop portfolios and help them find the right fit, along with financial aid, for high school. This effort is particularly helpful to parents who are not fully aware of all of their children's options for secondary education and college. These efforts on the part of the school will be intensified next year when the school will have its first eighth grade. The counselor's position will move from half-time to full-time.

The transition counselor encourages students to participate in the Young Scholars Program, which provides opportunities for students to get involved with extracurricular activities in the community, many of which have a social justice component. She meets with students during advisory periods and sometimes gives them high school application forms to complete as practice. The students also participate in a scheduled Career Day for the first time. Columbia University, which is adjacent to the school's location, provides volunteer students who tutor and act as role models for the students.

## PART II: SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN: ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### I. ACADEMIC PROGRAM GOALS

**Goal 1: All students at KIPP STAR Charter School will become proficient readers and writers of the English language.**

**Goal 2: All students at KIPP STAR Charter School will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem solving.**

(Note: Because the measures for Goals 1 and 2 are identical, they have been combined for purposes of this report.)

**Measure 1:** During the five-year period of the charter, students who have been enrolled at the school for two or more years will score at levels 3 & 4 on the New York State English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments at the following percentages:

**Percentage of Students Scoring at Levels 3 & 4 on the ELA/Math Assessments**

	2003-04 SY	2004-05 SY	2005-06 SY	2006-07 SY	2007-08 SY
<b>Grade 7</b>			65	65	65
<b>Grade 8</b>				75	75

**Measure 2:** Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, and for each of the remaining years of its charter, the KIPP STAR Charter School will have a greater percentage of students at Levels 3 & 4 than IS 195 (Roberto Clemente School), JHS 143 (Eleanor Roosevelt School), IS 275 (Henry Highland Garnet School), IS 164 (Edward W. Stitt School) and New York City School district 5 on the New York State ELA and mathematics assessments for grades 7 and 8.

**Measure 3:** Beginning with the 2004-2005 school year, cohorts of KIPP STAR students will reduce by one-half the gap between their baseline or prior year's performance and grade level (NCE=50) on the Stanford 10 Total Reading and Stanford 10 Math Batteries. By the end of grade 8, the cohort will be at 50 NCEs. If the cohort's baseline exceeds an NCE score of 50, it will be expected to show an increase in its NCE score.

**Measure 4:** Beginning with the 2004-2005 school year, cohorts of KIPP STAR students will reduce by one-half the gap between their baseline or prior year's performance and the eighth grade proficient performance level (in scale score) on the state ELA and mathematics assessments. By the end of grade 8, the cohort will be at the proficient scale score (scale score equivalent to level 3). If a cohort's baseline scaled score exceeds the equivalent of scoring at the proficient performance level on the eighth grade ELA and mathematics assessments, it will be expected to show an increase of ten scaled score points.

**Goal 3: All students at KIPP STAR Charter School will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning and problem solving.**

**Goal 4: All students at KIPP STAR Charter School will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of social, geographical, civic and world studies.**

(Note: Because the measures for Goals 3 and 4 are identical, they have been combined for purposes of this report.)

**Measure 1:** During the five-year period of the charter, 75% of the students who have been enrolled at the school for two or more years will score at levels 3 & 4 on the New York State science and social studies assessments.

**Measure 2:** Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, and for each of the remaining years of its charter, the KIPP STAR Charter School will have a greater percent of students at Levels 3 & 4 than IS 195 (Roberto Clemente School), JHS 143 (Eleanor Roosevelt School), IS 275 (Henry Highland Garnet School), IS 164 (Edward W. Stitt School) and New York City School district 5 on the New York State eighth grade science and social studies assessments.

### **ACADEMIC PROGRAM GOALS—RECOMMENDATIONS**

The inspection team suggests that the school might consider the following specific recommendations to enhance the quality of evidence to be used to assess progress toward its goals and measures:

*For Goals 1 (ELA) and 2 (Mathematics)*

1. Clearly label the tables for Measure 1 of ELA and mathematics to identify the assessments and indicate if they are statewide assessments or NYC assessments. When reporting the results for each measure, always indicate the number of students tested (“n”). The school should also clearly note if it is making a statement about matched or grade-level cohorts. Where possible, the school is urged to compare grade-level cohorts with matched cohorts (students who have been in the school for two years).  
Consider writing out the projected gains in textual form. For example, for grade 7, 65% of students will score at levels 3 & 4 for school years 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08; for grade 8, 75% of students will score at levels 3 & 4 for school years 2006-07 and 2007-08. (Note: There is no grade 8 class at the school during the 2005-06 school year.)
2. For Measure 2, the school should clearly identify the performance level of the individual schools being compared in terms of grade level cohort analyses. In addition, the inspection team urges the school to describe how the comparison schools were selected to make the data more credible. The school should also clearly identify the testing year(s) and present a year-to-year comparison to show a trend, which will make the data more powerful.
3. To show progress on Measure 3, the school should conduct a matched cohort analysis. In addition, the school could provide both grade-level cohort and matched cohort

comparisons to underline the progress of students who have been in the school for two or more years.

4. Measure 4 will be clearer for the reader if the school would define and provide the specific proficient scale score.

*For Goals 3 (Science) and 4 (Social Studies):*

5. As above for ELA and mathematics, the school is urged to compare grade-level cohorts with matched cohorts (students who have been in the school for two years), in addition to reporting solely on the matched cohorts.
6. This recommendation is the same as for Measure 2 for Goals 1 and 2. The school should clearly identify the performance level of the individual schools being compared in terms of grade-level cohort comparison. In addition, the inspection team urges the school to describe how the comparison schools were selected to make the data more credible. The school should clearly identify the testing years and present a year-to-year comparison to show a trend, which will make the data more powerful.

## II. ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY GOALS

Leaders of the KIPP STAR Charter School told the inspection team that they were not required to develop organizational viability goals.

### ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY GOALS—RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

## III. UNIQUE PROGRAMMATIC AREA GOALS

**Goal 1: Students who attend KIPP STAR Charter School will be capable of enrollment in college preparatory high schools.**

**Measure 1:** All students who attend KIPP STAR Charter School for three or more years will show acceptance in either the public or private college preparatory high school of his/her choice.

### UNIQUE PROGRAMMATIC AREA GOALS—RECOMMENDATIONS

*For Goal 1, Enrollment in College Preparatory High Schools:*

1. In table form, indicate the names and types of high schools where students are encouraged to apply, e.g., day schools, boarding schools, parochial schools, public schools.
2. In table form, identify the percentages and numbers of applicants to each type of high school by year.
3. Document the numbers and percentages of students who actually get accepted with the names of the schools they actually attend.
4. Keep longitudinal records to document the number and percentages of graduates who attend and complete their high schools.

5. Keep longitudinal records to document the number and percentages of graduates who attend college.

## APPENDIX A: Framework for the Analysis of School Progress

Category	Criteria	Evidence Sources
<b>Academic Program</b>	To what extent have students attained expected skills and knowledge?	School's Accountability Plan and Progress Report(s)
	What progress have students made over time in attaining expected skills and knowledge?	School's Accountability Plan and Progress Report(s)
	Does the school's instructional program meet the needs of diverse students?	Class visits, interviews, data review, Accountability Plan Progress Report
	Do the school's standards reflect the implementation of high academic expectations?	Review of curriculum documents, student work samples ; confirmation of implementation by class visits
<b>Organizational Viability</b>	Are students and parents satisfied with the work of the school?	Interviews, survey review
	Are systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the academic program and to modify it as needed?	Personnel evaluation policies, minutes and agendas of board, staff meetings
<b>Unique Aspects</b>	Are the school's mission and vision clear to all stakeholders?	Interviews, document reviews
	Are the school's special programs meeting expected targets?	Accountability Plan, Progress Reports, other docs unique to each school

## APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KIPP STAR COLLEGE PREP CHARTER SCHOOL

### I. Academic Program Goals

<b>Goal 1: All students at KIPP STAR Charter School will become proficient readers and writers of the English language.</b>	
<b><i>Proposed Measures</i></b>	<b><i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Students at school 2+ years score levels 3 &amp; 4 on NYS ELA test</li> <li>-- More students at levels 3 &amp; 4 on NYS ELA test than comparison schools for grades 7 &amp; 8</li> <li>-- Increase NCE on Stanford 10 reading to 50+ NCE by end of grade 8</li> <li>-- Cohort will be at proficient scale score or above by end of grade 8 on NYS ELA test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly label tables to show whether NYS or NYC test</li> <li>• Indicate “n” (number of students) when reporting results</li> <li>• Note if making a statement about matched cohorts or grade-level cohorts</li> <li>• When possible, compare grade-level cohorts with matched cohorts</li> <li>• Identify grade-level cohort performance in schools compared</li> <li>• Describe how comparison schools were selected</li> <li>• Identify testing years and present year-to-year comparisons</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2: All students at KIPP STAR Charter School will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of mathematical computation and problem-solving.</b>	
<b><i>Proposed Measures</i></b>	<b><i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Students at school 2+ years score levels 3 &amp; 4 on NYS Math test</li> <li>-- More students at levels 3 &amp; 4 on NYS Math test than comparison schools for grades 7 &amp; 8</li> <li>-- Increase NCE on Stanford 10 math to 50+ NCE by end of grade 8</li> <li>-- Cohort will be at proficient scale score or above by end of grade 8 on NYS Math test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly label tables to show whether NYS or NYC test</li> <li>• Indicate “n” (number of students) when reporting results</li> <li>• Note if making a statement about matched cohorts or grade-level cohorts</li> <li>• When possible, compare grade-level cohorts with matched cohorts</li> <li>• Identify grade-level cohort performance in schools compared</li> <li>• Describe how comparison schools were selected</li> <li>• Identify testing years and present year-to-year comparisons</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 3: All students at KIPP STAR Charter School will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning and problem-solving.</b>	
<b><i>Proposed Measures</i></b>	<b><i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- 75% of students at school 2+ years score levels 3&amp;4 on NYS Science test</li> <li>-- More students at levels 3 &amp; 4 on NYS Science test than comparison schools for grades 7 &amp; 8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare grade-level cohorts with matched cohorts</li> <li>• Identify grade-level cohort performance in schools compared</li> <li>• Describe how comparison schools were selected</li> <li>• Identify testing years and present year-to-year comparisons</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 4: All students at KIPP STAR Charter School will demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of social, geographical, civic and world studies.</b>	
<b><i>Proposed Measures</i></b>	<b><i>Recommendations for the school to consider:</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- 75% of students at school 2+ years score levels 3 &amp; 4 on NYS Social Studies test</li> <li>-- More students at levels 3 &amp; 4 on NYS Social Studies test than comparison schools for grades 7 &amp; 8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare grade-level cohorts with matched cohorts</li> <li>• Identify grade-level cohort performance in schools compared</li> <li>• Describe how comparison schools were selected</li> <li>• Identify testing years and present year-to-year comparisons</li> </ul>

**II. Organizational Viability Goals** N/A

<b>Goal 1:..</b>	
<b>Proposed Measures</b>	<b>Recommendations for the school to consider:</b>
<b>Goal 2:</b>	
<b>Proposed Measures</b>	<b>Recommendations for the school to consider:</b>
<b>Goal 3</b>	
<b>Proposed Measures</b>	<b>Recommendations for the school to consider:</b>

**III. Unique Programmatic Area Goals**

<b>Goal 1: Students who attend KIPP STAR Charter School will be capable of enrollment in college preparatory high schools.</b>	
<b>Proposed Measures</b>	<b>Recommendations for the school to consider:</b>
-- All students at school 3+ years will be accepted at college prep high school of his/her choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create table to show names/types of high schools to which students are encouraged to apply</li> <li>• Create table to show numbers/percentages of applicants to each type of school by year</li> <li>• Document numbers/percentages of acceptances and names of schools</li> <li>• Document numbers/percentages of high school completion</li> <li>• Document numbers/percentages of graduates who attend college</li> </ul>